

**United Nations  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

**FORTY-THIRD SESSION**

**Official Records\***



**SECOND COMMITTEE  
50th meeting  
held on  
Wednesday, 14 December 1988  
at 3 p.m.  
New York**

---

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 50th MEETING**

**Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia)**

**CONTENTS**

**DRAFT BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SECOND COMMITTEE FOR 1989-1990 (continued)**

---

\*This 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 DC2 750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Correction will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

**Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.2/43/SR.50  
16 December 1988**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

**DRAFT BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SECOND COMMITTEE FOR 1989-1990 (continued)  
(A/C.2/43/L.71)**

1. Mr. VIK (Norway) said that he had not intended to make a new proposal at the previous meeting, but merely to urge that the question of sustainable and environmentally sound development should be dealt with as proposed by the Secretariat in document A/C.2/43/L.71. The concerns reflected in that sub-item had been the focus of much debate in the Committee, and his delegation felt that it merited separate treatment.
2. Mr. FARRUGIA (Malta) said it had been agreed in informal consultations and elsewhere that the question of the protection of global climate would be a separate sub-item. He therefore hoped that there would be no change in that respect.
3. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, drew attention to document A/C.2/42/L.85/Rev.1, containing the draft biennial programme of work for the Second Committee for 1988-1989. The documentation for 1989 under item 2 (g), entitled "Environment", included two reports of the Secretary-General, one on the implementation of the resolution on the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and one on efforts to pursue sustainable and environmentally sound development. Therefore, the agreement had been to treat the item on sustainable and environmentally sound development under "Environment", not as a separate sub-item.
4. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft biennial programme of work for 1989-1990 (A/C.2/43/L.71), as orally amended, subject to any subsequent decisions taken by the Committee at the resumption of the session in 1989.
5. Mr. LICHTINGER (Mexico) said that he would appreciate clarification as to what precisely the Committee was being asked to adopt under item 2.
6. Mr. STORY (Secretary of the Committee) said that a number of suggestions had been made by him relating to the removal of brackets, and by members of the Committee relating to changes in titles, which he believed were acceptable to the Committee. In addition, the Committee had agreed to delete item 1 (n) and the reference to the report of the Secretary-General on guidelines for international decades and to the accession by the United Nations to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and to refer the sub-item and the report to the plenary Assembly. The Committee had still not clarified its position in relation to item 2 (g). It was his understanding that, pursuant to the Chairman's proposal, that item would be retained unless a specific proposal was made to delete it.

7. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) said that the Group of 77 had no specific proposal to make in relation to item 2 (g); it merely wished to know if the agreement reached during the adoption of the draft biennial programme of work for 1988-1989 was still valid. If not, there should be a proposal to change it. The Secretariat would do well to clarify its position in relation to the matter. The agreement reached in 1987 constituted the legal basis for preparing the draft biennial programme of work for 1989-1990.

8. Mr. STOPY (Secretary of the Committee) reminded the Committee that there had also been an agreement to add a new item on external debt. With regard to item 2 (g), the representative of Tunisia was technically correct. There had been an understanding in the Committee that in one year the biennial programme of work would list a number of entries under "Environment", while in other years, when there was no environmental focus, the question of sustainable and environmentally sound development would be a separate sub-item.

9. Mr. VIK (Norway) said that in view of the significance of the issue of sustainable and environmentally sound development, and in view of the important documentation to be submitted, his delegation felt strongly that it should be a separate sub-item, as should such related matters as the protection of global climate, and desertification and drought. He found it difficult to understand the objections to retaining that important issue as a separate sub-item with a specific title and with specific reports to be submitted under it. If such a procedure was really contested, then the draft should be closely examined in order to see what specific legal basis existed for treating other topics as separate sub-items.

10. Mr. BEN MOUSSA (Morocco) said that the Committee's time was being wasted on the current discussion. If the documents on sustainable and environmentally sound development were included in the documentation under item 2 (f), the problem would be resolved. If that was not the general understanding of the Committee, he would make a formal proposal to that effect.

