



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Resumed Forty-ninth Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

Thursday, 12 November 1970,
at 3.15 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 3

Report of the International Monetary Fund¹
(concluded) (E/4928)

1. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) congratulated the Managing Director of the Fund on his very clear statement. The Economic and Social Council was in the habit of considering the IMF report for a very short period of time during the General Assembly session. Its role must not become a routine one and it must not confine itself to endorsing that report automatically before its submission to the General Assembly. Since it covered problems deserving serious study, his delegation suggested that the IMF report should be discussed during several meetings, either during the session of the General Assembly, or during the year, which might perhaps be a more positive measure.

2. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the administration of the Fund considered the adoption of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV)) by the States Members of the United Nations as an important step forward. It should be stressed that the consultations with the various countries had gradually become an extremely useful dialogue which went to the heart of the matter. Moreover, when a State was examining its financial problems, it should take account of the effects on the whole of the economic life of the country considered. At that point it was necessary to be frank and the same applied to the domain of international co-operation. Everyone should speak without political dogmatism in order to avoid prejudice to international co-operation and the countries themselves. Further, it would often be possible to avoid rescheduling of debt service if, when loans were made, the debtor and creditor countries carefully examined the terms of repayment. There the Fund had a very important role to play. The Strategy provided the framework for the necessary planning, so that the policy finally decided should be positive and accepted by everyone. It was thus possible to consider the problems in their over-all perspective and avoid errors in decision-making.

3. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) thanked the Managing Director and the personnel of the Fund for the patient and painstaking work which they had done, particularly during the negotiations which preceded the general increase in Fund quotas, for the implementation of the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and for the contribution of the Fund studies to the

problems of the reform of the international monetary system.

4. The Managing Director's statements confirmed the interest which the Fund took in the problem of inflation, a phenomenon which was now present in nearly all countries, and in that of trade and financial relations between the developing countries and the developed countries. The Economic and Social Council was the most appropriate body for examining those problems.

5. The process of adaptation had proved to be slower than would be desirable. It was in fact the point of convergence of opposing ideas and of conflicts of interest which could only be reconciled and overcome through political decisions. For the moment it seemed that the possibility of reform of the international monetary system was mainly related to the need to define more realistic and more flexible exchange rates. It involved particularly the possibility for the countries of the European Economic Community (EEC) to adopt a single currency and the relationships of that group of countries with the United States of America. In a first phase, that could be brought about by fixing margins of fluctuation of European currencies which were closer between each other than they were in relation to the United States dollar. The basic idea was to secure greater co-operation between European countries and greater protection from dangers of imbalance which might come from outside, and particularly from economic systems of the size and importance of the United States. That view of the international monetary system might seem extremely limited and remote from the interests of other countries, but that was not so: the adoption of a single currency in Europe would not exert a decisive effect on the choice to be made, according to the indications of the Fund, among three exchange systems compatible with the IMF articles of agreement: enlargement of the margins of fluctuation between currencies, fluctuating exchange rates, period of transition during which the exchange rate could vary freely until a new parity was fixed.

6. Moreover, the alignment of exchange rates between the two great regions, the European and American ones, by a mechanism which enabled greater fluctuations in one direction rather than the other offered to all the other countries possibilities which they did not at present have or which were subject to greater constraints.

7. Those possibilities concerned either the selling of their product in one region or another under the best terms of price or credit which they could obtain, or the obtaining of capital on one market or another, or the use of liquid funds which they could receive as rapidly and efficiently as possible to finance their trade and development. More generally, since the aim of harmonizing relations between

¹ International Monetary Fund, *Annual Report, 1970* (Washington, D.C.).

the European region and the United States was to impart greater stability to the system of international payments, the developing countries could only benefit.

8. The process of monetary unification in Europe would be neither easy nor rapid. Apart from technical adjustments between European currencies themselves and between those currencies and the dollar, there was scarcely any reason for optimism. Monetary unification should be the last phase of the process of political and economic integration of the European countries and not a prerequisite for that integration. The growing importance at present given to European monetary unification and to the relations between Europe and the United States stemmed from a number of circumstances. Among the many reasons for an adaptation of the international monetary system, those concerning relations between the countries of the EEC and the position of the dollar were among the most important. The group of European countries had already achieved a degree of economic integration higher than other regions. It held nearly all the dollars which were owned abroad. It included countries which were more subject than others to external influences, in the form of imported inflation and large-scale capital movements. That same group represented a natural testing ground for experiment and for the evaluation of the various solutions which could successively be adopted. It sufficed to recall that those countries gave lower priority to economic development than to other requirements of a qualitative and social nature which were emerging with growing urgency.

