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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 28th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 3 December 2018, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Remaoun (Vice-Chair) ..... (Algeria)

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In the absence of Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales (Guatemala), Mr. Remaoun (Algeria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

**Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (continued)**

**(g) Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (continued) (A/C.2/73/L.36 and A/C.2/73/L.49)**

*Draft resolutions on the report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/C.2/73/L.36 and A/C.2/73/L.49)*

1. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.49](#), submitted by Mr. Remaoun (Algeria), Vice-Chair of the Committee, on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.36](#). The draft resolution contained programme budget implications.
2. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation withdrew the oral amendment that it had put forward in the previous meeting. Rather, by way of compromise, a statement by the Chair of the Committee could be issued in relation to the draft resolution along the following lines: “The Chair of the Second Committee requests the Secretary-General to review the statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.49](#) ([A/C.2/73/L.68](#)) to better reflect the resolution.”
3. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that his country had no objection to the suggestion made by the Russian Federation.
4. **Ms. Elgarf** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, thanked the delegation of the Russian Federation for withdrawing its oral amendment to the draft resolution and said that a statement by the Chair of the kind suggested by that delegation was contrary to the Committee’s rules of procedure. Member States were at liberty to make comments and issue declarations as they saw fit. It was not, however, within the purview of the Second Committee to issue statements on documents concerning programme budget implications.
5. **The Chair** proposed that the Committee take note of the declarations made by the Russian Federation regarding the statement by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.49](#) ([A/C.2/73/L.68](#)) and proceed to adopt the draft resolution.
6. *Draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.49](#) was adopted.*
7. **Mr. Kajimoto** (Japan), noting that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, said that the United Nations Environment Assembly played a vital role in addressing a range of environment issues. However, Member States had not been given enough time to consider the statement by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution. His country wished to request the Bureau and the Secretariat to ensure that Member States received information on programme budget implications sufficiently in advance to permit consultations prior to the adoption of draft resolutions.
8. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) needed to improve its financial management and consider the possibility of absorption within existing resources. It was the hope of his delegation that UNEP would take more steps to pursue effective, efficient and transparent management under its new leadership. The options for absorption within existing resources would be discussed further in the Fifth Committee.
9. **The Chair** said that the Bureau had proposed to hold informal meetings in 2019 with a view to improving the working methods of the Second Committee. He hoped that ways could also be found to adopt draft resolutions that were usually adopted by consensus. Although not all issues had been resolved at the current session, it was noteworthy that the Committee had completed its work in eight weeks and one day, three days less than in the previous year.
10. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America) said that, although her country had joined consensus on the draft resolution, it did not support any additional allocation to UNEP from the regular budget. The regular budget allocation to UNEP had ballooned from \$14 million to \$40 million since the 2012–2013 biennium. No substantive case had been made for additional funding and her country would reject any such proposals in the Fifth Committee.
11. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the delegation of Japan. However, although discussions regarding paragraph 9 of the statement by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.49](#) ([A/C.2/73/L.68](#)) had been conducted in a spirit of compromise, that spirit was not reflected in the statement itself. The Russian Federation, therefore, disassociated itself from paragraph 9 of the statement.
12. *Draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.36](#) was withdrawn.*

**Agenda item 24: Eradication of poverty and other development issues** (*continued*) (A/C.2/73/L.18/Rev.1)

13. **Mr. Yobouet** (Côte d'Ivoire) confirmed that his delegation had registered a correction of its vote to one in favour of the draft resolution on eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/C.2/73/L.18/Rev.1), which had been adopted at the 26th meeting of the Committee.

14. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America) said that, in line with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in which abortion was not recognized as a method of family planning, her country did not fund or support the provision or promotion of or referral for abortion in its global health assistance programmes. Her country strongly supported the dignity and value of all human life and rejected any attempt to pervert the terms "health services" or "health-care services" used in United Nations resolutions on development issues to include abortion.

**Completion of the Committee's work**

15. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), speaking on behalf of Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the engagement and commitment of the Member States during an intense process had proven to be the key to the successful conclusion of the Committee's deliberations. The Committee had addressed three key elements of the 2030 Agenda: people, the planet and prosperity. It had learned of the possible consequences of failing to accelerate efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and, in the run-up to the signing of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakesh, Morocco, it had discussed the multiple dimensions of poverty eradication, development and migration. Ways of empowering the response of the United Nations to the challenge of a growing global urban population had also been discussed.

16. In addition, climate, desertification, drought, biodiversity, water resources and other environmental issues had been addressed, along with the challenges facing the agriculture sector, the benefits of consuming pulses and the importance of plant health and food safety. The need to make the transition to a circular economy and raise awareness of its potential benefits had been explored in a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council. Discussions had also been held on promoting entrepreneurship, trade and development, follow-up to the third International Conference on Financing for Development and the challenges facing

countries in special circumstances: least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

17. Although there had been diverging views on those subjects, the Committee had managed to conclude its work in a timely manner. The Secretariat stood ready to provide the support necessary to make a success of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would be held under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2019. The decision by delegations to start informal discussions in that regard was greatly appreciated.

18. **The Chair**, speaking on behalf of Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales, thanked the Committee for its hard work and commitment and said that the refinement of the schedule of informal consultations and related timelines had eased the work of all the parties involved. Yet again, the Committee had demonstrated its capacity to work together for long-term goals.

19. The deliberations of the previous weeks had confirmed that the path to sustainable development for all could be arduous. Consensus was sometimes difficult to achieve but, ultimately, everyone was committed to the same goals. Future generations depended on current efforts to turn into reality the vision that had been adopted by leaders in 2015. The keynote address delivered at the second meeting of the Committee had made clear the challenges that lay ahead and the urgency of implementing the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the ensuing weeks, leading experts had examined policies to address gaps in social and physical infrastructure and ways to contain debt in developing countries. The importance of pursuing the shift from an unsustainable linear economic model to a circular economy had also become clear.

20. At a time when multilateralism and the rules-based international system were being called into question, efforts to engage and stay at the negotiating table must be intensified. As Chair of the Committee, he would continue to facilitate discussions in the lead-up to the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held under the auspices of the General Assembly. Even when compromise proved elusive, everyone must focus on the overarching goal of creating a safe and sustainable world.

21. *The Chair declared that the Committee had completed its work for the seventy-third session.*

*The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.*