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Synthesis Group Meeting
17-27 February 1981
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteurs: F. DAGHESTANI (Jordan)
W. CHARTERS (Australia)

Chapter ____ ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening of the session

1. In accordance with decisions 2 (II) and 3 (II) of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, 1/ and taking into consideration paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 35/204 of 16 December 1980, the Synthesis Group met at United Nations Headquarters from 17 to 27 February 1981.

2. The session was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy. In addition, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference addressed the opening meeting.

B. Membership and attendance

3. The session was attended by the members of the Synthesis Group, who had been invited by the Secretary-General of the Conference to attend in their capacity as individual experts, and by representatives of various concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as by observers from other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. For the list of participants, see annex I to the present report.

1/ A/35/43 (Part II), sect. VII.

C. Election of officers

4. At the opening meeting, the Synthesis Group elected the following officers:

Chairman: L. JAWARDENA (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen: I. CISSE (Senegal)
C. THAM (Sweden)

Rapporteurs: F. DAGHESTANI (Jordan)
W. CHARTERS (Australia)

D. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Synthesis Group considered and adopted the following draft provisional agenda (SYN/I/1):

1. Opening of the session
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy with a view to contributing to meeting future over-all energy requirements, especially those of developing countries
5. Assessment of the potential for the exploration, development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy:
 - (a) Technologies currently available and prospects for the future;
 - (b) Comparative technical and economic analysis of these technologies;
 - (c) Potential for the utilization of new and renewable sources of energy;
 - (d) Social and environmental considerations
6. Identification of measures necessary for the exploration, development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy with regard to:
 - (a) Financing;
 - (b) Information flows;
 - (c) Research and development and transfer of technology;
 - (d) Education and training;
 - (e) Others

7. Sectoral issues related to the exploration, development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy:
 - (a) Rural energy, including the utilization of energy in agriculture;
 - (b) Industrial issues, including the utilization of energy in transportation and allied sectors;
 - (c) Others
8. Recommendations to promote the development and utilization of new and renewable sources of energy
9. Adoption of the report.

E. Documentation

6. As requested in decision 2 (II) of the Preparatory Committee, the Synthesis Group based its work on the reports of the eight Technical Panels and six Ad Hoc Groups of Experts which had been established by the Secretary-General to assist in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Resources 2/ and which had met during the preceding months. The Group also had before it a draft version of the synthesis of the reports of the Technical Panels, 3/ which had been prepared by the Conference secretariat for submission to the Preparatory Committee, and a draft synthesis document of 16 February 1981 (non-symbol document) which had been prepared by the secretariat as the basic working paper for the Synthesis Group. For a list of the documents before the Synthesis Group, see annex II to the present report.

F. Opening statements

7. In his introductory statement, the Secretary-General of the Conference thanked the participants for their willingness to assist the preparations for the Conference. He recalled that much work had been accomplished in recent months in preparation for the Conference, which dealt with a subject currently of fundamental concern to all Governments. He noted that during the past decade it had become generally recognized that conventional energy resources were being rapidly depleted; that the relatively brief period of cheap energy had come to an end; and that energy problems threatened to place a particularly severe burden on developing countries, especially on the traditional sectors of their economies.

8. The Secretary-General noted that the decision to convene the Conference, contained in General Assembly resolution 33/148 of 20 December 1978, was one of

2/ See resolution 2 (II) of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy.

3/ To be issued as A/CONF.100/PC/42.

several initiatives taken by the United Nations in recent years to consider the many implications of future energy supply and use throughout the world, and the need for a transition to new energy patterns. He stated that, while the transition was both essential and practicable, it would be more complex than similar changes in the past and would take different forms in different countries. Everywhere, however, greater efficiency in the use of energy was essential.

9. While emphasizing that one of the major tasks of the Conference was to examine the nature of the transition to new energy patterns, the Secretary-General noted that the problems and needs of developing countries required equal consideration. Energy policy had to be regarded as an integral part of national development strategies, which meant that energy policy might become more of a driving force for development than it had been in the past. In his view, the Conference was likely to concentrate on five major tasks: (a) increasing general awareness and understanding of the need for a global energy transition; (b) increasing knowledge of the energy resources, technologies and strategies available to national Governments; (c) definition of short-term needs (especially those related to the fuelwood crisis in developing countries) and long-term research and development on new and renewable sources of energy; (d) stimulation of international co-operation in the transfer of new technologies; (e) promotion of a major co-ordinated response by the United Nations system. In conclusion, he stated that the work of the Synthesis Group should provide a solid foundation for the Conference in all those areas.

10. The Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference then addressed the Group. He thanked those Governments that had contributed to the strengthening of the Conference secretariat in recent months. Emphasizing that the measure of success by which the Conference would ultimately be judged was the content of the programme of action that it would adopt, he noted that the Synthesis Group was a bridge between the technical and other detailed preparatory investigation that had been undertaken and the development of the programme of action by the Preparatory Committee at its forthcoming sessions. The Committee was anxious to hear bold, informed and constructive views from the Synthesis Group, oriented towards desirable and feasible proposals. In conclusion, the Chairman stressed that the Conference would be an important test of the ability of the United Nations to contribute to the solution of a vitally important problem that was universal in character and had technical, scientific, social, economic and political dimensions.

G. Review of the draft synthesis document

11. The draft synthesis document of 16 February 1981 (non-symbol document) was briefly introduced by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, who explained that it represented an abbreviated synthesis of the reports from the Technical Panels, Ad Hoc Groups of Experts and consultants (see annex II to the present report). It was pointed out that all those reports would go forward as individual documents to the Preparatory Committee and the Conference. A separate, and more detailed, summary of the work of the Technical Panels had been prepared for the Preparatory Committee by the secretariat and draft copies of that summary had been made available to the Synthesis Group for its information. 3/ The draft synthesis document was to be regarded only as a working paper for the Synthesis Group; the Group should alter or restructure it to whatever extent was appropriate.