



SECOND COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Friday, 14 October 1988
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

*The record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC-2, United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a separate Uscode for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/43/SR.14
21 October 1988
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/43/3, A/43/8 and Add.1, A/43/122, A/43/214, A/43/235, A/43/273, A/43/325, A/43/336, A/43/341, A/43/360, A/43/367 and Corr.1-2, A/43/370, A/43/393, A/43/432, A/43/435, A/43/446, A/43/457, A/43/460, A/43/463, A/43/544, A/43/587, A/43/671, A/43/688, A/43/695; A/C.2/43/4; A/C.2/43/L.2, L.3, L.4)

1. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the work of the Economic and Social Council was of increasing importance in light of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations and the reaffirmation of its ideals and principles. Unfortunately, the success achieved by the United Nations in the political sphere had not been matched by similar success in the economic sphere. As the Council had emphasized in its report, poverty had worsened over the last 10 years and the contradictions of the world economic situation had created greater difficulties for the developing countries. It was therefore not surprising that during its second regular session, the Council had accorded such high priority to consideration of economic problems and the search for new solutions. Overall, the discussions had been constructive, and useful resolutions had been adopted on a certain number of issues such as the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, the assistance programmes for Afghanistan and co-operation in the area of environment. The adoption by consensus of Council resolution 1988/75, early identification of world economic developments, was an important initiative which would help strengthen the stability and predictability of international economic relations. His country believed that attention should be paid to gaining a better grasp of interdependence. Greater predictability would, in fact, promote the establishment of a secure international co-operation benefiting all States.

2. The international community was giving increasing attention to ecological questions since it was known that they could influence the destiny of all humankind. The Ukrainian SSR believed that the Council and its subsidiary bodies must act as a catalyst in co-ordinating the efforts of States and all the initiatives centred on protection of the environment at the international, regional and national levels. In 1987, it had submitted, jointly with Czechoslovakia, a draft resolution on international ecological safety. It would submit a similar text at the present session, in collaboration with other socialist countries, in order to encourage a dialogue on that issue and thus facilitate the establishment of a harmonious and safe economic environment for all members of the international community.

3. The Israeli economic practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and assistance to the Palestinian people continued to occupy an important place in the work of the Council. The situation in that region demonstrated clearly that the full realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab populations could be achieved only within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

(Mr. Goudima, Ukrainian SSR)

4. The Council had adopted several other useful resolutions and decisions which would require a strengthening of international co-operation. Those resolutions and decisions concerned, *inter alia*, the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa and Namibia and the Khartoum Declaration. While consensus had not been reached on some of them, it was to be hoped that Member States would participate in the resolution of the problems to which they referred. It was unfortunate that consideration of the draft resolution on confidence-building in international economic relations, submitted by Poland, had been postponed. His delegation was convinced that the issue must be considered as a matter of urgency if economic co-operation was to be increased. In that connection, he drew attention to the recent declaration of the States members of the Warsaw Pact (July 1988), which called for confidence-building and strengthening of co-operation in all spheres - political, military, economic, humanitarian and ecological.

5. The Ukrainian SSR wholeheartedly supported the strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council. Although the Special Commission on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields had not reached consensus, its work had been fruitful and there was reason to hope that the reform process currently under way would be completed. Council resolution 1988/77, on the revitalization of the Council, was an important step in that direction, because it set out precise guidelines for improving the Council's working methods. His delegation would actively support its implementation. With that in mind the Ukrainian SSR had submitted its candidature for election to the Council, as a member of the Group of Eastern European States. He hoped that the candidature would be well received.

6. Mr. MISSARY (Democratic Yemen) reaffirmed the importance of the Council within the framework of international economic co-operation in resolving the existing economic crisis. By redefining the relationship between the General Assembly and the Council and the measures guaranteeing implementation of the numerous resolutions and recommendations adopted over the years by the United Nations in the economic and social fields the effectiveness of both the Council and the United Nations would be further enhanced. The role of the United Nations would be facilitated if Member States fulfilled all their financial obligations to that Organization.

7. The many recommendations and decisions adopted by the Council during its second regular session, in particular resolution 1988/77 concerning the revitalization of the Council and decision 1988/160 concerning the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries, should help reactivate efforts in those areas. Equally encouraging was the progress made on other issues, in particular the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, the protection of the environment and the role of women in development; efforts must be redoubled in those areas.

