



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Fiftieth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Monday, 26 April 1971,
at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. Rachid DRISS (Tunisia).

Statement by the President

1. The PRESIDENT paid a tribute to Mr. Maramis, President of the forty-ninth session, whose able leadership had ensured the session's success. The fiftieth session was essentially social in character and only the Social Committee would be meeting along with the plenary Council; however, it should never be forgotten that the social and economic fields were interconnected and represented two faces of the same reality.

2. At the start of the session one could not but call to mind the obstacles which still kept the organs of the United Nations from discharging their duties efficiently. The Council should reaffirm its specially important role. To that end all must join hands, rise to the level of the community of men and promote international economic and social co-operation as called for in Article 55 and the whole of Chapter IX of the Charter. Nations large and small must assert their political will and, while the Economic and Social Council could not be expected to be more than the sum of the wills expressed by its twenty-seven member States, the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 2626 (XX)) could help the Council to gain its true role. The Council could become a genuine forum for deliberation and co-ordination if its twenty-seven members wished that to happen. It was therefore fitting to urge the representatives of all Governments to see to it that the fifty-first session of the Council, to be held at Geneva, gave new impetus to economic and social co-operation. Despite difficulties, the Council must find within the constructive character of its work the strength to persevere.

*Tribute to the memory of Mr. François Duvalier,
President of the Republic of Haiti*

3. The PRESIDENT asked the Haitian delegation to convey to its Government and to the family of the deceased the condolences of the members of the Council, who wished at the same time to express their sympathy and hopes for prosperity and happiness to the Haitian people.

4. Mr. ANTOINE (Haiti) thanked the President and the Council, on behalf of the Haitian people, for the statement just made in connexion with the death of President Duvalier. Despite the incomprehension of certain privileged Haitian circles and the world press, President Duvalier, who had carried out a great social revolution and fought for the moral and material advancement of his country, belonged to history. The nickname "Papa Doc" given him by the

rural people of Haiti had reflected the Haitian people's veneration for him. Privileged individuals and the world press had tried to make him out a dictator, but their cynicism was merely an outgrowth of a pitiful state of infantilism. With no economic help from the more prosperous peoples, President Duvalier had brought discipline and order to the country and had combated the elements of nature, the Pharisees and the prophets of doom. The hatred of his political adversaries and the foreign press had only added to his stature. Fighting for the freedom of the third world, martyred by the incomprehension of his unrelenting adversaries, he had given his life for Haiti. The Haitian people had looked upon him as a father and not as a dictator. Despite the persistent efforts of his enemies, the people would continue to pay grateful homage to his memory.

AGENDA ITEM 1

**Adoption of the agenda (E/4944 and Add.1,
E/4971 and Add.1, E/4972, E/4985, E/4995)**

5. The PRESIDENT invited comments on the provisional agenda, which had been considered on 12 January 1971 (1735th meeting) and had been issued as document E/4944.

6. He drew the attention of members of the Council to a note by the Secretary-General (E/4995), which set forth a list of supplementary items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure. He suggested that consideration be given first to the list of supplementary items:

- (i) United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Protocol on Psychotropic Substances: item proposed by the Secretary-General (E/4944/Add.1);
- (ii) Proposal to convene a Plenipotentiary Conference to amend the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961: item proposed by the United States of America (E/4985);
- (iii) Accession of the Republic of Korea to the Convention on Road Traffic of 19 September 1949: item proposed by the Secretary-General (E/4972).

7. In paragraphs 2 and 3 of his note (E/4995) the Secretary-General suggested that items (i) and (ii) should be included as subitems (a) and (c) respectively of agenda item 6, which should be amended to read "Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances", and that item (iii) should be included as a separate item.

8. Mr. ZAKHAROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat (E/4944) contained eighteen items relating to important

areas of international co-operation such as social development, human rights, natural resources, transport development and science and technology, and also questions of importance for the Council's own activities, such as measures to improve the organization of the work of the Council and the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC).

