



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CONF.14/SR.1  
21 May 1953  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

UNITED NATIONS OPIUM CONFERENCE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 11 May 1953, at 3.10 p.m.

CONTENTS

Opening of the Conference by the Secretary-General of the  
United Nations

Election of the President

Adoption of the rules of procedure (E/CONF.14/13)

Appointment of the Credentials Committee

Election of Vice-Presidents

PRESENT:

<u>Acting President:</u>	Mr. HAMMARSKJOLD	Secretary-General of the United Nations
<u>President:</u>	Mr. LINDT	Switzerland
<u>Executive Secretary:</u>	Mr. YATES	
<u>Administrative Secretary:</u>	Mr. PASTUHOV	

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The ACTING PRESIDENT declared the United Nations Opium Conference open.

Speaking as Secretary-General of the United Nations, he explained the aim of the Conference which had been convened by the Economic and Social Council in pursuance of the provisions of Articles 1 and 62 of the Charter, to solve a problem which had economic, social and humanitarian aspects.

The Conference was a part of the work of international co-operation, which was patiently being accomplished by the United Nations in technical fields for the benefit of the whole of mankind and which was too often overlooked or under-estimated. The League of Nations, and afterwards the United Nations with the help of the World Health Organization, the Permanent Central Opium Board and the Drug Supervisory Body, had set up a control system for narcotic drugs based on a series of international treaties which prevented the use of such drugs for illicit purposes but permitted all medical and scientific needs to be met.

Although that system had, as a whole, worked satisfactorily, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had thought that it would be a great advantage to codify, simplify and, if possible improve the international instruments on which it was based. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had undertaken that task and had devoted a large part of its recent sessions to the study of a draft single convention drawn up by the Secretariat in accordance with the Commission's instructions. As the work of drawing up a single convention took a great deal of time and would not be completed before several years had elapsed, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had decided that before the provisions of the future single convention referring to the limitation of raw materials for the manufacture of narcotic drugs could enter into force, a provisional international agreement should be reached for the limitation of the production of opium, on which most of the natural narcotic drugs were based.

Although the importance of synthetic drugs was growing from day to day, opium was still the most widely used drug in the world. With its derivatives morphine, codeine and heroin - it was an incomparable boon and also a deadly scourge, the most widely used analgesic and narcotic. The efforts made by States parties to the conventions on narcotic drugs during the past forty years had brought about a great reduction in the amount of opium used for purposes which were not medical or scientific, but the annual world production of opium was still several times greater than the amount needed for licit international trade purposes, estimated at approximately 500,000 kilogrammes.

The need for limiting the production of opium had been recognized for many years past. On 23 June 1921, the League of Nations Council had adopted a report stating that in order to solve the opium problem the evil should be attacked at its roots, that is to say, the production of opium must be reduced and its use limited to medical and scientific purposes. However, it had not proved possible to carry out such a programme, and the League of Nations had preferred to take up the question from another angle by attacking the various problems one by one in a series of international instruments on narcotic drugs. Only on the eve of World War II had the League of Nations Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs undertaken the preparation of a convention on the limitation of raw materials.

When the United Nations had decided to take up the study of the question, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had thought that the best way to solve the problem would be to follow the plan set out in the draft protocol which was before the Conference. That draft was based on the 1925 and 1931 Conventions and included an estimate system and statistical summaries. It indirectly limited the production of opium by establishing a limit for opium stocks which each of the parties to the protocol would be authorized to maintain. It provided for the strengthening of national opium monopolies and the establishment of international control, including embargos and investigations or the holding of administrative consultations on the spot. It was for the Conference to revise that text and to make any changes or improvements deemed necessary.

Member States of the United Nations represented at the Conference had a special interest in the opium problem as producers, manufacturers or consumers. He welcomed the representatives of non-member States which were parties to the conventions on narcotic drugs, and noted with satisfaction that many States which were not represented at the Conference because they were only slightly affected by the question, had stated that they would consider signing the protocol.

Lastly he expressed his most sincere wishes for the success of the Conference's work.

## 2. ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

The ACTING PRESIDENT asked members of the Conference to nominate candidates.

Mr. VAILLE (France) nominated Mr. Lindt, representative of Switzerland, who had ably presided over the Executive Board of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. Mr. Lindt represented a country which had traditionally played a leading part in the field of human solidarity and in the social field.

Mr. WALKER (United Kingdom) and Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) supported the proposal.

Mr. Lindt (Switzerland) was elected President by acclamation.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Conference, on behalf of his country and on his own behalf, for the honour it had paid him by electing him to preside over its work.

## ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE (E/CONF.14/13)

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Conference should provisionally adopt the rules of procedure drawn up by the Secretary-General. Representatives would

have every opportunity later to submit in writing any amendments they considered appropriate.

The draft rules of procedure (E/CONF.14/13) were provisionally adopted.

#### APPOINTMENT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT read out rule 3 of the rules of procedure and suggested that the representatives of the following countries should be appointed members of the Credentials Committee: Japan, Mexico, Pakistan, Netherlands and Turkey.

It was so decided.

#### ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS

The PRESIDENT pointed out that, in accordance with rule 5 of the rules of procedure, the Conference must elect six Vice-Presidents.

Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium), supported by Mr. VAILLE (France), nominated the United States and United Kingdom representatives.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia), supported by Mr. SARPER (Turkey) nominated the representatives of India and Iran as two of the Vice-Presidents.

Mr. HSIA (China) nominated the representative of France.

Mr. VAILLE (France) thanked the Chinese representative but asked him to withdraw his proposal, as it was essential for the three groups of countries - producers, manufacturers and consumers - to be adequately represented among the officers of the Conference.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY (India) nominated the representative of Canada.

Mr. WADSWORTH (United States of America) also regretted that he was unable to accept the honour which certain representatives had wished to pay his

country. He nominated the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. VAILLE (France) supported the proposal.

Mr. KYROU (Greece) emphasized that in order to maintain an equitable geographical representation one of the Vice-Presidents should be a representative of a Latin American country, and he therefore nominated the representative of Chile.

The PRESIDENT recalled that according to rule 35 of the rules of procedure all elections would be by secret ballot unless the Conference decided otherwise.

Mr. KYROU (Greece), supported by Mr. VAILLE (France), suggested that the six candidates nominated should be elected by acclamation.

The representatives of Canada, Chile, India, Iran, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom were elected Vice-Presidents by acclamation.

The PRESIDENT announced that the officers of the Conference would meet at the close of the meeting.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.