8. Mr. RAVI (India) said that his delegation supported the observations made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 with respect to agenda item 12.

/...

(Mr. Ravi, India)

9. India had always attached considerable importance to the question of human settlements, as evidenced by the adoption of several five-year plans and the development of a legal, financial and institutional framework to support the efforts of individuals, groups and institutions. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, which had been adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements, and called on the international community to co-operate in the implementation of that strategy under the Commission's guidance.

10. It hoped that the General Assembly would take positive action on draft decision 1988/178 concerning the reactivation of economic growth and development in developing countries and the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the subject, which had been submitted by the Group of 77 during the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council. The Group of 77 had also been responsible for Council resolution 1988/77 concerning the revitalization of the Council. Given the ongoing reform of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields that resolution was of considerable significance.

11. With respect to the issue of the reform of the United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social fields, he recalled that the positions adopted by the Group of 77 during the discussions and negotiations of the Special Commission constituted an integrated package whose diverse elements could not be dealt with in isolation. It was regrettable that the Special Commission had not been able to agree on an agreed set of conclusions on the restructuring; however, a certain convergence of views had emerged during the negotiations, and it should facilitate future work. It would, however, be prudent, before considering the question of subsidiary bodies and Secretariat support structure, to see how Council resolution 1988/77 was being implemented and what was happening to the various proposals made by the Group of 77 in the Special Commission.

12. Mr. AL-SAAN (Oman) said that the decisions adopted at the Council's second regular session of 1988 clearly showed the importance which the international community attached to current economic problems and the tragic consequences they were having for the developing countries. The problems were such that the only way to solve them and to break the vicious cycle of underdevelopment was through international action. The Council was the principal organ of the United Nations in the economic and social field, and it should continue to co-ordinate activities of the system in that area. Some co-ordination and integration between the Council and the Second Committee would also be desirable.

13. The Council resolutions concerning assistance to the Palestinian people and Israeli economic practices in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories should also be followed up in order to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people.

14. The resolution concerning the traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes should win universal approval. Oman was most concerned about the protection of the environment. It had recently established a Ministry of the Environment to

(Mr. Al-Saan, Oman)

deal with pollution control and protection of the natural resources and a Council for protection of the environment and maintained co-operation with UNEP and other competent bodies. The international community must continue its systematic efforts in the field of health care and the environment.

15. Finally, due consideration should be given to the proposals put forward by some delegations concerning the work of the Council, in view of the measure already taken to revitalize and rationalize its activities.

16. Mr. HORN (Hungary) said that while some centres of the world economy had gained in strength, the newly industrialized countries of Asia and the Far East had shown dynamic growth and the process of integration had accelerated, some countries or regions continued to lag behind in economic development, and the gap between them and the rich continued to widen. Many problems, those relating, for example, to world trade, the chronic malfunctioning of the international financial and monetary system and the debt, continued to get worse demonstrating the need for a vast international effort. In that connection, the Hungarian Government welcomed the concept of sustainable development and recommended that measures be promptly elaborated in order to put it into effect.

17. Recent international political events had opened new opportunities for all. At the political and military level, confrontation was increasingly being replaced by efforts to establish relations between partners. The concept of security was being extended from the military sphere to political, economic, environmental and human rights areas. Awareness of interdependence required the adoption of a new approach both at national and international level, and in international institutions. Only by harmonizing national, regional and global interests could the conditions and resources necessary for socio-economic development be created and mobilized. All interests must act in concert in order to solve the problems of the world economy.

18. The increased co-operation among European States indicated a growing awareness of that general interdependence. All countries recognized the importance of gradually eliminating discriminatory practices, which had been established for political and economic motives, and protectionist barriers. The recent signing of an agreement on co-operation between Hungary and the European Economic Community represented significant progress in that connection.

