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**SECOND COMMITTEE, 1482nd
MEETING**

Monday, 6 November 1972,
at 10.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mr. Bruce RANKIN (Canada).

AGENDA ITEM 47

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment:
report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/8688,
A/8691, A/8703/Add.1 (Part II), A/8783 and Add.1
and Add.1/Corr.1, A/CONF.48/14 and Corr.1,
A/C.2/277, A/C.2/L.1236/Rev.1, A/C.2/L.1237,
A/C.2/L.1241, A/C.2/L.1246, A/C.2/L.1247)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to examine draft resolution A/C.2/L.1236/Rev.1, on development and environment.

2. Mr. JOSEPH (Australia) said that his delegation could go along with operative paragraph 1, although it was procedurally unfortunate that the General Assembly should be pre-empting the Governing Council for Environmental Programmes with regard to decisions which that Council should make concerning the order of priorities for expenditure from the Environment Fund. His delegation could also accept operative paragraph 2, since it permitted a selective interpretation of the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 2849 (XXVI), which his delegation had been unable to endorse. It could also support operative paragraph 3, which respected the role of the Economic and Social Council.

3. A number of developing countries appeared to fear that contributions to the Environment Fund would mean a diminution of contributions for development assistance, but that fear had no validity so far as Australia was concerned. Australia's net development assistance flows to developing countries in the current financial year were expected to total \$265 million, all in the form of grants, and that amount would probably rise at the rate of more than 10 per cent annually over the next five years. In contrast, Australia had pledged a total of \$2.5 million to the Environment Fund over the same period. It was also relevant that Australia had made its pledge to the Environment Fund in a year in which its pledge to UNDP would be increased by 20 per cent. Accordingly, his delegation had no difficulty in supporting a recommendation that contributions to the Environment Fund must be additional to the present level and projected growth of contributions to development assistance programmes, including UNDP; it could go even further and support a recommendation that that principle should also apply to pledges relating to any other multilateral funds meant to finance environmental or related activities. However, it could not accept the present version of operative paragraph 4 which, taken at face value,

implied that environmental assistance provided bilaterally to developing countries was not to be considered valid technical assistance in terms of the targets and objectives established in the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV)). Australia would regard such bilateral assistance as valid aid expenditure and would report it as such to the OECD Development Assistance Committee in Paris.

4. Mr. GRANQVIST (Sweden) said that his delegation would support the draft resolution on the understanding that the objective—particularly of operative paragraph 4—was to ensure that resources for international environmental programmes should not be diverted from international development assistance. Sweden's contribution to the Environment Fund would be in addition to the development aid it provided; however, environmental considerations would figure significantly in its bilateral development assistance.

5. Mr. JOSEPH (Australia), referring to the Swedish representative's remarks, said that his delegation would be able to support operative paragraph 4 if the sponsors made it clear that it applied solely to international programmes.

6. Mr. OKELO (Uganda) said that the draft resolution placed the required emphasis on the needs of the developing countries as a whole by establishing a stronger link between the problems of development and those of environmental activities. His delegation would therefore support it.

7. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that the environmental programmes referred to in operative paragraph 4 would be those for which the new Governing Council would be responsible under operative paragraphs 8 and 9 of the draft resolution on institutional arrangements which the Committee had already adopted (A/C.2/L.1228). It was possible that the Governing Council would make recommendations concerning co-operation between States and at the regional and sub-regional levels; it was therefore difficult to state categorically what type of programmes were envisaged.

8. Miss DARLING (United Kingdom) said that her delegation also had certain difficulties with draft resolution A/C.2/L.1236/Rev.1. Much of its content was repetition of what had already been agreed in the draft resolutions relating to the environment and it was not possible at that stage to go beyond those agreed positions. The call in operative paragraph 1 for special con-

sideration of the needs of the developing countries was repetition of the last phrase in operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228. Operative paragraph 2 was not really necessary, since it could be assumed that the Governing Council would take into account important declarations—and particularly the International Development Strategy—adopted by the General Assembly. Her delegation maintained the reservations it had expressed on certain aspects of General Assembly resolution 2849 (XXVI), on the International Development Strategy and on the World Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology to Development.

9. It could similarly be assumed, with reference to operative paragraph 3, that the Economic and Social Council would continue to act in furtherance of the objectives of the International Development Strategy, and it was insulting to the Council to imply that it was not doing its work in that way. The somewhat ambiguous statement of the representative of Pakistan had not removed her delegation's reservations concerning operative paragraph 4. It had been made clear on several occasions that the United Kingdom contributions to the Environment Fund would be additional to its aid programme and to the 1 per cent aid target, and the delegation had informed the co-sponsors that the United Kingdom would have no objection to seeing that position reflected in the draft resolution. However, with respect to bilateral aid, United Kingdom representatives had on several occasions already said that while they would be happy to assist developing countries on request with projects of an environmental nature, that would be within existing aid programmes.