9. He wished to refer to the Soviet Union's position of principle on the development of international co-operation. Quite recently, the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR had adopted a programme of action for peace and international co-operation and the freedom and independence of peoples. The programme stated that the Soviet Union was prepared to strengthen in all areas its co-operative relations with interested States on a basis of mutual benefit. The Soviet Union was prepared to co-operate with other countries in finding answers in the fields of environmental protection, utilization of natural resources, including electric power, development of transport and telecommunications, prevention and eradication of the most serious and widespread diseases, utilization of space, the sea and oceans and related research.

10. In addition, specific targets had been fixed in the sphere of external economic relations. Durable relations were to be developed in trade, science and technology with the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, on a basis of mutual benefit and with the purpose of strengthening those countries' economic independence. Relations of that kind were also to be strengthened with those developed capitalist countries which expressed readiness to enhance their co-operation with the Soviet Union.

11. His delegation was prepared to make a positive contribution to the Council's work aimed at developing international co-operation in the economic, social, scientific and technological areas. It accordingly supported the provisional agenda in document E/4944.

12. His delegation wished, however, to draw attention to the note by the Secretary-General (E/4972), in which it was proposed "in accordance with past practice" to include in the agenda of the fiftieth session an item on the accession of the "Republic of Korea" to the Convention on Road Traffic signed at Geneva in 1949. His delegation was in disagreement with so-called "past practice". It would be quite illegal to discuss the proposed item. The South Korean régime could make no claim whatsoever to speak for Korea. Including the question in the agenda would only make it more difficult to give constructive consideration to the important questions of international co-operation. His delegation was against including the item in the agenda and would vote against the proposal for its inclusion.

13. Mr. SZARKA (Hungary) said that his delegation supported the proposed agenda but could not agree to the inclusion of an item on the accession of the "Republic of Korea" to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic. The Seoul authorities could not enter into international commitments on behalf of Korea.

14. The PRESIDENT asked whether the USSR representative was insisting on a vote on the question.

15. Mr. ZAKHAROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was.

16. Mr. SKATARETIKO (Yugoslavia) supported the Soviet proposal and said that his delegation would also vote against the inclusion of the item in the agenda.

17. Mr. BUSH (United States of America) said he was surprised by the objections raised by the Soviet representative. The fact was that since 1950, the General Assembly had repeatedly considered the question of Korea, often on the proposal of the socialist countries. He therefore hoped that the Soviet representative would reconsider his proposal to take a vote on the inclusion of the item.

18. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that although the Council's rules of procedure had been observed, the request for the inclusion of supplementary items in the agenda had been circulated rather late and his Government had not had time to consider it closely.

19. A distinction should be made between the inclusion of an item in the agenda and the consideration of the substance of the item. His delegation was reluctant to commit itself in a procedural vote and would in any case reserve its position with regard to the substance of the item.

20. Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) shared the view expressed by previous speakers that the Soviet representative should reconsider his proposal to take a vote on the item. He was prepared to support fully the Secretary-General's proposal to include the item in the agenda, particularly since there were precedents for such action. If the Council decided to put it to a vote, his delegation would vote for inclusion of the item.

21. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the inclusion of the following item in the provisional agenda: "Accession of the Republic of Korea to the Convention on Road Traffic of 19 September 1949", the three items proposed in document E/4995 and the provisional agenda as a whole.

The item was included in the provisional agenda by a vote of 18 to 5, with 4 abstentions.

The three items proposed for inclusion in the agenda in document E/4995 were included.

The provisional agenda, as a whole, as amended, was adopted.

Organization of work

22. Mr. VIAUD (France) requested that the Council should defer consideration of item 3 of the agenda (Outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries), which it was to take up in plenary that week, until the beginning of the third week of its session or the end of the second week following item 10 (Public administration and development). Some of the studies necessary for consideration of the problem had not yet been made available to the French delegation and it needed more time for a more careful examination of the resolution submitted by the USSR.