19. Given the rapid pace of economic development it was necessary to evaluate realistically the role of international institutions, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Those institutions must assume growing responsibilities. Given the global nature of economic problems, specific new tasks must be assigned to those organizations; in addition they must be better adapted to economic evolution and must show a greater spirit of conciliation. The Hungarian Government was convinced that the United Nations and its specialized agencies would be able to meet the challenges of the world economy. In order to enable the international organizations to carry out their mission, their functions in respect of the forecasting of economic, trade, financial, monetary and environmental processes must be improved. They should also be able to anticipate, manage and

(Mr. Horn, Hungary)

resolve conflicts. Indeed, working methods must be streamlined and institutional machinery reformed. Duplication should be eliminated, items that give rise to futile debates should be deleted from the agenda, the decision-making mechanism should be updated and resolutions of the United Nations should be given some weight by the adoption by consensus, of decisions responsive to realities and to the interests of participants.

20. Hungary was fully aware that its development would depend on how flexibly it was able to respond to shifts in the world economy and on the extent to which it participated in international economic co-operation. It would seek to continue to show initiative and to play an active role in international relations.

21. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) welcomed the many results obtained by the Council during the past year and the adoption by consensus of resolution 1988/77 on the revitalization of the Council. The latter should constitute, together with the in-depth study of the United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social fields, a point of departure for an overall reform of the activities of the United Nations system in those areas.

22. The Committee nevertheless had on its agenda other extremely important questions relating to the work of the Council (such as the situation of developing countries and the debt problem) which could destroy the prestige and credibility of the international bodies unless they demonstrated that they were able to find solutions. Mention should be made in that connection of the proposal of the Group of 77 concerning the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the reactivation of economic growth and development in developing countries in order to permit those countries to emerge from the disturbing situation in which they had been for several years. The fact that the Group of 77 was attempting to define the issues which would be taken up on that occasion and would thus be responsible for the success of the session was encouraging because it would help to bring about agreements which would ensure that the machinery and objectives proposed were appropriate.

23. Colombia had always believed that adequate attention should be given to human resources. It was therefore both surprised and disappointed to note that even among developing countries, it had become difficult to take up such delicate matters as social investment, human resources management and the fight against poverty. Those countries feared that if the United Nations and developed countries analysed the situation they might continue their activities to assistance programmes which would only accentuate the existing imbalances in the distribution of resources intended to eliminate the causes of extreme poverty.

24. The overall situation was therefore disturbing. It should, however, be possible to identify a framework in which social justice and development were compatible and tolerable. The proposals of Canada, Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries) and China led one to believe that a new approach, one that went beyond existing limits, would receive sufficient support.

25. Mr. SIALA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that Libya was a member of the Economic and Social Council, and had actively participated in the discussions in that body and supported the proposals contained in the report. The Council was called on to play a growing role, taking into account the international economic situation, and it was important to improve and strengthen its co-ordination of activities of the specialized agencies. Member States should undertake to ensure implementation of resolution 1988/77 on the revitalization of the Council, which was intended to enable the Council to carry out better the mandate entrusted to it under Chapters IX and X of the Charter and subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly with respect to policy formulation, monitoring of the implementation of overall strategies, policies and priorities established by the General Assembly in the economic and social and related fields, operational activities and co-ordination of activities of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. He drew attention to the need for Member States to undertake effective consultations with the Secretariat in order to implement the part of resolution 1988/77 entitled "Working methods and organization of work", to strengthen the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and to give due consideration to the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the recruitment of staff of the United Nations Secretariat in the economic and social fields.

26. The interest the Economic and Social Council showed in the environment was fully justified. It was particularly appropriate to study in greater depth the ecological impact of the activities of transnational corporations in the developing countries. The People's Congress of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which was also preoccupied by the problem of the environment, had, at the beginning of the year, adopted a statement in which it had demanded the elimination of nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons.

27. Referring to Council resolution 1988/65, he denounced the practices of the Zionist entity in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. The financial, land-related and legal practices and measures already described by the representatives of Saudi Arabia and Syria were in flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as far as the utilization of economic resources was concerned.

28. Mr. ASA-EL (Israel), raising a point of order, asked the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to call the State of Israel by its name and to refrain from referring to it as "the Zionist entity".

29. Mr. SIALA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the United Nations had a moral responsibility for helping the Palestinian people since it had participated in the latter's dispersal. He urged the international community to intensify its efforts to help the Palestinian people to return to its territories and to create an independent State. The uprising of the Palestinian people proved that a small and unarmed people could stand up to persecution which was aimed at imposing upon it Israeli identity.

