



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Fiftieth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Monday, 17 May 1971,
at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. Rachid DRISS (Tunisia).

AGENDA ITEM 16

Measures to improve the organization of the work of the Council (continued)* (E/4986 and Add.1-7, E/L.1382, E/L.1408, E/(L)/CRP.1)

1. The PRESIDENT announced that the time-limit which had been set for the submission of draft resolutions on the present item was lifted.

2. Mr. MARAMIS (Indonesia) said the very fact that the Council was considering the question of improving its work bore witness to the dynamic changes which were taking place and the need for institutional and organizational reforms. No fields had expanded more than those that were of concern to the Council, and the time had come to redefine the Council's functions. Under the Charter, the Economic and Social Council was a forum for the discussion and formulation of broad economic and social policies. It was a co-ordinator of the activities of the United Nations system in the economic, social and human rights fields and also a governing body for activities in those fields carried out by the United Nations itself.

3. It seemed that, on the whole, delegations were agreed that there was a need to strengthen the central role of the Council. That role had gradually changed over the years because the number of organs had multiplied and the Council's task of co-ordination had therefore become increasingly complex. Moreover, as a result of the emergence of autonomous programmes with their own decision-making authority, the Council's responsibility was not so great. Consequently, its role might be reduced to that of a co-ordinator of other organs. Again, there were now a number of matters of a multidisciplinary nature such as the issues of natural resources, the environment and population, which required an integrated approach.

4. Many suggestions and proposals had been made with a view to improving the organization of the work of the Council, including in particular an improved level of documentation, so as to make documents more concise and analytical, and a recommendation that reports to and from the Council should be brief, concrete and contain specific recommendations. In addition, the agenda should be simplified. Generally speaking, in the work of reorganization any repetition or duplication caused by the agenda should be avoided.

5. In his view, the summer session of the Council should be broadened to include consideration of social questions,

* Resumed from the 1761st meeting.

for the economic and the social fields were interrelated. Furthermore, a number of functional commissions met immediately before or even during the Council's spring session. Their reports did not therefore reach the Council in sufficient time to enable it to consider some matters in the spring. Lastly, attendance at the summer session was often at a higher level of representation.

6. Like many others, his delegation considered that it would be advantageous to increase the membership of the Council. The difficulties in that regard should not be insurmountable. Meanwhile, efforts could be made to increase the co-operation between members and non-members, for example at sessional meetings or in working groups.

7. The Council had a role to play in the Second United Nations Development Decade, for it would have to direct the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy—an enormous task, but one which gave it the opportunity of playing its true part in development as a whole.

8. He supported the proposal contained in draft resolution E/L.1382 that the Council should draw up and submit to the General Assembly a list of questions on which it was empowered to take a final decision. The adoption of that proposal would make it possible to affirm the Council's autonomy and its authority in particular areas.

9. It should be stressed that co-ordination was not an end in itself, but a means of carrying out policy. The Council's first responsibility was to set that policy, and that should be borne in mind when attempting to balance the Council's various functions.

10. The Council should endeavour to reach a consensus on areas for short-term action and present them to the fifty-first session. It might not yet be in a position to take a decision on long-term measures, but it would be useful to undertake the preparatory work by means of informal discussions and negotiations before the fifty-first session.

11. Mr. BUSH (United States of America) said that the statements made so far had shed light on the challenges which the Economic and Social Council had to meet if it wished to become an effective force for leadership in the Second Development Decade. It was encouraging to note that the discussion had taken place in a particularly constructive atmosphere. The statements made both by members of the Secretariat and by representatives were witness to that fact.

12. His delegation had an open mind on the question of enlargement of the Council. At all events, his delegation would see merit in considering enlargement of the Council

provided that such enlargement was accompanied by a firm determination that the enlarged Council would indeed assume the role of leadership and co-ordination provided for in the Charter. It should also be clearly stated that any enlargement was envisaged solely to strengthen the work of the Council and not to encourage the enlargement of other United Nations bodies. Under those conditions, his delegation would be ready to give the question the most serious consideration.

13. The Council must play the role assigned to it in the Charter as the principal organ under the General Assembly responsible for directing and co-ordinating all activities of the United Nations in the social and economic field, and it was his hope that the Council would be able to proceed quickly with detailed programmes and actions to reassert its authority.