10. Lastly, her delegation could support operative paragraph 5, but found it out of place in that draft and regretted its context. A number of delegations, including her own, felt that sectoral funds for development purposes were a distortion of the priorities of the international development system as set out in the Consensus adopted by the Governing Council of UNDP at its tenth session in June 1970¹ and endorsed in General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) of 11 December 1970. Since, in introducing the draft resolution, the representative of Pakistan had referred to the need to avoid distortive priorities, it was surprising that Pakistan had been among the sponsors supporting a special fund for housing.

11. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan), replying to the representative of the United Kingdom, said that the positions of principle expressed by certain delegations sometimes seemed inconsistent with their decisions on individual resolutions. It had been asserted that concern for the environment should not diminish concern for development. It was, however, difficult to reconcile general assertions with such statements as that just made by the United Kingdom representative. That was precisely why the sponsors of the draft resolution had felt it desirable to put forward their proposal.

12. As to the explanation he had given in connexion with operative paragraph 4, it was so specific and clear that it could hardly be termed ambiguous. He was

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 6A*, para. 94.

pleased that the United Kingdom representative considered operative paragraph 5 acceptable while reserving her delegation's position on the remainder of the draft resolution.

13. His own delegation, too, was concerned when special funds were set up that were not in accordance with priorities established. He noted, however, that in some cases the United Kingdom delegation had supported such special funds. If all special funds were to be abolished, the Pakistani delegation would go along with that procedure and support the amalgamation of all into one unified fund.

14. Mr. ROUGÉ (France) said that operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1236/Rev.1 contained differences between the French and English texts. Moreover the English text was lacking in clarity and unnecessarily complicated.

15. Although the principle of additionality of resources was acceptable to his delegation, it was unable to support the draft resolution in its present form.

16. Mr. JOSEPH (Australia) requested a separate vote on operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.

17. He noted that special funds such as the Environment Fund and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control were desirable because such projects would not attract financing from UNDP. In his view, housing could normally be funded through UNDP and therefore a special housing fund was unnecessary.

A non-recorded vote was taken on operative paragraph 4 of A/C.2/L.1236/Rev.1.

Operative paragraph 4 was adopted by 74 votes to 3, with 26 abstentions.

A non-recorded vote was taken on A/C.2/L.1236/Rev.1 as a whole.

The resolution as a whole was adopted by 85 votes to none, with 21 abstentions.

18. Mr. MORENO (Cuba) said that his delegation had abstained from the vote because of the references in the draft resolution to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and to certain draft resolutions adopted previously. His delegation's abstention was, however, unrelated to General Assembly resolution 2849 (XXVI), which it continued to support.

19. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that his delegation had abstained on operative paragraph 4 which, in its opinion, required clarification. If, however, the co-sponsors submitted a satisfactory revised wording at the plenary meeting, his delegation would be in a position to change its vote.

20. Mr. YOKOTA (Japan) said that his delegation had abstained on operative paragraph 4 and on the draft resolution as a whole because it had difficulty with the concept of additionality.

21. Mr. ARVESEN (Norway) recalled that his delegation had earlier voted in favour of the United Kingdom proposal to refer all resolutions in draft to the Governing Council because that represented the most consistent course of action in the light of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1229/Rev.1. After the Committee's rejection of the United Kingdom proposal, the Norwegian delegation had decided to abstain on other draft resolutions which, in its view, would tend to some extent to disrupt the over-all balance.

22. It would, however, reconsider all proposals prior to the vote in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

23. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) explained that his delegation had abstained in the vote on operative paragraph 4 and on the draft resolution as a whole for the same reasons as those he had indicated in the past.

A non-recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1237.

The draft resolution was adopted by 97 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.

24. Mr. ROUGÉ (France) said that while his delegation agreed that it would have been better to refer all proposals to the Governing Council for action, the majority of the Committee had not concurred in that position. The French delegation had therefore preferred to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1237 instead of abstaining.

25. Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland) said that his delegation had abstained on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1237 and other recent draft resolutions because it agreed with the Norwegian delegation that it would have been most appropriate for the items to be transmitted to the new permanent environmental machinery.

26. Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland) said that his delegation's abstention did not represent a substantive objection but stemmed from the fact that Poland had not participated in the Stockholm Conference.

27. Mr. MORENO said that his delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1237 because of the references to the Stockholm Conference, in which his country had not participated.

28. Mr. BELLIZZI (Malta), Mr. KANE (Mauritania) and Mr. SINGH (Malaysia) said that they had not been present for the vote on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1237, but that they would have voted in its favour.

29. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) thanked the co-sponsors of the draft resolution and the Committee for their favourable action on an initiative undertaken by the Government of Iran.

30. The CHAIRMAN said that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1241 had been withdrawn.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

31. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to examine draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246, and announced that the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

32. Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, proposed that operative paragraph 2 should be amended to read "*Further decides* to locate the environment secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya."

33. Mr. ZAGORIN (United States of America) said that the question of locating parts of the United Nations system in developing countries was an important one and merited careful examination. The fact that the representative of Kenya had raised it in the Second Committee might well accelerate its consideration. However, his delegation could not accept the draft resolution, nor the amendment just proposed for operative paragraph 2. To decide, as operative paragraph 1 of the draft did, to locate the environment secretariat in a developing country only, might be divisive and could adversely affect international co-operation. Goodwill was needed in a political forum such as the United Nations in order to stimulate delegations to convey to their Governments and peoples the idea of a dynamic and interrelated world society in which harmony was essential. The employment of a bloc approach which meant that matters were virtually decided in advance would make it more difficult for some to feel involved and to accept their commitment to such a system. Moreover, he could not accept the idea of rejecting out of hand, without giving them any consideration whatever, all other sites proposed for the environment secretariat in the Secretary-General's report (A/8783/Add.1 and Corr.1).

34. The question of the location of the new secretariat must be dealt with on its merits. The secretariat's effectiveness and impact on environmental programmes must be borne in mind; it was essentially a co-ordinating unit, and should therefore be located in a central place within the United Nations system. Moreover, the cost aspect must not be neglected. The representative of Kenya had said that the decision should be taken not on technical and economic, but on political grounds. However, political judgement need not and should not be incompatible with assessment of the technical and economic merits of any given case, and to ignore those merits would cause serious harm to the United Nations system as a whole.

35. The questions of effectiveness and performance could be ignored. All Governments in the years and decades to come would have to take those factors into account in justifying to their legislatures support for United Nations activities, including the environment activity about to be set up. Attitudes towards their support would unquestionably be influenced by judgements about efficiency, effectiveness and performance.

36. Furthermore, under rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, before it took any decision the Committee must have before it a statement of financial implications from the Secretary-General. Precise estimates for each proposed location were not available; before any decision was taken on the proposed amendment, his delegation would insist on a statement of the financial implications of locating the new secretariat at Nairobi as well as other locations cited in the Secretary-General's report.

37. His Government's first preference was for location of the environment secretariat in New York. Because it was the seat of the United Nations European Office and other international organizations within the United Nations system, it would also consider Geneva. In his view, to attempt to set up an opposition, as did the proposed draft resolution, between Geneva on the one hand and developing countries on the other, distorted the true situation. Geneva historically had been an international centre for many years, offered the benefits of proximity to other organizations within the United Nations system, and would offer many advantages for a body engaged primarily in co-ordination.

38. His delegation appealed to the sponsors of the amendment not to insist on ruling out consideration by the Committee of the other sites which had been suggested. Those sites had been offered in good faith, and the possibility of accepting the offers should not be summarily dismissed. In the past, moreover, it had been the practice to deal with the selection of sites by secret ballot. Amendments to the draft resolution providing for such a ballot and enabling the Committee to make a choice among a number of possibilities would therefore be extremely desirable. Moreover, his delegation insisted that the financial implications of the various possible sites must be known before any decision was taken.

39. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that his delegation's feeling of solidarity with those of other African countries inclined it to support the amendment introduced by the representative of Egypt. However, to do so would place his Government in an extremely delicate position in relation to the Governments of a number of other Mediterranean countries including Cyprus, Malta, Spain and Monaco, which had also offered sites for the proposed environment secretariat. His delegation was also aware of the merits of a number of other suggested locations such as Vienna, Geneva and New York.

40. If a consensus could not be reached, however, his delegation would respond to the appeal of the representative of Kenya for a political decision, and would vote with the Group of 77 in favour of the proposed amendment. His Government was convinced that the Government of Kenya would do everything in its power to promote the work of the environment secretariat. To locate the secretariat at Nairobi would implement the principle outlined in the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution that the headquarters of United Nations bodies should be located having regard

to equitable geographical distribution, and would be fully in accordance with operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, which decided to locate the secretariat in a developing country.

41. In fact, however, the selection of a site was a complex matter. Equitable geographical distribution was obviously desirable, but the matter remained one requiring detailed and objective consideration. To limit the selection of a site to the developing countries would be to ignore the extensive contribution made to their development by the developed countries. Most of the problems of developing countries were individual features of their one overriding problem of underdevelopment; and in matters relating to the environment, too, their main concern must be for development. Their cause might in fact be better served through a strengthening of machinery and operational activities at the regional level than through the location of the environment secretariat in one of them.