9. With regard to the problem of the reform of the international monetary system, the role of the Directors of the Fund and their essential contribution to the task of decision-making were a source of satisfaction and reassurance both to the industrialized countries and to the developing countries. At various times the Italian Government had expressed its conviction that the creation of international liquidity to assist the development of international trade and to expand the financing possibilities of all countries depended essentially on a decision taken collectively for reasons of general interest. It should not be left to the initiative of a small number of countries nor be narrowly linked to gold production.

10. Like the Managing Director of the Fund, his delegation recognized that the recent adoption of the International Development Strategy, with its stress on the procedures for review and appraisal, only increased the importance of consultations, and it was desirable that they should lead to an increased participation of the IMF in the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Second Development Decade.

11. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) congratulated the Managing Director who had presented the IMF report and made the French text of his speech available to the French speaking delegations. Many urgent problems had arisen during the past year. Some had been the subject of a memorandum submitted to the annual meeting at Copenhagen by the African group as a whole. Certain administrative problems might appear routine ones, but they were in fact very important. There was a particular need to reflect the geographical representation of member countries within the Committee responsible for interpreting

the articles of agreement. That was not a new question and a Fund team was working on it, but the African group would like to see that type of study accelerated. Again, with regard to the IMF Institute, the African group had urged that the number of trainees should be increased in order to meet the needs of the developing countries for skilled personnel. So long as the developing countries did not have enough specialists available, most of the international community would be excluded from active participation in major decisions. Missions had been sent to Africa to recruit Africans for the IMF. So far the results had been only partial, but that action was to be continued.

12. The long delay in translation of documents from English into French, which often prevented the States concerned from studying them at the proper time, had once more led the African Governors to request the establishment of a genuine translation department within IBRD and IMF. Where development assistance was concerned, the African Governors had, in their memorandum, urged that a link should be established between SDRs and development financing. They had invited the Managing Director to propose ways and means of establishing such a link before the next SDRs allocation. Some consideration should be given to the possibility of amending article XXIII, section 3, with a view to allowing international development organizations to have special drawing rights.

13. With regard to the net income investment of IMF, the African Governors had observed that the special reserve fund had reached such a level that it was no longer necessary to increase it. With a view to increasing the funds available to the developing countries, the African Governors had called the Managing Director's attention to the need for reinvesting the net income of IMF in IBRD low-interest bonds.

14. With regard to the question of making exchange rates more flexible, the African Governors had taken note of the report of the Directors on the role of exchange rates in the adjustment of international payments. They had pointed out that the exchange rate system should maintain the basic principles of the par value system. They had also drawn attention to the problems which the developing countries might experience if the smallest margin of variation were adopted. There would have to be some guarantee that the reforms to be adopted would in no way prejudice the economies of the developing countries. The African Governors had reiterated their disappointment at the decision taken by the Fund and IBRD regarding the stabilization of raw material prices and had pointed out that it was impossible for the developing countries to utilize the new facilities for the financing of buffer stocks because of the restrictions imposed by the Fund. They had urged that IMF and IBRD should collaborate with a view to establishing a real multilateral facility for stabilizing the prices of raw materials. The Managing Director of the Fund had replied to those observations in various ways. His delegation was grateful that the Managing Director had stressed the need for continuing the consultative missions in an atmosphere of greater confidence when discussing problems connected with the flow of funds to promote economic development and the difficulties experienced by the African countries in managing their foreign debts.

15. As for the international situation, he felt that every means should be employed to combat inflationary tenden-

cies. The Managing Director and his colleagues had tried to prevent spiralling inflation. Thanks to their tireless efforts, IMF had always been able to adapt to fluctuating world conditions.