14. But even before such long-term decisions were taken, the members of the Council should in some way make a down payment by taking interim measures as an unequivocal token of their political will to make the Council the right arm of the General Assembly. They should envisage the establishment of subsidiary bodies to deal with the issues of review and appraisal of the Strategy, and of science and technology. Such bodies could in the short run have a larger membership than that of the Council.

15. In his view, failure to adopt such early measures might raise serious doubts as to the need to consider changes in the Council itself since, in all probability, the altered body would be no more concerned with fundamental matters than it was at the present time.

16. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece), introducing draft resolution E/L.1408, said that it was primarily concerned with marginal questions—the “down payment” referred to by the United States representative—and the more fundamental questions were left for the summer session.

17. The preamble of the draft reaffirmed the role and the functions of the Council, recalled the task it was to carry out in the Second Development Decade and stressed that great importance must be attached to the definition of priorities. In the last preambular paragraph, the words “in particular” should be replaced by the word “including”. In addition, the words “are required” should be replaced by “seem to be required in order”.

18. The first operative part dealt with the work programme of the Council. Paragraph 2 (c) stated that, in alternate years, the summer session would devote itself to the question of the implementation of the International Development Strategy. In other words, an appraisal of the Strategy would be made every two years. The brief resumed session envisaged in paragraph 2 (d) would facilitate the consideration of certain matters such as the report of the IBRD or IMF.

19. Part II dealt with the Council’s agenda and prescribed some concrete measures for simplifying it.

20. Part III, which concerned documentation, outlined measures intended to facilitate the Council’s work. Paragraph 4 stated that the Council considered that it was

desirable to eliminate the present exceptions to the rule that the functional commissions should meet biennially. He knew that some delegations objected to that rule, often for political reasons. Paragraph 6 reaffirmed the so-called “six-week rule” provided for in rule 14 (4) of the Council’s rules of procedure.

21. Part IV provided that the consideration of changes in the structure of the Council and its committees should be deferred to the fifty-first session. The sponsors had attempted to deal only with marginal questions and to leave the options open on such matters as the enlargement of the Council.

22. Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand), speaking as a co-sponsor of draft resolution E/L.1408, said that the draft attempted to distinguish between short-term and long-term measures since the long-term measures, unlike the others, had proved to be somewhat controversial. The Council should take a step towards adopting the more important measures by unanimously adopting the draft resolution.

23. Operative paragraph 3 of part II should not be interpreted as preventing the exercise of the right to speak on questions relating to human rights which delegations felt to be important. The exception referred to in operative paragraph 4 of part III was, as everyone knew, the Commission on Human Rights. The paragraph meant that the Council would regard it as desirable to eliminate that exception, but not take any concrete action. The sponsors were not trying to deny that the Commission on Human Rights played an important role; they merely wished to organize the work of the Council and the Assembly as effectively as possible on a biennial basis. If that paragraph were adopted, the Third Committee would have a lighter workload. It would not depend so much on the Commission and would deal with certain questions itself.

24. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), introducing draft resolution E/L.1382, said that that draft was based on the practical experience gained by the General Assembly and the Council over the past 25 years, as reflected in the resolutions referred to in the preamble. It was also based on the need for strict observance of the basic principles of the Charter and for practical action based on those principles. It was for that reason that the preamble referred to Chapter IX of the Charter, which specified that the General Assembly and, under its authority, the Economic and Social Council were responsible for the development of economic and social co-operation. The preamble also referred to Chapter X of the Charter, which required the Economic and Social Council to play a key role within the United Nations system in the economic, social and human rights fields. By introducing a more rational order into the consideration of economic and social and scientific and technological questions confronting the Organization, the draft resolution sought to solve a serious practical problem. It aimed at striking a better balance between the spheres of activity of the Assembly and the Council. One of the most important operative paragraphs was paragraph 4, which called the attention of the Council to the need for greater precision and efficiency in the exercise of its functions and powers, particularly those defined in Article 63 of the Charter. In paragraph 5, the Assembly instructed the Council to prepare and submit to it proposals concerning effective measures to remedy present shortcomings.

25. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that his delegation had some fears and misgivings about adopting measures which had not been given adequate consideration. The General Assembly had on a number of occasions called into question decisions which had been agreed upon by groups of countries. It was important that doubt should not be cast on decisions taken on a question as vital as the one under consideration.

