



Economic and Social Council

Provisional

8 October 2010

English

Original: French

Substantive session of 2009

Provisional summary record of the 38th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 27 July 2009, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Ali (Vice President). (Malaysia)

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In the absence of Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Coordination, programme and other questions: international cooperation in the field of information technology (continued)

Draft resolution E/2009/L.30: Need to harmonize and improve the informatics systems of the United Nations for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States

The President invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/2009/L.30, entitled “Need to harmonize and improve the informatics systems of the United Nations for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States”. He noted that the draft resolution had no impact on the programme budget.

Noting that a consensus had been reached on the proposed text, he would take it, in the absence of comments or objections, that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution E/2009/L.30.

The draft resolution was adopted.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters: elections and appointments (continued)

Commission on Population and Development

The President announced that the Group of Western European and Other States had endorsed the candidature of Portugal for the vacant seat of the Group on the Commission on Population and Development. He took it that the Council wished to elect Portugal by acclamation for a term beginning at the first meeting of the forty-fourth session of the Commission in 2010 and ending at the close of the forty-seventh session in 2014.

It was so decided.

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

The President announced that the Group of Eastern European States had endorsed the candidature of Bulgaria for the vacant seat of the Group on the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. He took it that the Council wished to elect Bulgaria by acclamation to serve from the date of election to 31 December 2010.

It was so decided.

Executive Board of the World Food Programme

The President announced that the Group of Western European and Other States had endorsed the candidacies of France and Luxembourg to fill the two vacant seats reserved for countries on list D. He took it that the Council wished to elect France and Luxembourg by acclamation to the Executive Board of the World Food Programme for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2010.

It was so decided.

Committee for the United Nations Population Award

The President announced that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had endorsed the candidacy of Nicaragua for the vacant seat of the Group on the Committee for the United Nations Population Award. He took it that the Council wished to elect Nicaragua by acclamation for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2010.

It was so decided.

The President, noting that there were no other nominations, said that he took it that the Council wished to defer to a later date the election of two members from the Group of African States, two members from the Group of Asian States, a member of the Group of Eastern European States and a member of the Group of Western European and Other States for a term of three years beginning on 1 January 2010.

It was so decided.

Committee for Programme and Coordination

The President announced that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had endorsed the candidacy of Haiti to fill the last vacancy of the Group on the Committee for Programme and Coordination. In the absence of further nominations, it was his understanding that the Council wished to nominate Haiti for election by the General Assembly for a term of three years beginning on 1 January 2010.

It was so decided.

The President also took it that the Council wished to postpone to a later date the nomination of a member of the Group of Western European and Other States for election by the General Assembly for a term of three years beginning on 1 January 2010.

It was so decided.

The President recalled that there remained three vacancies for the Group of Western European and Other States for a term ending 31 December 2013.

Committee for Development Policy

The President recalled that the appointment of 24 experts to the Committee for Development Policy had been deferred pending the issuance of a note by the Secretariat presenting the candidates. He drew the Council's attention to document E/2009/9/Add.19, which contained the list of 23 experts nominated by the Secretary-General, together with biographical information about them, and indicated that information about the twenty-fourth expert would be submitted to the Council later. Given those factors, he took it that the Council wished to approve the appointment of the 23 experts whose names appeared in the document for a term of three years beginning on 1 January 2010.

It was so decided.

The President also took it that the Council wished to postpone to a later date the appointment of the last expert.

It was so decided.

Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

The President invited the Council to take note of the list of 25 experts appointed by the Secretary-General for a term of four years ending 30 June 2013 contained in document E/2009/9/Add.17 and Corr.1.

United Nations research and training institutes

Presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (E/2009/57)

Mr. Lopes (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and Director of the United Nations System Staff College) highlighted the Institute's key roles of training and capacity-building, which were both a driving force in international cooperation and an essential condition for good governance.

Since 2007, the Institute, which trained an average of 40,000 people per year, was undergoing major reforms aimed at making it a centre of

excellence recognized as such within the United Nations system and outside for its normative methods, the quality education it provided and its capacity for research on knowledge systems. The four pillars of the strategic plan for 2007-2009 were to build institutional capacity for training and research, develop human capital, create and strengthen strategic partnerships and streamline the Institute's organizational structure.

As noted by United Nations bodies responsible for monitoring and control, the Institute had within less than two years introduced a results-based management style in its planning and budgeting; implemented all of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, except for one; and reaffirmed and strengthened its autonomy, supported by a re-energized Board of Trustees fully committed to the Institute. That effort had given the Institute greater credibility and had allowed it to become more recognized and appreciated.

The reform of the Institute had also borne fruit in the field of knowledge management and the implementation of educational programmes. Responding to calls for greater coherence in the United Nations system, the Institute had been a leader in providing integrated training services, focusing on strategic-policy think tanks by adopting innovative training methods and making a place for governance training.

On the financing side, the Institute had grown dramatically. Its current budget, representing an increase of 50.5 per cent compared to the previous year, was funded up to 95 per cent through special-purpose grants.

