



Thirteenth session  
Item 7

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL UNDER  
COUNCIL RESOLUTION 345 (XII) RELATING  
TO CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION  
OF NON-AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Report by the Secretary-General

1. At its twelfth session the Economic and Social Council adopted a two-part resolution, 345 (XII), dealing with international action for the conservation and utilization of non-agricultural resources. In Part A the Council requested the Secretary-General "to initiate a programme designed to promote the systematic survey and inventory of non-agricultural natural resources". In Part B the Secretary-General was authorized to undertake, upon the request of Member States, explorations with respect to the holding of international conferences on particular resources or resource problems. This report is the first to be submitted in accordance with the Council's request that the Secretary-General furnish to each session a statement of specific plans and the action taken.

Part A. The Survey and Inventory of Non-Agricultural Resources

2. With respect to Part A of the resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to initiate a programme including

- "(i) The development and improvement of standard concepts, terminology in various languages, methods and procedures useful for the survey and inventory of specific types of non-agricultural natural resources;
- (ii) The systematic compilation, at United Nations Headquarters or other suitable places, of information embodying the results of surveys and inventories of particular non-agricultural natural resources on the basis of the examination of published data and data furnished by governments;"

In selecting the resources to be considered, the Secretary-General deems it proper, in view of the preamble to the resolution, to give priority to resources which are

fundamental for economic development. The non-agricultural resources with which the resolution is concerned comprehend both water resources and mineral resources. With regard to water resources, it is believed that the need for systematic survey and inventory activities and the development and improvement of standard concepts and terminology may best be clarified following the preparation of the report on international co-operation in the field of water control and utilization requested by resolution 346 (XII) which it is expected will be submitted to the fifteenth session of the Council.

3. With regard to mineral resources it is proposed to select iron ore as the first resource for study chiefly because it is one of the most important non-agricultural resources basic to economic development, but also because certain of the necessary preparatory work has already been undertaken by the United Nations.<sup>1/</sup>

It is planned that the work on iron ore should, in the light of paragraphs 1 (a) and (b) of Part A of Resolution 345 (XII), comprise the following major steps:

- (a) preparatory work including the compilation of a preliminary inventory of this resource and a study of the survey methods and definitions in use with respect to it;
- (b) the convening by the Secretary-General of a group of experts, to whom the preparatory materials would be presented, so that they may prepare recommendations regarding desirable methods and definitions for future survey and inventory work;
- (c) the circulation of these recommendations for review by member governments (consultations with scientific societies would also be desirable at this point); and
- (d) the review of any comments made by member governments and the final formulation by the Secretary-General of standards to be presented to the Economic and Social Council as suitable for international use; and
- (e) consideration by the Council.

4. It is expected that the recommendations prepared by the group of experts would cover improved procedures and definitions to be used in the description of

<sup>1/</sup> See World Iron Resources and Their Utilization, document ST/ECA/6, 25 August 1950.

deposits of iron ore - including techniques for determining the amounts of ore in the deposits and relevant geological, physical, and chemical aspects of the deposits and other factors which influence the extraction and commercial usefulness of the ore. Recommendations would also be sought concerning the characteristic features of deposits which should be presented in both national and international totals as well as classifications and definitions to be employed for the description of iron ore production, beneficiation and trade.

5. It is expected that the preparatory activity will include work of the following types:

- (a) A review of the different forms in which the particular resource appears in nature and a review of the different forms in which the resource is currently being utilized and may be expected to be utilized in the near future on the basis of pending improvements in technology or pending economic developments such as depletion of rich ores or expansion of demand.
- (b) A compilation of existing knowledge of the particular resource in the form of a preliminary inventory.
- (c) A summary of the principal variations which exist in the statistics employed to report on the particular resource.
- (d) An examination of survey methods currently being employed, including, if possible, data on the costs of different methods of survey.
- (e) Proposals for improved procedures and definitions for both individual surveys and inventory statistics. Standards would be proposed with respect to actual surveying methods wherever it was felt that such standards were necessary or useful.