26. The body to which States Members of the United Nations attached the most importance in the economic field and the one most whole-heartedly supported by the developing countries since its creation was the Trade and Development Board, which had 55 members, or about twice as many as the Council. Despite its relatively large membership, the Trade and Development Board had been very active since its inception. The Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade had been at least equally popular with the Group of Seventy-seven. It had served a really useful purpose in drawing up the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade, and it too had had about twice as many members as the Council. The Council's performance during the same period had, by comparison, been rather lacklustre. It was tempting to conclude that all that was needed to give new vitality to the Council was to increase its membership, as had been done in 1963 when the number of Council members had been raised from 18 to 27. The results of that increase had, however, been disappointing. Enlarging the membership of a body was not a cure-all. The vitality of the Trade and Development Board and the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade appeared not to depend mainly on their size, but rather on the nature of the questions they dealt with; they were concrete questions which brought into play key ideas on economic and social matters.

27. If that was indeed the case, the reforms to be undertaken should turn on the kind of problem to be considered by the Council. As the representative of the United States of America had said, the Council should be officially assigned the role of examining the machinery for evaluating the results of the Second Development Decade. That was at present the most important and urgent question for the developing countries. It could be argued that if agreement was reached on the establishment of subsidiary committees with enlarged membership, the question of enlarging the Council would become secondary. There could be one Committee to evaluate the results of the Decade and another on the application of science and technology to development. The natural result of establishing such enlarged committees and of confirming the mandate of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development might be to enlarge the membership of the Council itself. However, he felt that the idea of establishing committees directly under the General Assembly would have to be abandoned. A sensible agreement to expand the role and membership of the Council's subsidiary bodies might actually strengthen the prestige and effectiveness of the Council itself. He hoped that measures to restructure the Council could be brought under study in the near future.

28. In view of the foregoing considerations, his delegation wished to see some changes made in the draft resolution

submitted by Greece and New Zealand (E/L.1408). The Greek representative had already read out an amendment to the last preambular paragraph. If, in addition, the sponsors really wished to press for examination of the problem rather than a solution, it would be easier to arrive at a text which all could accept. Moreover, the proposal in question related more to form than to substance. The sponsors of the draft resolution proposed that consideration of the question of changes in the structure of the Council and that of its committees should be deferred until the fifty-first session. His delegation supported that idea, since it considered that all aspects of that question should be reviewed simultaneously and as a whole. It regretted, however, that the sponsors had confined themselves to mentioning the committees of the Council. Mention should also be made of advisory bodies such as the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development. It would be in the interests of the sponsors to broaden their formula to encompass all the subsidiary bodies of the Council.

29. The rule that the functional commissions should meet biennially should, of course, be reaffirmed, but the Council should first find out the reactions of its members. Some might want to retain, in certain cases, the practice of annual sessions.

30. His delegation considered that the draft resolution submitted by the USSR (E/L.1382) contained many ideas worth retaining. The Council was to some extent the servant of the General Assembly and it should prepare the way for the Assembly's deliberations in such a way as to direct its attention to the most important questions. That meant that all important subjects should first be considered by the Council. The General Assembly was a sovereign body and the members of the Council neither could nor wanted to encroach upon its sovereignty. However, it should not be forgotten that the proposed measures would be of no value unless they were approved by the Assembly and that a subsequent session of the Assembly could always reverse decisions made by the previous one.

31. The Council could make use of the two draft resolutions before it by taking what was best in each of them; that would enable it to reach a decision that would make a great contribution towards improving the organization of the work of the Council and its effectiveness.

32. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had received with interest the draft resolution submitted by Greece and New Zealand (E/L.1408). The text in question was based in part on the principles of the Charter. However, it provided for some specific measures to improve the work of the Council which went in a different direction from the Charter. His delegation therefore endorsed all the provisions of the draft resolution which were directly derived from the Charter but could not accept those which departed from it.