16. Mr. SCHWEITZER (Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund) thanked the representative of Tunisia for his kind words which provided an appropriate opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Hedi Nouria of Tunisia, Chairman of the 1970 Annual Meeting of the Fund. Mr. Nouria had not only carried out his task with distinction, but had made a most impressive statement on the needs of the developing countries. He said that he shared the anxieties felt by the members of the Economic and Social Council. The Fund was a specialized agency of the United Nations and such exchanges of views should serve as a guide and an inspiration to it. He wanted to thank all the delegations which had spoken for their encouraging words about the work of the Fund. It seemed to him that during the discussion, no real criticism of the Fund's action had been expressed but only regret that IMF could not get more done with greater haste. The Directors of the Fund were convinced that it could play a quietly effective role in the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade. The Fund was aware that its role was to defend the interests of the developing countries and help them to strive for their economic and social objectives within the framework of the Strategy. Perhaps the present period of relative calm would provide enough time for an in-depth consideration of a number of basic problems facing the international organizations and the IMF in particular. The international monetary system was in a state of continuous evolution. Recently some important changes had taken place, among them the activation of Special Drawing Rights and the substantial increases in the quotas of the members. Both those steps would give the Fund a greater opportunity for intervention. The member countries could henceforth count on greater aid from the Fund. Many of the ideas expressed and suggestions advanced had already been raised by the Governors at the Copenhagen meeting. The Board of Directors would be asked to study carefully its programme of work for the years to come. Among the matters under consideration he wished to call attention to the establishment of a link between SDRs and development assistance, other possible changes in the status of SDRs, questions concerning the calculation of quotas and their role in the organization of the Fund, and problems raised by the regional groups. The Fund was following attentively developments in economic and monetary co-operation at the regional level. It was prepared to lend its support and provide technical assistance in that area. Raw material difficulties and shortfalls in export receipts were not short-term or medium-term problems. They were long-term problems and were very serious, but at the present time the Fund did not have the means to consider anything but short- or medium-term solutions; however, it would make an effort to encourage the solution of such problems.

17. The matter of consultations was extremely important. At a time when the United Nations was attaching great importance to the review and appraisal of objectives and policies, it should be pointed out that the Fund had had a great deal of experience in that area and had learned how to carry on a dialogue with all the member countries by

agreeing to study all development problems. Development was more complicated than economic growth expressed in statistical terms. It involved real economic and social progress. When the Fund embarked on consultations, it did not do so as an authority giving an examination or passing judgement but it tried to find mutually acceptable ways of solving the problems. The Fund's experience could serve as a guide in the implementation of the Strategy for the Second Development Decade. It was totally dedicated to the cause of development. At present, it had to concern itself with the hazards of spiralling inflation in most of the industrialized countries. The Fund could study ways of ending that inflation or controlling it. It could serve only in an advisory capacity, however, and the sovereign member countries had to take the final decisions. It was for the industrialized countries to decide what political and social measures they were going to take to put an end to inflation. The Fund, for its part, could emphasize international interdependence and solidarity. That might be a modest, unobtrusive role, but in the present circumstances it was the most important role the Fund could play.

18. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should adopt a resolution on the report of the International Monetary Fund, on the lines of the one adopted at the resumed forty-seventh session, which would read:

"The Economic and Social Council,

"Takes note with appreciation of the report of the International Monetary Fund."

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 7

Calendar of conferences (concluded)* (E/L.1360)

19. Mr. FAKHREDDINE (Sudan) said that in co-sponsoring draft resolution E/L.1360, his delegation had been prompted by two main considerations. The first was the purpose of establishing the Economic Commission for Africa and the regional economic commissions in general; the second related to the interpretation and application of the rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Africa. Although separate, the two questions were closely linked, since the rules of procedure could be interpreted only in the light of the purposes for which the Commission had been established.

20. In resolution 1155 (XII) of 26 November 1957 the General Assembly had recommended that the Economic and Social Council, for the purpose of giving effective aid to the countries and territories of Africa, should give prompt and favourable consideration to the establishment of an Economic Commission for Africa. In response to that appeal, the Council had decided at its twenty-fifth session to establish the Economic Commission for Africa and had clearly defined its objectives, terms of reference, geographical scope and membership status. Since the main purpose of the Commission was to initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development of Africa, it was obviously the African countries which were primarily concerned with its

* Resumed from 1727th meeting.

operation and which should be in a position to shape its policies and assess its results. Accordingly, if those countries considered that it was beneficial for the Commission to hold its meetings in the territory of a member State rather than at its headquarters, that consideration should outweigh the presumed rights of the non-members. Otherwise the interests of non-member States would quite illogically be given preference over the interests of member States. For that reason the draft resolution reaffirmed that the appropriateness of the choice of venue for the regular sessions of the regional economic commissions was primarily within their own competence; the point had been emphasized because it had been contested and because other organs of the United Nations had tended to act as if the matter lay within their competence, rather than within that of the regional economic commission in question.

21. The primary interest of the member States of a regional commission in supervising its operation gave them the right to decide whether the participation of a non-member State would further the Commission's objectives or should be accepted because of a special interest. It was in fact laid down in the rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Africa that the Commission shall invite any Member of the United Nations not a member of the Commission to participate in its deliberations on any matter which was of particular concern to that non-member and the Commission, under paragraph 10 of its terms of reference, had to follow the practices of the Economic and Social Council in that respect. Under those practices, as defined in rule 75 of its rules of procedure, the Council itself decided whether a non-member State had any particular interest which necessitated its participation in the deliberations. It was therefore not enough for a State which was not a member of the Council, or of a regional economic commission, merely to assert that it had a special interest in a matter for it to be allowed to participate in the consideration of that matter. The organ concerned, in other words, the regional economic commission, had to authorize such participation after considering the validity of the claim.