6. Accordingly, the Secretary-General would convene a group of experts to participate in the programme of work in respect of iron ore resources. In selecting the experts the Secretary-General will have regard to the desirability of having members with technical, economic, or practical developmental experience and will seek to associate with the experts' work the resources and experience of technical institutions or learned societies engaged in this field. The completion of the preparatory work described above and its examination by the experts will, it is planned, be completed in 1952. It is also hoped that the group of experts might meet to consider the preparatory material and the formulation of recommendations in 1952, perhaps concurrently with the 1952 session of the International Geological Congress if this is found convenient.

/7. It is further



7. It is further proposed to explore during 1951 whether and for what other mineral resources a need exists for similar work. At present the resources which, because of their important basic role in economic development, appear most appropriate for the future work programme are the mineral fuels and fertilizers, and it is planned to study the need for projects in these fields. It is believed that it would be helpful in connexion with this exploration and study to secure suggestions and relevant statistical and technical materials, which may be available from scientific and technical organizations and to consult with individual experts in accordance with the provisions for consultations which are contained in Part A, paragraph 1 (b) of the resolution. It is therefore proposed to canvass such organizations and a number of individual experts regarding the suitability of work on these additional resources. Following these consultations it is expected that proposals for further work on minerals will be presented to a subsequent session of the Council.

#### Part B. International Conferences on Resources

8. With respect to Part B of the resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General in sub-paragraph 1 (a) "To explore, at the request of Member States concerned ... the scope and specific subject matter of any particular resource conferences that may, upon appropriate investigation, appear desirable;". No activities have been carried out under this sub-paragraph inasmuch as no requests for particular conferences have been received from Member States.

9. In paragraph 2 of Part B of the resolution, the Council requested "the regional economic commissions to consider the present resolution and to make such recommendations as they deem would be useful in promoting its purposes".

10. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, in its seventh session held at Lahore on 28 February to 7 March 1951, did not have the opportunity to consider the resolution. However, in a resolution adopted on 3 March 1951, (E/CN.11/296), which antedated the Council's adoption of resolution 345 (XII), it expressed "its keen interest in the programme on the conservation and utilization of non-agricultural resources and on conferences on resources problems, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (E/1906) and approved by the Economic Committee of the Economic and Social Council on 22 February 1951;" and then requested "the Executive Secretary, in co-operation with the United Nations Headquarters, to take



any such steps in connexion with the programme as may be required by the Council's resolutions;"

11. The Economic Commission for Latin America, in its fourth session, considered Council resolution 345 (XII) and recommended "that in planning conferences of this nature, the Secretary-General take into consideration points 1 to 10 suggested by the Executive Secretary in his Note on Measures Relating to International Action for Conservation and Utilization of Non-Agricultural Resources (E/CN.12/231)". (See Annex I).

12. The Economic Commission for Europe, in its sixth session, took note of the action of the Council and requested its technical Committees and the Executive Secretary to take account of the Council's resolution on the conservation and utilization of non-agricultural resources.

13. No action by the Secretary-General is required in respect of these decisions.

#### Financial implications

14. The Secretary-General considers that the expenditures required in 1951 and 1952 to carry out the proposals described in Part A of this report can be absorbed within the resources available in 1951 and in the budget estimates he has proposed for 1952. Therefore, unless the Council has other suggestions, it might merely take note of this report. As required by resolution 345 (XII) further reports will be submitted to each session of the Council.

ANNEX I

Points suggested by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America in the Note on "Measures in Relation to International Action for Conservation and Utilization of Non-Agricultural Resources" (E/CN.12/231)

1. Iron ore resources and their utilization for the development of local iron and steel industries
2. Possibilities for the expanded domestic use of petroleum by economically under-developed petroleum producing areas
3. Possibilities of use of low grade coals and lignite
4. Improvements in the methods of preparation of mineral products
  - (a) Sulphur from volcanic deposits;
  - (b) Low grade apatites and phosphate bearing rocks;
  - (c) Low grade manganese ores;
  - (d) Sodium, potassium and miscellaneous saline compounds, etc.
5. The availability and use of local resources to meet fertilizer requirements
6. Possibilities for a comparative and integrated study of mining codes
7. Mineral resources survey and appraisal techniques
8. Expanded use of local resources for building materials
9. The development of energy resources in relation to one another and in relation to general economic development
10. The integrated development of river and lake basins