

FISCAL COMMISSION

Documentary Material on Relations with  
Non-Governmental Organizations  
(Item 12 of the Draft Provisional Agenda of the  
First Session of the Commission)

Foreword

This document is designed to provide background material to the Fiscal Commission when it considers the question of its relations with non-governmental organizations.

This material includes extracts from the following sources:

1. United Nations Charter, resolutions of the General Assembly and the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council;
2. recommendations or proposals contained in the reports of the Commissions of the Council which have already met.

DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL

1. The Charter of the United Nations provides, in Article 71, that:  
"The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned."
2. In view of a resolution of the General Assembly (A/54/Rev.1) recommending that suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations be adopted as soon as possible, the Economic and Social Council established at its first session a Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations. This Committee

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submitted a report, later approved by the Council (E/43/Rev.2) which set forth certain principles to be applied in establishing a list of non-governmental organizations which would be eligible for consultation, and which provides that the organizations placed on such a list be divided into three categories:

- "(a) organizations which have a basic interest in most of the activities of the Council, and are closely linked with the economic or social life of the areas which they represent;
- (b) organizations which have a special competence but are concerned specifically with only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council; and
- (c) organizations which are primarily concerned with the development of public opinion and the dissemination of information."

3. The report, as adopted by the Council, gave consultative status, in Category (a), to the World Federation of Trade Unions, the American Federation of Labor, and the International Co-operative Alliance. A later report, also adopted by the Council, added the International Chamber of Commerce to this list (E/189/Rev.2). And at its fifth session the Council admitted the following additional organizations to consultative status (a): International Federation of Agricultural Producers, International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, Inter-Parliamentary Union. A number of other organizations were also admitted to consultative status (b) and (c).

4. In its report to the General Assembly (A/125, page 68), the Economic and Social Council stated, with reference to the consultation of approved non-governmental organizations with Commissions, that:

"Organizations in Category (a) would normally consult directly with the various Commissions themselves. Those in Categories (b) and (c) would normally be linked for consultation purposes with the particular Commission or Commissions concerned with their particular field of  
/interest.

interest. The Commission would be free to consult with these organizations either directly or through a committee established for that purpose."

5. As a result of its discussion of the Report of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions, the first recommending to the Economic and Social Council,

"that it give to the World Federation of Trade Unions the right to submit to the Economic and Social Council questions for insertion in the provisional agenda, in accordance with the procedure now applicable to specialized agencies,"

and the second expressing agreement with the general principle

"that all non-governmental organizations in Category (a) should receive equal treatment in respect of consultative arrangements with the Council." (A/246, pages 3 and 4).

6. At their recent sessions four of the commissions of the Council discussed the question of relations with non-governmental organizations. The relevant recommendations or proposals contained in their reports to the Council are outlined below by Commissions.

7. The Statistical Commission expressed the following views regarding relations with non-governmental international organizations interested in statistics:

"(a) that the United Nations and specialized agencies have responsibilities for the collection, analysis and publication of statistics required in the performance of their assigned tasks and for the general development and improvement of an adequate and co-ordinated international statistical system;

(b) that non-governmental organizations interested in the development of statistics should maintain and develop their scientific and professional character. And they should direct their activities toward the development of:

/(i) statistical

- (i) statistical methodology and scientific standards;
- (ii) the interchange and diffusion of knowledge;
- (iii) the training of statisticians; and
- (iv) the maintenance of high professional competence."

The Commission further recommended:

"(a) that the Council admit to consultative status non-governmental organizations interested in the development of statistics that so request and are prepared to relate their activities to those of the United Nations in the manner described in paragraphs (a) and (b) above;

(b) that the Council request the Secretary-General in his discussions with such non-governmental international organizations .... be guided by the definitions of roles stated above." The Secretary-General should attempt to eliminate any duplication in programmes and activities and to assume responsibility for such activities as might more appropriately be undertaken by the United Nations;

"(c) that the Council request the Secretary-General to report periodically to the Commission upon the discussions and negotiations which he has conducted ....." (Document E/264, pages 11 and 12).

8. The Commission on Human Rights decided not to make any recommendations with respect to relations with non-governmental organizations. It adopted, however, the following proposal which is intended to cover such relations, viz:

"that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, in drawing up the preliminary draft of the International Bill of Human Rights, may consult any person or document deemed by them of relevance to their work." (Document E/259, page 3).

9. The Social Commission adopted the following resolution:

"THE SOCIAL COMMISSION takes note of the texts in which the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly have fixed the rules for consultation with the non-governmental organizations by the various United Nations bodies.

/"THE COMMISSION

"THE COMMISSION is convinced that the closest co-operation of the non-governmental organizations recognized by the United Nations is indispensable for the success of its work. The Commission has therefore decided to give these organizations all the facilities necessary for full consultation and, in particular, to invite the representatives of the organizations classified in Category (a) to all its open meetings and also to the open meetings of its committees and sub-commissions.

"THE COMMISSION desires to co-operate to the fullest possible extent with the World Federation of Trade Unions which groups seventy-one million workers in fifty-six countries and is the most authentic representative body of the workers of the world.

"IT INVITES the Secretariat to maintain during the interval between sessions permanent contacts with the non-governmental organizations mentioned in Category (a)."

(This Resolution was adopted unanimously with the exception of the third paragraph, which was on roll-call adopted by ten votes for and four votes against). (Document E/260, page 25).

10. The Commission on the Status of Women decided that since the Council had already set up a Committee on arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations:

- (a) all requests from women's organizations for consultative status be referred to that Committee;
- (b) that whatever decisions the Committee may take be discussed by the Commission at its next session. This shall not apply to the principle of national co-ordinating agencies.

The Commission expressed the desire that the Economic and Social Council recommend that member states take steps to encourage the creation within their country of a co-ordinating agency of non-governmental organizations interested in the condition of women. Also, the requests of such co-ordinating agencies when formed should be considered for consultative status.

/Finally,

Finally, the Commission stated that it desired to collaborate with  
TU, the AFL, and the ICA and stated its wish to utilize their  
experience in working out its decisions. (Document E/281, page 3).

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