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Chairman: Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal)

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

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council *(continued)*

Draft resolution on public administration and development (A/C.2/56/L.42)

1. **Mr. Mbayu** (Cameroon), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.42 and recommended its adoption by consensus.

2. *Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.42 was adopted.*

3. **Ms. Shimo** (Japan) said that her delegation had supported the resolution on the understanding that it had no programme budget implications. The Secretariat should keep Member States well informed of developments in the area of public administration, pursuant to paragraph 5 of that resolution.

Agenda item 95: Macroeconomic policy questions *(continued)*

(a) Trade and development *(continued)*

Draft resolutions on macroeconomic policy questions: trade and development (A/C.2/56/L.35, L.38 and L.49)

4. **Mr. Mbayu** (Cameroon), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.49, which had been drafted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.35, and L.38, and recommended its adoption by consensus.

5. **Ms. Kelley** (Secretary of the Committee), speaking on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.49, said that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Trade and Development Board would hold a special session in Bangkok from 29 April to 3 May 2002 to carry out the mid-term review. That session would consist of two meetings a day for a duration of five days. Interpretation would be provided in all six official languages, and 100 pages of pre-session, 30 pages of in-session, and 50 pages of post-session documentation would be processed also in the six languages. Conference-servicing requirements at full cost were estimated at \$287,200.

6. The extent to which the Organization's permanent capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance could be determined only in light of the

calendar of conferences and meetings for the 2002-2003 biennium. Provision was made, however, under section 2 (Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services) of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings were consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years. Consequently, should the General Assembly approve the recommendations contained in the draft resolution, no additional appropriations would be required for conference servicing in the biennium 2002-2003.

7. In accordance with the headquarters principle embodied in General Assembly resolution 40/243, the special session of the Trade and Development Board should take place in Geneva. Under the terms of paragraph 5 of the same resolution, however, United Nations bodies might hold sessions away from their established headquarters on the understanding that any additional costs directly or indirectly involved in holding the meeting away from such headquarters would be borne by the host Government, in the current case Thailand. Consequently, should the General Assembly approve the recommendations contained in draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.49, no additional provisions were expected to be required in the biennial programme budget for 2002-2003.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.49 was adopted.*

9. *Draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.35 and L.38 were withdrawn.*

Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development *(continued)*

(e) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States *(continued)*

Draft resolution on further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/C.2/56/L.16/Rev.1 and L.53)

10. **Mr. Djumala** (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.53, which had been drafted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.16/Rev.1, and recommended its adoption by consensus.

11. *Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.53 was adopted.*

12. Draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.16/Rev.1 was withdrawn.

(b) International strategy for disaster reduction

Draft resolution on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/C.2/56/L.15)

13. **The Chairman** announced that Canada and the United States had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Organization of work (continued)

14. **The Chairman** expressed serious concern at the fact that the Committee, which should have completed its work at the current meeting, still had 22 draft resolutions pending, with one yet to be formally submitted. Noting that the coming week would be extremely busy and that the Committee was scheduled to hold its last plenary meeting on 12 December, he urged all delegations to be flexible and expedite negotiations on all drafts, and to consider holding informal consultations during the weekend. Since the Fifth Committee was scheduled to complete its work on 16 December, all draft resolutions with programme budget implications must be adopted before that date. In any case, he would inform the President of the General Assembly that, in his view, there was no question of holding a resumed session. He did understand that some reports, particularly the report on the least developed countries (A/56/645 and Add.1 and Corr.1) had been issued very late. Consequently, the draft resolution on that subject was still under consideration by the regional group concerned. There were also some programme budget implications to be considered.

15. **Mr. Mbayu** (Cameroon), Vice-Chairman, reported that agreement had been reached with respect to the draft resolutions on economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (A/C.2/56/L.14) and on the high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (A/C.2/56/L.22). The main problem was the draft resolution on least developed countries, which was supposed to have been submitted on 5 December 2001. While it was true that the relevant report had been issued late, further complicating negotiations on an already complicated

but important topic, greater flexibility on the part of all delegations would enable the Committee to move forward. He therefore appealed to all those concerned, particularly the 37 least developed countries, to do their utmost to produce a draft on which the Committee could start working on 10 December.