22. The idea of making a distinction between passive and active observers was not without interest, but it seemed inconceivable that a non-member State which asked to participate in the deliberations of the regional economic commission, on the pretext that the matter discussed was of particular concern to it, should remain passive. His delegation maintained that the problems of African development were difficult enough without complicating them further by the injection of extraneous factors. It earnestly recommended that the Council should adopt the draft resolution, with its emphasis on the primacy of the interests of the countries of Africa over other considerations.

23. Mr. OLDS (United States of America), speaking of his statement and that of the French delegation at the 1727th meeting, and of the Norwegian representative's appeal to the Council to solicit the opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs on the draft resolution before it (E/L.1360), said he wished to stress again the possible repercussions of that draft.

24. His delegation did not dispute the validity of the premise of the co-sponsors, namely, that the composition

and organization of sessions of the regional economic commissions should primarily be within the competence of member States. If that were the only matter involved, his delegation would have no difficulty in supporting the draft resolution. Nevertheless, as the representative of France had pointed out, the issue of the choice of venue for regular sessions could not be separated from the interpretation of the provisions of the Charter, in particular those concerning the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations and the need to ensure that all enjoyed the rights and benefits resulting from membership. The problem was also inseparable from such questions as the granting of visas, agreements with host countries, privileges and immunities, and many others. It was therefore of vital importance and affected the very principles of the United Nations.

25. He had recently had an interview with the Secretary-General, during which he had ascertained that he was in no way exaggerating the scope of draft resolution E/L.1360. The interview had shown that the co-sponsors of the draft resolution were calling in question twenty-five years United Nations practice and nine decisions by the Secretary-General, by not stating specifically that the choice of venue for sessions should be made in accordance with the regular practice of the United Nations and the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations.

26. In the circumstances, it seemed that three courses of action were open to the Council. First, it might adopt the draft resolution, together with a clear statement that it was not thereby infringing the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations and was in no way disputing the Secretary-General's right to interpret the provisions of the Charter as he had done in the past. That solution was acceptable to his delegation. Another solution might be to invite the co-sponsors to declare unambiguously that they were, in fact, calling in question the practice followed by the United Nations and certain principles proclaimed in the Charter. If that course was followed, the matter would obviously be outside the competence of the Council; it should then, after an advisory opinion had been obtained from the Office of Legal Affairs, as the representative of Norway had suggested, be transmitted to the Sixth Committee. The third and last possibility was to amend the existing text of the draft resolution in order to make it more explicit. In any case, his delegation was not in a position to vote in favour of the draft resolution as it stood without an opinion from the Office of Legal Affairs.

27. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that, at the 1727th meeting, he had explained the views of co-sponsors of the draft resolution, in response to the apprehension expressed by the United States delegation. The text clearly showed that there was no intention of impugning the principles of the Charter, since Article 69 was expressly referred to. With regard to the doubts expressed by the United States representative as to the Council's competence to deal with the question, it should be understood that the sponsors of the draft resolution had been assured by the Secretary-General, before submitting it to the Council, that the question fell within the competence of the Council. While every Member State unquestionably had the right to request that the Office of Legal Affairs should make its opinion known, such a step was hardly called for when the

Council had before it a text as clear as that which it was discussing. Finally, the draft resolution was fully in accordance with the Charter, the rules of procedure of the Council and those of the regional economic commissions; any amendment would inevitably introduce new elements and thus depart from the consensus which those instruments expressed.

28. In conclusion, he noted that draft resolution E/L.1360 had already been the object of lengthy debates and suggested that the President should ask the Council whether it considered that it had sufficient information to proceed to vote.

29. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that the discussion so far had resulted only in confusion. Some delegations maintained that the draft resolution merely reproduced established principles—although, if that were so, the need for it might be questioned—while others insisted that it challenged the principles of the Charter itself. Some speakers asserted that the purpose of the draft resolution was to avoid any future misinterpretation of existing rules, but the text itself was giving rise to a wide variety of interpretations within the Council itself. Again, the Secretary-General's position on the question had been described in opposite ways by two speakers. A statement by the Secretary-General would therefore be especially welcome.

