



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 52nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAVAJAS-MOGRO (Bolivia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)
(A/C.2/43/L.39 and L.85-L.87)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the draft decision contained in document A/C.2/43/L.86, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries", which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations held on draft decision A/C.2/43/L.39. A statement of programme budget implications was contained in document A/C.2/43/L.87. He wished to point out that the "brief session in June 1989", mentioned in paragraph 9 of the annex to document A/C.2/43/L.86 and reflected in section C of the statement of programme budget implications, was to last for a maximum of three days.

2. Mr. CAHILL (United States of America) said that his Government had conducted an intensive analysis of the question of holding a special session of the General Assembly on international economic issues. In the light of that review, his delegation had decided to request that a recorded vote should be taken on draft decision A/C.2/43/L.86 and to vote against it.

3. The economic problems of developing countries were of major concern to his Government, and it had supported a broad range of initiatives designed to promote growth and development and to address problems such as debt. Moreover, the United States continued to be one of the largest sources of official development assistance and would continue to participate actively in high-level discussions in IMF and the World Bank as well as GATT, the Trade and Development Board and the Second Committee of the General Assembly. The United States also intended to work constructively with developing countries at the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries and the eighth session of UNCTAD.

4. However, his delegation believed that the proliferation of special sessions of the General Assembly tended to diminish their value. In fact, a special session on broad economic issues was not really needed, since a number of other institutions were actively addressing those issues. Such a session might undermine the mandates and competence of the institutions concerned, particularly if it sought to provide policy guidance for the United Nations and other international bodies. Finally, his delegation was concerned that the special session might raise unrealistic expectations among developing countries, thereby undermining individual country efforts to restructure debt, obtain financing and implement needed reforms.

5. Mr. TAI (Malaysia) said that, as the dates of the special session had been agreed in informal consultations and in fact appeared in paragraph 5 of the annex to the draft decision, they should be inserted in the text of the draft decision, replacing the words, "early in 1990".

6. The CHAIRMAN said he would take note of that suggestion.

7. Mr. ZVEZDIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed disappointment at the statement by the representative of the United States. While it was encouraging to note that the United States intended to participate in many forums dealing with major international economic issues in the coming year, he hoped the time would come when that country would begin to participate actively in the work of the Second Committee and other United Nations bodies.

8. As for the statement that the special session might raise unrealizable expectations among developing countries, he wished to point out that Committee members were fully aware of the enormous problems facing the third world as well as of the need to deal with them. For its part, the Soviet Union not only thought about solving such problems but participated directly in the decision making process. The Second Committee could benefit from a certain amount of "perestroika" in approaching the solution of problems such as the debt problem. In contributing to that effort, the Committee should take into account the work done by other agencies and organizations, but must not shirk its responsibilities in that area.

9. A recorded vote was taken on draft decision A/C.2/43/L.86.

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: None.

10. Draft decision A/C.2/43/L.86 was adopted by 97 votes to 1.

11. Mr. SALARICH (Spain), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that those States had been pleased to vote in favour of the draft decision, since the special session would benefit developed and developing countries alike. They welcomed the spirit of co-operation which had prevailed during the debate on the matter during the Committee's resumed session. They also welcomed the fact that the session was to have a new, pragmatic focus aimed at stimulating dialogue and co-operative solutions, taking into account the activities of other forums so as to avoid duplication of effort.
12. The preparations for the special session should be co-ordinated with the preparations for the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade. While it was unfortunate that a consensus had not been reached on the draft decision, they nevertheless hoped that all delegations would help in preparing for the special session.
13. Mr. KIURU (Finland) said that he had voted in favour of the draft decision to support the international community's efforts to improve the critical economic situation of the developing countries. The special session would help the United Nations to respond more effectively to the changing circumstances in the international economic environment. He regretted the lack of consensus on the draft decision, but expressed the hope that all members would contribute to the success of the special session, whose final document must reflect the views of the entire international community.
14. The interrelationship of the major economic issues facing the United Nations in the 1990s must not delay the preparations for the special session on the new international development strategy. Greater political will in tackling the main problems in the economic relations between developed and developing countries was necessary. Consequently, input from Governments should be sought early in the preparatory process.
15. Mr. KAGAMI (Japan) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision. The issues to be considered at the special session were already under discussion in various forums, and he welcomed the fact that paragraph 2 of the annex to the draft decision recognized the respective spheres of competence of the specialized institutions. Monetary questions, including the critical problem of debt, should be dealt with in forums having expertise in that area. Thus it might be inappropriate for the special session to address the question of debt, particularly if it did not wish to undermine the efforts being undertaken elsewhere. His delegation particularly endorsed paragraph 11 of the annex to the draft decision.

16. Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, said that those delegations supported the proposal of the Group of 77 to convene a special session of the General Assembly that would focus on international economic co-operation. The informal consultations held on the draft decision clearly indicated that that initiative was supported by most Member States, a fact which made the inability to achieve a consensus on the question regrettable. Efforts should be made to ensure that recent positive trends in international political affairs, such as the relaxation of tension and disarmament, should be pursued, as they contributed to the solution of problems in international economic relations. A sober-minded, business-like approach to the solution of those problems was called for; concrete tasks and realistic objectives must be identified. Greater foresight, predictability and stability were needed in international economic relations, so that those relations might once again become the driving force behind development.
17. Multilateralism must be strengthened and the role of the United Nations in the economic sphere enhanced. In preparing for the special session the social aspects of growth and development must be considered and the economic formalism of previous years abandoned. All those efforts would make the special session an important step towards achieving sustained growth in the world economy.
18. Mr. WANG Baoliu (China) welcomed the adoption of the draft decision, which his delegation had supported. That achievement was the result of joint efforts, although it was unfortunate that a consensus had not been reached on such an important issue. He hoped that those who had been unable to join in the consensus would rethink their position and adopt a more flexible and constructive attitude towards the special session.
19. Mr. TAI (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, welcomed the adoption of draft decision A/C.2/43/L.86 and said he hoped that those delegations that had not supported it would do so later since the special session would undoubtedly consider the concerns of all of them.
20. Mr. PILBEAM (Australia) said that the special session should analyse policies that had proved effective and consider many developmental approaches while avoiding duplication of effort. Maximum participation should be encouraged so as to produce a consensus for the benefit of all.
21. Mr. DJOHLAF (Algeria) said it was unfortunate that the Committee had been compelled to vote on a text proposed by the Chairman on the basis of informal consultations. That was against accepted practice and should not set a precedent.

22. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) said he welcomed the adoption of the draft decision. It was, however, unfortunate that, despite all efforts to meet the concerns of all delegations, it had not been possible to adopt the decision by consensus. He noted that the United States delegation had joined in a consensus on the same subject in the past and hoped that it would participate in the preparatory work for the special session. The special session would contribute to the revitalisation of economic growth through improved co-operation, especially between developed and developing countries.

23. Mr. VAN BRAKEL (Canada) welcomed the adoption of the draft decision. The special session would provide an opportunity for taking stock of the world economy and economic interdependence and seeking means of improving multilateral co-operation. He regretted the lack of consensus but hoped that all States would participate fully in the preparations for the session and in the session itself.

24. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Co-operation) said that the decision just taken was an extremely important one. It was gratifying to see that broad agreement had been reached, despite the absence of consensus. The decision would revitalise the dialogue on international co-operation, especially the North-South dialogue, and the session would also have a useful political impact. He hoped that eventually consensus would emerge and that effective preparation, based on the political good will of the Governments, would result in its success.

25. Mr. TAEB (Afghanistan), Mr. COULIBALY (Mali), Mr. BISTA (Nepal), Mr. MARTINEZ (Panama) and Mr. LAWSON (Togo) said that they had been absent during the vote on draft decision A/C.2/43/L.86. Had they been present, they would have voted in favour.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection he would take it that draft decision A/C.2/43/L.39 was now withdrawn.

27. It was so decided.

DRAFT BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SECOND COMMITTEE FOR 1989-1990 (continued)
(A/C.2/43/L.71/Rev.1)

28. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its 51st meeting the Committee had decided that sub-item 2 (g) entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind" should be made a separate item and inserted between items 3 (External debt crisis and development) and 4 (Operational activities for development). It had also been agreed in informal consultations that a new sub-item entitled "International co-operation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries" should be added under item 2 (Development and international economic co-operation).

29. Mr. TAI (Malaysia) recalled that the Group of 77 had stated clearly at the previous meeting that document A/C.2/43/L.71/Rev.1 should remain as it stood, but that the item on climate should be made a separate one.

30. Mr. VIK (Norway) said that whether climate was a sub-item or a separate one was not very important because it was clear that environment was a very important issue. What mattered was to agree on the substance of the programme of work and he was certain that environment would be given due priority at the forthcoming General Assembly.

31. Mr. WOLFF (Colombia) said that the item on poverty was extremely important and that there should be no trade-off between poverty and the environment.

32. Mr. TAI (Malaysia) said that the Group of 77 was not opposed to a discussion of environment but only wished to abide by the rules of the General Assembly. That was why it had decided that the document should remain as it stood except for a separate item on climate.

33. Mr. VIK (Norway) said he wished to be absolutely clear that he was not at all opposed to the inclusion of the topic of poverty and that there was no trade-off between the two issues.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve its biennial programme of work for 1989-1990 contained in document A/C.2/43/L.1/Rev.1, as orally revised.

35. It was so decided.

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

36. The CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had completed its work for the forty-third session.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.