16. **Mr. Zarie Zare** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, requested an extension of the deadline for the submission of the draft resolution on least developed countries until Monday, 10 December 2001.

17. **Mr. Traub** (United States of America) said that, while his delegation was very sympathetic to the Group of 77 and China, particularly the least developed countries, it was very concerned that the Second Committee was being asked not only to extend the deadline on a particular agenda item but also to extend the deadline for the entire work of the Committee. That had serious implications for the United Nations budget as well as serious personal implications for the Secretariat staff and for delegations. It made his delegation uncomfortable, as a matter of principle and as a matter of substance, that a subject so important to so many countries should be raised in an incomplete manner on the last day of the Committee's work. Serious and careful attention could not be given to such an important item with only one day of negotiations, especially given the differences of opinion across such a wide spectrum of countries. As far as working during the weekend was concerned, he was sure that there would be problems with organizing any formal meetings.

18. **Mr. Ramsden** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that he shared the previous speaker's concerns and was opposed to the holding of weekend meetings; the Committee should be able to complete its work in the time allotted.

19. **Mr. Goffin** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, noted that, whereas the Committee had planned to complete its work a week ahead of schedule, delegations were now being asked to agree to finish a week late. The fault lay not with the Bureau or the Secretariat but with Member States. The European Union had traditionally opposed the holding of meetings outside normal United Nations working hours; however, it was essential for the Committee to complete its work by 12 December and, to that end, he

would agree to the holding of informal consultations during the weekend on an exceptional basis.

20. However, the representative of the United States of America was not entirely wrong in noting that the draft resolution on agenda item 106 was too important to be dealt with in haste. As the European Union was not willing to agree to the scheduling of meetings beyond 12 December, it might be best to take up the draft resolution on the least developed countries at a resumed session in 2002.

21. **The Chairman** said he planned to inform the President of the General Assembly that, in his view, there was no question of holding a resumed session. The Committee had clear deadlines for which all members were responsible. However, while he understood the concerns expressed by the United States delegation, it should be pointed out that the adoption of the draft resolution on the World Summit on the Information Society (A/C.2/56/L.52) had been delayed because of objections raised by that delegation.

22. In the case of the draft resolution on the least developed countries, the delay could be attributed in part to the late issue of the relevant report (A/56/645 and Add.1 and Corr.1). He suggested that the Committee should meet on the following Monday, by which time a draft resolution on the item should be available. If it then appeared that consensus was unlikely, a decision on further action could be taken.

23. **Mr. Mbayu** (Cameroon), supported by **Mr. Conteh** (Sierra Leone), reminded the Committee that its members had all contributed to the problem at hand. Delegations should remember that it was their privilege to take decisions affecting many lives and that their inconvenience paled before the suffering of the people of the least developed countries.

24. **Mr. Traub** (United States of America), replying to the Chairman's remark that his delegation had delayed the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.52, pointed out that a new proposal on paragraph 3 of the draft had been submitted at a late stage of the negotiations. His delegation had needed time to consider that proposal.

25. He was reluctant to agree to weekend negotiations since he might then find himself obliged in plenary meeting to oppose a consensus reached in his absence. While he was moved by the representative of Cameroon's plea on behalf of the least developed

countries, he considered that the seriousness of that issue was belied by the lateness with which the delegations concerned had addressed it.

26. **The Chairman** replied that he had only meant to point out that, if a delegation as important as that of the previous speaker had had difficulty in concluding negotiations on time, it was scarcely surprising that a regional group with 132 members should face similar problems. All the Committee's members must share the blame for the current situation, which, however, was also a reflection of the issue's importance and of the desire for a balanced approach. Informal consultations were merely a forum for discussion, the bulk of which would take place during the formal and informal sessions held during the following week. It was for the Committee to decide whether to use the meeting rooms and technical assistance that would be available over the weekend; in any event, however, he would recommend to the President of the General Assembly that the Committee's meetings should not be permitted to extend beyond Friday, 14 December 2001.

27. He suggested that the deadline for the submission of draft proposals under item 106 on the least developed countries should be postponed to noon on Monday, 10 December 2001.

28. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.