23. Mr. DE ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil) said that he had no objection to the French proposal but would like to complement it by suggesting that item 10 should be taken up in the first week instead of item 3.

24. Mr. OSMAN (Sudan) pointed out that according to the note by the President (E/L.1377) the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (item 14) was to be considered in the fourth week. However, since that report should facilitate consideration of item 8 (Natural resources) and item 9 (Transport development), the Council might be well-advised to examine the comments of CPC before taking up those items.

25. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) drew attention to the annotations to the provisional agenda (E/4944). As indicated in the document, by the time the Council came to consider item 14, all that would be left of the CPC report would be those aspects which had not already been directly considered in the Council in connexion with other agenda items. The CPC report was to be issued the next day.

26. If the French proposal was adopted, the Council would try to complete consideration of item 11 (Science and technology) by the end of the second week and could then take up item 3 at the beginning of the third week.

27. The Brazilian proposal to take up item 10 instead of item 3, although feasible, would create a few difficulties. The Secretary-General's report on public administration in the Second United Nations Development Decade (E/4950) and other related documents could not be issued in all the languages until the beginning of the following week.

28. The first part of item 9, dealing with the establishment of a United Nations transport centre, could be taken up the first week and the second part at a later stage once the relevant information had been received from the Trade and Development Board.

29. Mr. DE ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil) said he would not press his proposal.

30. The PRESIDENT said that the Council appeared to be in general agreement that item 3 would not be taken up until the beginning of the third week of work.

It was so decided.

31. The PRESIDENT said that the item proposed by the Secretary-General for inclusion in the agenda, "Accession of the Republic of Korea to the Convention on Road Traffic of 19 September 1949", could be taken up after item 9.

It was so decided.

32. The PRESIDENT pointed out that the proposals concerning the organization of the work of the session (E/L.1377) were tentative and subject to change if the work of the Council or its Social Committee made it necessary. If there was no objection, he would take it that for the time being the Council agreed with the arrangements proposed in document E/L.1377 as he had amended them.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 16

Measures to improve the organization of the work of the Council (E/4986 and Add.1-3)

33. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider item 16 of the agenda. The Secretary-General had invited Governments of Member States to communicate their views on the question and had reproduced the replies received in document E/4986 and Add.1-3. The President suggested that the meeting should be devoted to a preliminary exchange of views and that the Council should revert to the question towards the end of the session. He asked those representatives who wished to speak to give their names to the Council Secretary.

34. Mr. OSMAN (Sudan) asked how the President thought the Council could deal with the question of measures to improve the organization of its work.

35. The PRESIDENT said that it was for the Council to determine how it wished to deal with item 16. He personally felt that the first thing to do was to consider the substance of the replies from Governments, then try to formulate proposals or even resolutions on the question.

36. Mr. OSMAN (Sudan) said that a date should be set for the submission of specific proposals. It would be a good idea at that point to establish a working group to consider those proposals since the Council was taking up the question with a view to adopting a resolution on it.

37. Mr. DE ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil) said that although very few positive results had been achieved so far it was encouraging that Member States still clung to the hope of making the Economic and Social Council an efficient tool for the implementation of the objectives set forth in Chapter IX of the Charter. A cold analysis of the facts must be made if anything was to be accomplished.

38. The achievements of the United Nations in the realm of economic and social development had been far from encouraging. The international community had failed to provide the impetus which could ensure a pace of development compatible with the aspirations of the great majority of the peoples of the developing countries. In its twenty-five years of existence the Economic and Social Council had failed to grasp the tragic dimensions of the problems of underdevelopment. Subjects of vital importance to the less privileged countries were treated academically, and the Council had become little more than a channel through which information supplied by experts was mechanically transmitted to the General Assembly.