30. The protectionist measures adopted by the industrialized countries discouraged the developing countries from exporting and dimmed any prospect of an alleviation

(Mr. Siala, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

of indebtedness and a revitalization of credit machinery. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as a country which exported chemical and petrochemical products, was much affected by those measures.

31. The locust and grasshopper infestation extended throughout north Africa and was destroying millions of hectares of agricultural and pasture land, thereby jeopardizing food security and threatening to increase hunger and poverty. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had established a national committee to deal with locust and grasshopper infestation, which was acting in co-operation with other Arab countries. Meetings dealing with the subject had been held in Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and in Rome at the headquarters of FAO. However, the countries affected were convinced that their efforts alone would not suffice. The international community must give its support, because the problem went beyond national and regional boundaries.

32. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) said that the work of the Economic and Social Council in 1988 had been fruitful. The spirit of co-operation and dialogue which delegations had generally displayed had enabled a greater number of resolutions to be adopted by consensus. Resolution 1988/77, which dealt with the revitalization of the Council, was particularly important since it specified the Council's functions and its relations with other bodies which had parallel responsibilities. Its implementation would certainly contribute to improving the operation of the Council and strengthening its role within the United Nations system.

33. Consideration had continued to be given to the manner in which the Council could help in solving the urgent international problems which came within its competence. It was in that light that one had to evaluate the work of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. It had not been possible to reach a consensus but on the whole the discussion had been fruitful. Many useful ideas and proposals had been put forward. For example, the delegation of Mongolia found the proposal of the Group of 77 on broadening the composition of the Council to embrace all Member States very interesting. It supported the proposal periodically to organize sessions at ministerial level. Such an initiative would give the Council increased authority and enable it to play a more important role in analysing and solving international problems. The adoption of a resolution on assistance programmes relating to Afghanistan (Council resolution 1988/52) was a new development. Mongolia saw it as proof that the Council could also play a role in relation to the humanitarian aspects of certain complex political problems. The assistance offered to Afghanistan would be even more effective if the Geneva Accords were fully respected by all parties. For its part, Mongolia had declared that it was ready to associate itself with the implementation of the programme in so far as it was able to do so.

34. Resolution 1988/75 entitled "Early identification of world economic developments" was a very important text in that it indicated for the first time a desire to remedy the disorders in the world economy by taking preventive measures. Mongolia considered that it would be possible and desirable to set up a small working group within the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

(Mr. Doljintseren, Mongolia)

which would have the task of analysing urgent economic problems on the international level and, on the basis of that analysis, to indicate rapidly the negative consequences which those problems might have for the world economy. That group might include highly qualified international experts and representatives from the various economic agencies of the United Nations system.

35. The extremely worrying situation of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa had been given much attention by the Council. The international community must take urgent measures to help those countries. In particular, it would be necessary to implement fully the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and the related measures which had recently been recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly in its report (A/43/664).

36. The overriding importance of human resources in solving economic problems had been widely emphasized in the Council and other bodies, especially the regional commissions. Documents had been adopted such as the Khartoum Declaration on a Human-focused Approach to Socio-Economic Recovery and Development in Africa and the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP region. In that connection, his delegation once again drew attention to Council resolution 1987/81 adopted the previous year on the initiative of Mongolia and a number of other countries. Consideration might also be given to organizing an international conference specially devoted to the question of human resources, under the auspices of the United Nations.

37. At its most recent session the Council had adopted other useful resolutions, for example on assistance to the Palestinian people, the environment, the role of the Commission on Transnational Corporations, etc. His delegation regretted, however, that it had been necessary to take a vote in the case of some of those resolutions. A consensus would have been preferable.

38. The regional commissions of the Economic and Social Council made an appreciable contribution at the regional level to solving international economic problems. Mongolia, a member country of ESCAP, participated as actively as it could in the work of that body. On the occasion of the forty-fourth session of the Commission it had introduced two draft resolutions which had been adopted by consensus. They concerned the declaration of an international literacy year and the social aspects of rural development. Mongolia hoped that those resolutions and its other initiatives would serve to encourage co-operation and enable socio-economic problems at the regional level to be solved more effectively.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.