30. He felt that the sponsors of the draft resolution had, to judge from operative paragraph 1, been inclined to exaggerate the powers of the regional economic commissions and to oversimplify the situation. In resolution 2609 (XXIV) the General Assembly had specified that the regular sessions of ECAFE, ECLA and ECA might be held away from their headquarters when the commission concerned so decided, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly. It was therefore not sufficient to state that the question of the appropriateness of the choice of venue for the regular sessions of the regional economic commissions was primarily within the competence of the said commissions. Moreover, the statement in operative paragraph 2 that the granting of observer status was governed by the terms of reference and rules of procedure of the commissions was incorrect, since there was, in fact, no formal rule on the subject, but rather a body of customs and practices.

31. He said, in conclusion, that his delegation was hoping that a statement by the Secretary-General would bring some clarity to the debate.

32. Mr. FAKHREDDINE (Sudan) said that the point at issue required commonsense rather than an interpretation of the Charter, since the essential fact was that any regional economic commission had the right to choose the venue for its regular sessions. Operative paragraph 1 was very clear and the draft resolution should be adopted as it stood.

33. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) said that to try to read into the document something which it did not state might cause the real issue to be overlooked. The decision of ECA to accept the Tunisian Government's invitation might be challenged, but, if so, that should be clearly stated. As matters stood, the draft resolution was simple and clear, and the sponsors had had no second thoughts about it. If a

precedent was set, it might later apply to other regional economic commissions. Since the Council had approved ECA's report, it should adopt a draft resolution whose sole purpose was to endorse that Commission's decisions. The Council could not, without giving grounds for concern, challenge decisions taken or the interpretation of the Charter on which they were based; to do so would be to exceed its functions.

34. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that the sponsors' explanations had failed to dispel his doubts. The sponsors might have had either of two very different concepts in mind in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the passive participant or the active participant. If they had had the former in mind, the draft resolution was both illegal and unnecessary, inasmuch as ECA would be assuming the right to grant observer status, which derived from the Charter. If a commission should refuse the representative of a Member State a visa for the purpose of attending a meeting of a United Nations body, that refusal would be deemed to be a unilateral act, and the Secretary-General would be empowered to take action in accordance with his responsibilities. If the sponsors had the active participant in mind, why did they not say so? In the absence of satisfactory explanations, his delegation would be compelled to vote against the draft resolution.

35. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that the matter at issue was, after all, a fairly simple one. The sponsors' intent was to solve problems created by the choice of venue for a session. He pointed out, in reply to the statement by the United Kingdom delegation, that the text of General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV) was clear. Moreover, the principle stated in paragraph 9 (*i*) was precisely the one which was reaffirmed in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution E/L.1360. His delegation had expressed its opinion on operative paragraph 2 at the 1727th meeting. In any case, the decision was one for the regional economic commission concerned.

36. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) pointed out that paragraph 9 (*i*) of the Assembly resolution, which had been mentioned by the Pakistani delegation, did indeed state that the decision of the regional economic commissions was subject to the approval of the Council and of the General Assembly. It was therefore those two organs which were primarily concerned.

37. Mr. BRECKENRIDGE (Ceylon) said that the draft resolution was quite clear and should not give rise to a legal discussion; otherwise as the representative of Upper Volta had pointed out, new problems, with deeper implications, might arise.

38. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that the fact that the decisions of the regional economic commissions were subject to the approval of the Council and the General Assembly did not detract in any way from the usefulness of the draft resolution.

39. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that, at the beginning of the discussions, a problem had arisen owing to a difference of opinion between some delegations, and the Secretary-General and the Office of Legal Affairs. To seek the opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs was to ask it to make

a decision again; the Council could, however, decide without seeking the views of a member of the Secretariat. Delegations which advocated that a staff member should be consulted again were merely using a procedural device to postpone the decision.

40. Mr. FAKHREDDINE (Sudan) said that he agreed with the Tunisian representative. His delegation would vote against any request for consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs.

41. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that he wished neither to postpone the decision nor to start a further argument, but to obtain some clarifications which unfortunately had not been provided. The question of the choice of venue for meetings involved not only had geographical considerations, but certain difficult problems deriving from the Charter and from the rights it conferred on Member States. The practice followed until now was clear and had not been disputed for twenty-five years; it might be challenged but that should be clearly stated. The draft resolution raised constitutional and legal problems. The text of operative paragraph 1 was far from clear, since the word “primarily” was ambiguous. The legal precedents and the conventions on diplomatic privileges and immunities could not be summarily discarded. The explanations of the sponsors had dispelled none of the doubts of his delegation, which maintained its insistence on consulting the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel. Reference had been made to the difference between passive and active observers. In the matter of participation in deliberations, no one was questioning the right of the regional economic commissions. The right to attend a meeting, which derived from the Charter, should not, however, be confused with the right to take part in discussions, a right which the body concerned could either grant or deny. In any event, the draft resolution appeared to be poorly drafted and ambiguous, and the Council would be ill-advised to take a decision without obtaining an opinion from the Secretary-General and from the Office of Legal Affairs.

42. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) urged the United States representative not to press his request that the Office of Legal Affairs and the Secretary-General should be consulted. Involvement of the Secretariat in the Council’s deliberations would constitute an unfortunate precedent. It was for the Council, as a sovereign organ, to decide on the point. The matter, as he saw it, was not one of refusing to listen to the Secretary-General but of making the Council’s prerogatives quite clear. Since some delegations objected to the wording of operative paragraph 2, it could perhaps be reworded to read as follows:

“2. *Recalls* that the participation of States Members of the United Nations which are not members of the regional organs is governed by the terms of reference and rules of procedure of those organs . . .”.

43. He hoped that that compromise solution would resolve the problem. Where operative paragraph 1 was concerned, it would be best, after all the clarifications that had been given, to proceed to vote.

44. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that it would be helpful to hear the Secretary-General’s interpre-

tation, since some important questions had not been cleared up.

45. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said he hoped that the Secretary-General would be able to make an oral statement as well as a written statement concerning the question under consideration, in accordance with rule 31 of the Council’s rules of procedure.

46. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) moved the closure of the debate under rule 53 of the Council’s rules of procedure.

47. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) opposed the motion.

48. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) moved the adjournment of the debate, and noted that under rule 55 of the rules of procedure that motion had precedence over the motion for closure.

49. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that an attempt was being made to postpone a decision indefinitely, and the Council should proceed to vote in accordance with rule 53.

50. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece), speaking on a point of order, moved the adjournment of the meeting under rule 54 of the rules of procedure.

The motion was rejected by 15 votes to 8, with 3 abstentions.

51. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the United Kingdom motion for adjournment of the debate.

The motion was rejected by 15 votes to 7, with 4 abstentions.

52. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the Tunisian representative’s motion for closure of the debate.

The motion was adopted by 16 votes to 6, with 5 abstentions.

53. The PRESIDENT invited the members of the Council to proceed to vote.

54. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said he hoped that his request for information before the vote would be met.

55. Mr. FAKHREDDINE (Sudan) said that to request information at the present stage would mean reopening the debate.

56. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) pointed out that under rule 53 the debate was closed.

57. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) invoked rule 53 of the rules of procedure, and said that he did not wish to reopen the discussion but merely to obtain some necessary explanations.

58. Mr. SAM (Ghana) said that every opportunity for delaying matters further had been exhausted. In view of the

change that had been made in operative paragraph 2, the draft resolution was now quite unambiguous.

59. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) said he accepted the Council's decision not to seek the opinion of the Legal Counsel. Since, however, operative paragraph 2 had been revised at the last minute, his delegation would like an opportunity to consult its own legal expert regarding the meaning of the paragraph, as revised.

60. Mr. OGISO (Japan) asked whether the vote would be taken on the text as revised.

61. The PRESIDENT replied in the affirmative.

62. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) pointed out that the revision of operative paragraph 2 was very similar in wording to the heading of chapter XIII of the Council's rules of procedure.

63. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) read out draft resolution E/L.1360, as orally revised.

The draft resolution was adopted by 14 votes to 5, with 6 abstentions.

64. Mr. BRADLEY (Argentina) said that his delegation had not spoken during the long debate because the text was not sufficiently clear and because of the existence of a second motive on which it would have been improper for the Council to begin a debate that was beyond its competence. His delegation had understood what interests were involved and had abstained from voting.

65. Mr. VIAUD (France) said it seemed wrong to his delegation that a regional economic commission should be unable to meet in the capital city of a member State because of the application of a general rule. On the other hand, it felt that the method chosen to correct that anomaly could be used in circumstances which might rebound upon the sponsors. In view of that lack of clarity, his delegation had voted against the draft resolution.

66. Mr. ZAKHAROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the representatives of the USSR in United Nations organs had consistently spoken, and would continue to speak, in favour of respect for the principle of universality and in opposition to limited interpretations of that principle. His delegation would emphasize the consistency of the USSR's position with regard to the principle of universality. In view of the reasons and motives of the sponsors of the draft resolution, his delegation had felt that it could abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

67. Mr. SKATARETIKO (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation, bearing in mind all the circumstances had voted in favour of the draft resolution.

68. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution because the principle underlying it seemed to be at variance with general provisions relating to the participation of Member States. His delegation regretted that it had not had time to ponder the question or to consult its legal expert.

69. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution because its request for a legal opinion had not been taken into consideration.