39. As far as the United Nations system in general was concerned, the lack of effective co-ordination by the Council could not be more obvious. That inertia might, however, have been a blessing in disguise, since it had led to the establishment of various subsidiary organizations which constituted the present United Nations system. Despite statements to the contrary, those organizations played a useful role, as a result of their diversity and relative vitality.

40. It was hard to see how measures to strengthen the role of the Council could be envisaged when an effort was being

made to establish an arbitrary and fixed ceiling on budgets, as if development needs had suddenly become static. Furthermore the Council's functions as a policy-making body could not be enhanced so long as it followed a policy of evading commitments and imposing controls, such as population control and environmental control. Moreover, it seemed that efforts to reorganize the Council were to a large extent provoked by the desire to counteract the natural preference of developing countries for larger and more politicized bodies in which they had a better chance of having their claims satisfied.

41. The considerations he had mentioned indicated that the possibilities of improving and strengthening the work of the Council were very limited. The remedy might lie in finding ways and means of measuring the participation of more Member States so as to inspire greater confidence in the Council's work and provide broader political support for its decisions and recommendations. Effective policy-making called for adequate representation of all prevailing views. Note should also be taken of the greatly enlarged membership of the United Nations and of the much greater range in opinions and interests, as compared with 1945.

42. Significant improvements could certainly be achieved in the area of the Council's responsibilities as the "governing body" which directed United Nations activities pertaining to economic, social and related matters. The defects and deficiencies in that area could hardly be attributed solely to the limits imposed on budgets. For example, the quality of programmes could be considerably improved, particularly by a clearer definition of priorities. If co-ordination proved to be almost impossible on a system-wide basis, there was no reason why the same should be true of the United Nations itself. The draft programmes and general blueprints for future activities prepared by the functional commissions and standing committees of the Council naturally concentrated on purely technical aspects. With the assistance of the CPC the Council should undertake a much more serious examination of those drafts and blueprints.

43. The Council's current procedure was to review very superficially, or simply to take note of, the reports of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the programmes of the various units of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office at Beirut (UNESOB). As far as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were concerned, it was obvious that the General Assembly alone had the political leverage necessary to review the work of those bodies, but that did not apply to programmes prepared at the technical level for

the different sectors of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Council should define the priorities and a more integrated picture should emerge, not only on a sectoral basis, but also from a cross-sectional, interdisciplinary approach. There should also be a more rational integration of planning at the global and regional levels. Very often proposals made at Headquarters seemed to ignore measures being carried out at the regional level by the regional economic commissions, and vice versa.

44. Improving the Council involved political and, to some extent, technical issues. For the time being, little could be done with respect to the political issues, but there was no reason why an attempt should not be made to improve the technical performance of the Council, for example, by insisting on comprehensive and clear reports, a more rational calendar of meetings and perhaps some modifications in budget presentation. The idea of programme-budgeting, recently presented as a panacea for all the evils besetting the United Nations, could be effective but might involve too great an increase in the Secretariat staff required.

45. Apart from organizational and procedural changes, members of the Council should concentrate on the programming aspects which fell within the Council's competence. Even when trying to improve its own work, the Council should proceed on the basis of priorities.

46. It was high time to transform the Council into an effective instrument as part of the international machinery for development. It should be remembered, however, that the so-called "reactivation" of the Council should not upset the constitutional balance of the United Nations by interfering with the normal development of UNCTAD, UNIDO and UNDP, or by altering in any way the basic relationship which had developed between the Council and the General Assembly. Maximum power was vested in the Assembly and any reform that might immobilize the most representative body of the United Nations and change its economic and social role into that of a mere rubber-stamp for the Council's recommendations should be rejected. He did not believe that the failures of the United Nations and of the Council in particular could be attributed to excessive participation in decision-making by Member States. Improving the Council should not result in the curtailment of the functions of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, which should maintain its powers and prerogatives so that it could continue to defend the interests of medium and small nations. The Council should nevertheless be reactivated and its work should be made more effective and meaningful. The Council should at last emerge from its current state of inertia.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.