11. Mr. OULD EL GHAOUTH (Mauritania) said he believed that the current discussion was the result of a misunderstanding. He reminded the representative of Norway that a resolution had been introduced some years previously by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries to make desertification and drought a separate sub-item under "Development and international economic co-operation", thus giving it a legal basis. However, his delegation did not think that a legal basis existed in relation to item 2 (g). If Norway wanted the subject-matter of the two documents referred to under item 2 (g) to constitute a distinct sub-item, it could make a proposal to that effect in 1989. Resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 did not mandate such a procedure. He did not understand what point the representative of Norway wished to make by referring to agenda item 148, relating to conservation of climate. That was a distinct and independent topic, as was desertification and drought.

12. Mr. VIK (Norway) said that he had made no proposal to change the status of the topic of desertification and drought; he had simply mentioned it in making the argument that there should similarly be a separate sub-item for sustainable and environmentally sound development. It was not fair to argue that a separate sub-item could exist only in cases where there had been an explicit decision to that effect, as that had not happened in relation to item 2 (1) concerning the eradication of poverty in developing countries. The agenda should reflect the focus of attention of the Member States; the discussion at the current session showed the treatment he recommended to be amply justified.

13. Mr. LABERGE (Canada) said that he was struck by the possible variants in the legal basis for the appearance of the various sub-items in the draft programme of work. In approaching the issue item by item, the Committee ran the risk of a long and unproductive debate. The problem of a legal basis would be resolved if the Committee agreed to adopt the draft.

14. Mr. JØNCK (Denmark) said that while it was not his intention to correct the representative of Mauritania, he was compelled to take issue with him on one point: the question of a mandate for the reports listed under item 2 (g). There was indeed a clear mandate for the submission of those reports; the problem appeared to centre on whether they should be listed under a separate heading. If the Committee became involved in such a discussion, it would be interminable. There was no mandate requiring a separate sub-item on external debt, but the Committee had established the practice of having one. It was necessary to be consistent in the type of arguments which were employed. He urged the members of the Committee to endorse the Secretariat's proposals contained in document A/C.2/43/L.71. The proposal made by the representative of Morocco could also be useful.

15. Mr. LICHTINGER (Mexico) said that the question of a sub-item on environmentally sound development had been the subject of a gentleman's agreement reached during the negotiations on General Assembly resolution 42/187 and expressed in the adoption of the biennial programme of work for the Second Committee for 1988-1989, as the representative of Tunisia had recalled. If item 2 (g) was accepted, that agreement would be violated. The question which had taken up most of the discussion at the current session had not been sustainable and environmentally sound development, but rather the convening of a United Nations conference on environment and development. Such a conference was now referred to under the sub-item on the environment; but a matter which had never been clearly discussed was also included as a separate sub-item. For the purpose of consistency, the proposal made by the Group of 77 and others should be adopted: item 2 (g) should be deleted and the two documents should be listed under item 2 (f). Where agreement existed on a proposal in the draft programme of work, it should be accepted; otherwise, brackets should be placed around the proposal in dispute, which should be referred to the plenary Assembly for a decision.

16. Mr. OULD EL GHAOUTH (Mauritania) endorsed the suggestion by the representative of Mexico. In order for an item to be included in the agenda of the General Assembly, the Assembly must adopt a resolution to that effect. It had not been requested to include in its agenda the matters covered in resolutions 42/186 and 42/187.

17. Mr. SHAABAN (Egypt) stressed the importance of following the rules with respect to the inclusion of agenda items. He recalled that the developed countries had been urging delegations to group items together, in the interest of rationalization. In 1985 the General Committee had decided to include the topic of the external indebtedness of the developing countries as a separate item, without calling for its consideration during a particular year.

18. Given the controversy concerning document A/C.2/43/L.71, the Committee should defer the adoption of the draft programme of work until the resumption of the session.

19. Mr. 'IK (Norway) said that his delegation was not asking for special treatment of item 2 (g). However, if it was decided to place square brackets around sub-item (g), then, it was only appropriate to do the same with other questions when no specific legislative mandate requested their consideration as separate topics.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to defer a decision on its draft biennial programme of work for 1989-1990 until the resumption of the session.

21. It was so decided.

22. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its work until the resumption of the session.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.