AGENDA ITEM 10

Reconsideration of the composition of the membership of the Committee on Natural Resources (*continued*)* (E/L.1363)

70. Mr. FERNANDINI (Peru), introducing draft decision E/L.1363, sponsored by Italy, Pakistan and Peru, said that in the view of the sponsors, there was no reason why Council resolution 1535 (XLIX) should not be amended. References had been made to precedents and to the practice hitherto of restricting the membership of subsidiary organs of the Council to twenty-seven, but the Council should be prepared to make innovations when circumstances so required, and in the present case it ought to take into account the desires of the many developing countries that wished to be members of the Committee on Natural Resources. It should be noted that the number thirty-eight was a compromise and would not provide representation in the Committee for all the States that sought it.

71. He appealed for understanding between the regional groups and urged the delegations of African States to give sympathetic consideration to the desires of developing countries in other regions.

Mr. Franzi (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.

72. Mr. NDUNG'U (Kenya) said that after the close of the 1727th meeting of the Council he had had a number of conversations with a view to devising, if possible, a compromise solution; however, the draft introduced by the representative of Peru certainly did not contain anything of a compromise nature. His delegation therefore suggested the following draft resolution:

"The Economic and Social Council,

"Taking note of resolution 1535 (XLIX) which it adopted at its forty-ninth session in Geneva in July 1970,

"Taking note of the increased interest by Member States in membership of the Committee on Natural Resources,

"1. Decides to reaffirm its resolution 1535 (XLIX);

"2. Further decides to review the composition of the Committee on Natural Resources after an appropriate experimental period."

The main consideration which had prompted his delegation to prepare that text was that the review of the membership of the Committee on Natural Resources was not at all urgent at the present stage and that it would be better to make a decision in the light of experience.

73. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) stated that his delegation was opposed to the change in the number of members of the Committee on Natural Resources proposed by the sponsors of draft decision E/L.1363. Council resolution 1535 (XLIX) had been adopted on 27 July 1970 and had not yet been implemented. Furthermore, as several speakers

* Resumed from the 1727th meeting.

had observed during the discussion, the Committee was being established not for political reasons, but to carry out a specific technical task. It would be better to reduce the membership of the Committee, rather than to increase it; that would simplify its discussions and give greater cohesiveness to regional groupings, with each delegation speaking on behalf of its regional group.

74. With regard to the text suggested by the representative of Kenya, it seemed superfluous to make provision now for a review of the Committee's composition in the light of the experience to be gained from an experimental period; it would always be possible, without adopting any resolution to that effect, for the Council to alter its original decision if circumstances so required.

Mr. Maramis (Indonesia) resumed the Chair.

75. Mr. SKATARETIKO (Yugoslavia) said he hoped that the Council would find a compromise solution; the best way of doing so would be through informal consultations, and there could perhaps be a brief suspension of the meeting for that purpose.

76. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) emphasized that decisions of the Council were in no way sacred and could subsequently be changed whenever the Council deemed it appropriate. The increase in the membership of the Committee on Natural Resources was justified both by the importance of the subject and by the large number of candidates for membership.

77. His delegation did not agree with the representative of the Upper Volta on the desirability of one delegation's acting as the spokesman for all the States in its regional group. Draft decision E/L.1363 was realistic, and his delegation was most surprised at the objections raised to it by some members of the Group of Seventy-seven, which might be well advised to hold consultations with a view to determining the reasons for their position and devising, if possible, a compromise solution.

78. Mr. DIXIT (India) observed that his delegation had voted for Council resolution 1535 (XLIX) in the belief that a membership of twenty-seven would enable the Committee on Natural Resources to carry out the task assigned to it. However, as the representative of Pakistan had said, the Council should take a dynamic approach, and the fact that it had only recently adopted the resolution did not prevent it from amending it according to the needs. The fact was that many countries wished to be members of the Committee, and his delegation had no objection to the proposed increase of the membership to thirty-eight. In the last preambular paragraph of resolution 1535 (XLIX), the Council had stated its conviction that the activities of the United Nations in the field of natural resources should be widened, accelerated and given more adequate intergovernmental leadership and guidance in the Second United Nations Development Decade. That consideration alone justified the proposed increase in the membership of the Committee. He would point out to the representative of Kenya that the text he had suggested was not a compromise solution but would simply defer discussion of the question until a later date. He hoped that discussions within the Group of Seventy-seven might lead to a compromise solution.