42. A primary consideration was that the site for the new environment secretariat must be in a neutral capital. His delegation hoped that the sponsors of the draft resolution would bear that point in mind and accept amendments which would enable delegations to vote in the real interests of the United Nations system, the developing countries and the international community as a whole. In any event, the site agreed on for the environment secretariat should entail the least possible additional cost to the United Nations budget and should afford ready access to existing machinery and agencies. In the light of those considerations, his delegation felt that the matters mentioned in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report should be considered fully, and that the Secretary-General's comment that a comprehensive survey of all the proposed locations could be completed in time for presentation to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session should be borne in mind. The sensible approach would be to postpone a decision until the following session; however, if good sense was outweighed by political considerations, his delegation would vote with the Group of 77.

43. The CHAIRMAN read out the text of rules 155 and 156 of the rules of procedure concerning the financial implications of resolutions.

44. Mr. SADDLER (Office of Financial Services) said that, in furtherance of the recommendations of the Stockholm Conference, the Secretary-General had prepared estimates of the cost of the institutional arrangements proposed. In the absence of any decision to the contrary, those estimates had been based on the continued presence of the environment secretariat at its present location, in Geneva. Unfortunately, the Secretary-General was not in a position to give detailed figures for the various alternative sites which had been proposed. A study giving such figures would take between six and eight weeks to produce; the Secretariat was prepared to do so and to submit the results to the General Assembly, but there was no assurance that that could be done by the end of the twenty-seventh session.

45. Mr. DEBRAH (Ghana), speaking on a point of order, said that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246, if so amended, would refer to only one site—Nairobi.

46. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) said he could not understand why so much time would be needed to prepare a statement of financial implications. Rule 155 was not a new rule. Moreover, the Secretariat had had a list of possible sites in its possession since the Stockholm Conference.

47. Mr. WALDRON-RAMSEY (Barbados) concurred in the view expressed by the representatives of Ghana and Kenya. The arguments advanced in favour of Nairobi were solid and unimpeachable.

48. In his opinion, rules 155 and 156 would not prevent the Committee from passing judgement on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246 since those rules applied only to the General Assembly meeting in plenary.

49. Even if the statement of financial implications could not be ready for six or eight weeks, which seemed incomprehensible to him, the Committee could vote on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246 and discuss the financial implications, if any, in the plenary meeting.

50. Mr. ZAGORIN (United States of America) took exception to the remarks of the representative of Barbados: The first sentence of rule 155 was clear. He formally requested a legal ruling as to whether the Committee could vote on the draft resolution before it had been apprised of the relevant financial implications. His delegation felt that that was not possible.

51. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) recalled that at the previous meeting the Committee had adopted draft resolution A/C.2/L.1235 calling for the convening of a conference/exposition on human settlements in Canada without having heard the financial implications.

52. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that it had been announced that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1235 would not involve any financial implications for 1973.

53. Mr. McCARTHY (United Kingdom) supported the United States representative's request for a legal ruling.

54. Mr. HARDY (Canada) noted that the report of the Secretary-General (A/8783/Add.1 and Corr.1) indi-

cated that a number of States besides Kenya had offered to serve as host country of the environment secretariat. In fairness to those States maintaining their offer, which were not mentioned in a draft resolution, the Committee should also be given a legal ruling concerning the status of their requests for consideration as possible sites.

55. Mr. FINDLEY (Liberia) said that the Headquarters of the United Nations and those of its major agencies were situated in the United States and western Europe. However, the developing countries were also involved in the United Nations and needed some sense of belonging. There would be financial implications wherever the environment secretariat was established, since it was a new body. The establishment of the secretariat in Kenya would bring economic benefits to the developing countries, particularly those in Africa. The Group of 77 was giving its moral support to the Kenyan proposal. Developing countries should not be discounted as possible sites for United Nations bodies on the grounds that it would cost more to locate them there. Accordingly, the Committee should vote on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246.

56. Mr. McCARTHY (United Kingdom) said that, for the purposes of a legal ruling, all countries which had offered to serve as host should be considered in contention. If necessary for technical reasons, his delegation would be prepared to submit a subamendment proposing the substitution of the words "London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland" for the words "Nairobi, Kenya" in the amendment read out by the representative of Egypt.

57. Mr. ARLÍA (Argentina) said that he considered a legal ruling necessary on whether the Committee could take a decision on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246 without having heard a statement of financial implications.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that legal rulings would be given at the following meeting on the points raised by the representatives of the United States of America and Canada.

59. Mr. DEBRAH (Ghana) felt that a ruling was necessary only on whether a statement of financial implications was required in respect of Nairobi.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.