33. The last preambular paragraph of draft resolution E/L.1408 stated that longer-term measures, in particular measures to increase the membership of the Council, were required to strengthen the representative character, the authority and the dynamism of the Council. Similarly, operative paragraph 1 of part IV clearly indicated that the

sponsors intended to change the membership of the Council. When such radical changes were proposed, convincing arguments should be given in support of them. However, none had been given. In his statement at the 1735th meeting of the Council, the Pakistan representative had spoken on behalf of the developing countries, but it was clear that the developing countries were not unanimous on the question. An enlargement of the Council which was not based on solid arguments would reflect only a vague impulse towards generosity. The strength of the United Nations during the past 25 years had lain in the fact that all delegations had collaborated on the basis of the main principles of the Charter. The decision in the Charter that the General Assembly was to be the principal organ and would consist of all the Members of the United Nations and that the Council would have only 18 members, a figure which had since been increased to 27, had not been arrived at by accident. A very important question of principle was, in fact, involved. Some delegations were trying to provoke an artificial confrontation between the Assembly and the Council. Whereas all Member States were represented in the General Assembly, the Council, which consisted of 27 members, represented the regional groups and took account of regional problems when formulating proposals. The Council's proposals were then transmitted to the Assembly, where the representatives of Member States considered them in relation to their national interests. That was a reasonable principle set out in the Charter. Such a dialectical contradiction made it possible to ensure that decisions were worked out in a reasonable manner. The enlargement of the membership of the Council would result in a decrease in the responsibility of its members towards the regional groups. His delegation agreed with the French representative's statement that the effectiveness of a body did not depend on the number of its members. During the first session of the Committee on Natural Resources, whose membership had been increased to 38, it had been noted that one third of the seats had been unoccupied. The enlargement of that Committee might explain in part why the results achieved had been inadequate. The weakening of the responsibility of the members towards the regional groups had led to a decrease in the quality of the work done by that body.

34. As to operative paragraph 1 of part II of draft resolution E/L.1408, his delegation feared that a simplified agenda might be detrimental to the Council's activities and might weaken its role. As to paragraph 3, under which consideration of the reports of the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women should be confined to the specific recommendations addressed to the Council, his delegation was astonished that a discriminatory attitude was being taken with regard to very important bodies. His delegation also failed to understand why, in paragraph 5 of part II and paragraph 1 of part III, the sponsors had felt it necessary to assign a more important role to the Secretary-General than to the Council itself.

35. Moreover, in accordance with operative paragraph 3 of part III, the reports of subsidiary bodies were to contain a concise summary of recommendations; those reports would have no substance whatsoever if they did not mention the views of delegations. As to paragraph 4 of part III, the current exceptions to the rule that the functional commis-

sions should meet biennially could not be eliminated abruptly, in view of the current nature of those commissions.

36. His delegation hoped that the sponsors of draft resolution E/L.1408 would either amend their text in the light of the observations made during the debate or agree not to put it to the vote.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries (*continued*)* (E/4798, E/4820 and Corr.1 and Summary, E/4820 and Add.1 and Corr.1, E/L.1379/Rev.1, E/L.1409, E/L.1412)

37. Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon) introduced draft resolution E/L.1412, prepared by the Working Group which had been requested to prepare a new draft resolution on the basis of the two earlier draft resolutions (E/L.1379/Rev.1 and E/L.1409).

38. He pointed out that the new draft resolution combined some of the provisions of the preceding two draft resolutions. In view of the spirit of compromise which had already been shown by the delegations concerned, he hoped that the Council would be able to approve the text unanimously.

39. Mr. OSMAN (Sudan) thanked the representative of Lebanon and the members of the Working Group for their work in preparing a new text.

40. His delegation, which unfortunately had been unable to participate in the Working Group's discussions, was not satisfied with the wording of operative paragraphs 3 (*e*) and 5. There was insufficient emphasis on the role which the developed countries should play in support of the efforts of the developing countries, especially under paragraphs 62 and 64 of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV)). Nor was enough importance given to the aid which developed countries should give to developing countries in establishing scientific and technical research centres in an attempt to bridge the existing gap between those countries in science and technology and to encourage scientists and trained personnel from the developing countries to return to their countries.

41. His delegation would therefore request a separate vote on operative paragraphs 3 (*e*) and 5 unless the present wording was changed.

42. Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon) drew the attention of the representative of Sudan to the fact that operative paragraph 3 (*e*) was intended to encourage Governments of the developing countries to set up their own programmes to put an end to the outflow of technicians and trained personnel, to improve their teaching and research facilities, and request the technical assistance which they needed for that purpose. The wording of the subparagraph was also

* Resumed from the 1763rd meeting.

designed to satisfy certain members of the Working Group who were concerned about ensuring a balance between the provisions of operative paragraphs 3 and 4.

43. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the members of the Working Group for their work in reconciling the various points of view. He wished, however, to suggest several minor changes.

44. First, the exact terminology to be used in drafting operative paragraph 2 (a) in the various languages was not yet clear, and should be specified.

45. Also, in operative paragraph 3 (e) it was inappropriate to speak of agencies "in the United Nations system", since those agencies did not provide technical assistance directly, but worked through the Council.

46. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) said that his delegation appreciated the spirit of co-operation which had prevailed in the Working Group, but regretted that a number of important provisions had been omitted from the text before the Council. Operative paragraph 2 (a) seemed pointless to his delegation, since the study in question would serve very little purpose. As for paragraph 2 (b), it was the responsibility of the Economic and Social Council to guide the Secretary-General in that matter.

47. The recommendations to the governments of developing countries in operative paragraphs 3 (a) and 3 (c) also served no purpose, since the measures which they mentioned had already been taken. His delegation had already had occasion to observe that as long as development remained stagnant, the outflow of trained personnel from developing countries would continue. Many investors, in order to protect their investments in developing countries, called foreign specialists into their firms instead of using qualified local personnel. One of the main causes of the outflow of trained personnel from the developing countries was, of course, that those countries could not offer high salaries.

48. A major shortcoming of the draft resolution was that it provided for no specific measures to eliminate the outflow of trained personnel. His delegation therefore wished to submit amendments at the next meeting.

49. Mr. ANTOINE (Haiti) said that in the French text, the term "*hommes de science*" would be more appropriate than "*scientifiques*". His delegation also regretted that the draft resolution, although it was a good synthesis of the two previous draft resolutions, made no mention of the efforts which the developing countries were making to hold onto the scientists and researchers who had been trained in their countries.

50. He endorsed the remarks of the representatives of Kenya and the Sudan.

51. Mr. DUNN (United States of America) said that the Working Group had performed a difficult job successfully and that his delegation supported the draft resolution as it stood. It had reservations, however, concerning the financial implications of operative paragraph 2 (b). It

thought that the Council should vote as soon as possible on draft resolution E/L.1412.

52. The PRESIDENT asked whether the members of the Council preferred to vote immediately on the draft resolution or to wait until the amendments which had been announced had been submitted.

53. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) agreed with the representative of the United States that the Council should vote on the draft resolution at once. If necessary, it could first vote separately on some paragraphs.

54. Mr. OSMAN (Sudan) said that although the Council's time was precious, the question of the outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries was too important to be resolved hastily. In operative paragraph 3 (e), his delegation wished to propose that the word "obtain" should be replaced by the word "seek". It also proposed that operative paragraph 5 should be amended to read:

"Calls upon developed countries, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the various organs, commissions and agencies in the United Nations system to assist developing countries to establish scientific and technological research centres, at both the national and the regional level."

55. Mr. DE AZEVEDO BRITO (Brazil) urged the Council not to vote on the draft resolution until it had the text of the amendments of the representative of Kenya, which raised very important points.

56. Mr. ANTOINE (Haiti) recalled that when France had submitted a late amendment in the Council two sessions previously, it had been decided not to consider it. Perhaps, therefore, there was no reason to postpone the vote in the present case. If a vote was taken, however, his delegation would abstain.

57. Mr. GROS (France) said that his delegation had no fundamental objection to the Council allowing the representative of Kenya a short period of time to submit his amendments. However, some of the amendments that had been suggested, by the Sudan in particular, seemed unacceptable, since they called into question the consensus which the Working Group had arrived at with some difficulty.

58. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development was studying the question of local training of skilled personnel, which was a costly but none the less effective project, as it made it possible to keep such personnel in the countries where they were trained.

59. If the majority of the members of the Council were in favour of an immediate vote, his delegation would not object.

60. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) thanked the representative of Brazil for his support. His delegation would be grateful if

the Council would agree to wait for his amendments, which related to operative paragraph 3.

61. The PRESIDENT said that the Council would authorize the representative of Kenya to submit his amendments at the next meeting, at which it would vote on draft

resolution E/L.1412. He set Tuesday, 18 May, at 11 a.m. as the final deadline for the submission of formal amendments to the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.