79. Mr. PRAGUE (France) said that, although the United Nations was different from what it had been twenty-five years earlier, as the representative of Yugoslavia had pointed out at the 1727th meeting, it had certainly not changed much since July 1970, when resolution 1535 (XLIX) had been adopted. For the Council to amend that decision, which had not yet been implemented, would be a sign of inconsistency, and not dynamism, as some speakers had suggested. Moreover, an increase in the size of the Committee on Natural Resources was likely to result in a further increase in applications for membership.

80. His delegation was therefore opposed to increasing the membership of the Committee to thirty-eight at the present time, as the sponsors of draft decision E/L.1363 proposed; however, it fully agreed with the representative of Kenya that, if subsequent experience proved that it was desirable to increase the size of the Committee, there was nothing to prevent the Council from reconsidering the question of membership of the Committee at a later date. To dispel the Indian representative's apprehension that a decision on the matter might be postponed indefinitely, he added that the draft resolution proposed by the representative of Kenya could even be amended to specify the precise length of the proposed trial period. That would be a real compromise.

81. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that the Peruvian delegation's interesting statement showed that the sponsors of the draft decision were essentially advocating a pragmatic attitude. His own delegation believed that the United Nations should not always follow the easiest road or the line of least resistance; rather, it must come squarely to grips with its problem. He agreed with the representative of Upper Volta that in the particular case under consideration it would be preferable to reduce the number of members of the Committee in order to make it more effective. If the Council altered its original decision, the number of applications for membership was bound to increase. The problem was not an institutional one but rather, as everyone knew, a financial one. Therefore, his delegation could not support the draft decision.

82. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) said that the establishment of the Committee had aroused considerable interest and that many countries had already expressed their intention to apply for membership, thereby raising the question of equitable geographical distribution. It was, however, surprising to note that, among the delegations opposing the adoption of the draft resolution, there were some which had been reluctant to acknowledge the need to establish the Committee, but had still expressed the wish to become members. In view of the Committee's important role, it was understandable that many countries, both developing and industrialized, should wish to take part in its work. Furthermore, his delegation wondered whether the Italian Government could consider itself bound by decisions taken in circumstances in which it had not had the opportunity to state its position. The Council must take the necessary steps to ensure that the interest already expressed by many Member States could be translated into active participation.

83. Mr. FAKHREDDINE (Sudan) supported the draft decision and said he was surprised at the opposition expressed by certain delegations. The number of members originally established by the Council had not been calcu-

lated on the basis of an econometric model and there was therefore no reason to adhere to that number if there seemed to be good reasons for changing it. His delegation agreed with others that consultations might make it easier to arrive at a solution.

84. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) recalled that the functions of the Committee would be technical, and not political. The Committee should therefore be composed of experts recruited on the basis of their qualifications rather than their country of origin, and representing various disciplines, rather than geographical groupings. It could therefore be argued that an increase in the number of members would not necessarily lead to increased efficiency. On the contrary, experience with two other advisory bodies composed of eminent scientists—namely, the Committee for Development Planning and the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development—showed that very effective work could be accomplished with a small membership. Moreover, since the Committee would only meet biennially, and assuming that its sessions would be of the usual length, a decision to increase the membership to thirty-eight would mean that each member would be able to speak only for approximately one-and-a-half hours every two years. It was questionable whether the work could be conducted efficiently on that basis. It would even be preferable to reduce the number of members originally established. The Council might possibly decide to consider the question of the Committee's membership after a certain length of time; but it should definitely not increase the membership at the present stage.

85. Mr. NDUNG'U (Kenya) said that he did not understand why the Pakistan delegation had been surprised to note that some members of the Group of Seventy-seven

were opposed to the draft decision. Clearly, every country had its own interests and its own policy; but that was no obstacle to unanimity on decisions affecting a group of countries facing the same problems. Divergent views existed even within families. It was entirely legitimate for Kenya to adopt the same view as the developed countries.

86. Mr. MARSH (Jamaica) supported the Kenyan representative's position. Since a decision did not become binding until its implementation had begun—and since the elections had not yet started—his delegation did not think that there were any procedural difficulties in the proposed solution. Moreover, the session was not yet over. He would, however, support the Greek delegation's position if there were a proposal to increase the membership to more than thirty-eight.

87. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said he regretted that his allusion to the Group of Seventy-seven had been misunderstood. He, too, was surprised to note that the opponents of the draft decision included the Greek delegation, which had supported an increase in the membership of several bodies. Lastly, it was unfortunate that the Kenyan representative had misunderstood the true meaning of the Pakistan delegation's statement.

88. Following an exchange of views in which Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) and Mr. FRANZI (Italy) took part, Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) said that not all delegations wishing to apply for membership had notified the Secretary-General of their intention. The Secretary-General had unofficial information, which was necessarily incomplete.

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.