The Institute would pursue and strengthen its efforts in several areas in 2009 and beyond, launching the second phase of its reform process. It would focus particularly on: the implementation of results-based management in all its activities; research on improving quality and establishing a framework for the implementation of standards, controls and methods of quality certification; sustainable use of teaching methods based on technology; and measures aimed at achieving more adequate and more predictable support for core diplomatic training. This last area was of particular importance, given the increasing complexity of the multilateral system and the efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the system.

Presentation of the report of the Director of the United Nations System Staff College on its work, activities and accomplishments (E/2009/77)

Mr. Lopes (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and Director of the United Nations System Staff College) stressed the dynamism of the Staff College, which had, with a modest staff of 38 officials, provided training to over 8,000 people during 2008 alone. Its budget for that year had grown by 17 per cent compared to 2007, and the financial resources of the College had increased by 65 per cent between 1 July 2007 and 30 April 2009. The College had managed to ensure broad geographic diversity, while increasing the scope of its training through activities that were not only inter-institutional in nature but also included all United Nations staff, from staff recruited recently to senior officials.

The College had focused on four main areas: knowledge management, strengthening leadership capacity, certification and United Nations country team support. It had thus provided the means to better meet needs across the United Nations system through activities like the programme to build a strategic core of senior staff able to meet the global challenges facing the United Nations by linking the concept of leadership to major themes such as climate change and human rights.

Since 2007, the College had initiated various reforms in management. It has taken steps to mainstream risk management and results-based management, recruit qualified personnel in various key positions and put the concept of knowledge management at the heart of its business model. Such reforms had enabled it to strengthen the coherence of its programmes and activities, as well as the effectiveness of its internal management mechanisms.

The College had further strengthened its collaboration with United Nations agencies and established successful partnerships with leading academics, which had reinforced its reputation as a centre of excellence.

The report under consideration contained a proposal to strengthen the governance structure of the College, a proposal submitted for approval by members of the Council. The proposal sought to clarify the functioning and structure of the Board of Governors of the College and address the lack of predictability

regarding the composition of the staff and the lack of a systematic procedural mechanism for the Board.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil), noting the changes that were taking place within the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, in particular its strategic reform, wanted to know how the reform was being discussed with Member States.

Noting that the income of the Institute, which had doubled in five years, consisted almost exclusively of special-purpose grants, he requested clarification on the arrangements and the allocation of those grants.

Brazil welcomed the measures taken to correct the imbalance in the geographical origin of the staff of the Institute. Stressing that the Institute's presence in developing countries could only be beneficial, he welcomed the opening of offices of the Institute in Brasilia and Pretoria.

Noting that many research activities and much of the training of the Institute dealt with climate change, he wondered whether it was appropriate to emphasize a particular area to the detriment of others, such as the international financial crisis or the global economic and financial architecture, which were matters of concern to the United Nations and many countries.

Brazil had capabilities in the field of the application of satellite technology and cooperated intensively in that area with many other developing countries, particularly for humanitarian purposes. It would be useful, in that regard, to consider how the Institute could make greater use of the expertise existing in developing countries.

He welcomed efforts by the Institute to establish online courses, including courses on finance and trade, and the emphasis on migration, and he stressed the importance of continuing to invest in such areas, which were of great interest, particularly for developing countries.

Brazil supported the organization by the Institute of training in the field of peacekeeping but stressed that there were different ways of approaching such training. Brazil had embraced a vision of peacekeeping based on social and economic development. It would be desirable therefore for the Institute to take into account the different views of Member States in that regard.

Mr. Ustinov (Russian Federation) said that over the past two years the leadership of the Institute had

managed to revitalize that organization, which was now very sensitive to the training needs expressed by Member States. Russia noted with particular satisfaction that the Institute took into account, in its choice of topics for training, the problems facing the international community. His delegation welcomed the establishment, within the framework of the reform process, of a committee on appointments and promotion and a finance committee and the strengthening of the Institute's cooperation with the private sector and local authorities.

It was important, however, that the reform should not lead the Institute to abandon the research themes and core training called for in its mandate, because Russia would not support activities that duplicated those of other bodies and components of the United Nations. It was thus desirable that the programme on applications of satellite technology be better managed and coordinated and be used in accordance with guidelines approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) welcomed the new directions that the Institute had embarked on since the current Executive Director had taken charge and the fact that the Institute had become a model in the field of training. The reforms put in place had enabled the Institute to adopt a results-based management framework, which enabled it to effectively implement its programmes.

His delegation supported the position taken by the Executive Director of the Institute, who sought, in order to meet the expectations of countries, to strengthen and expand the Institute's activities related to the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development. In that regard, the core diplomatic training for diplomats from developing countries deserved the support of the United Nations, because it helped prepare diplomats for multilateral activities wherever they were posted. His delegation therefore strongly hoped that the Institute would receive the resources it needed, especially financial resources, so that it could continue to offer and enhance that core diplomatic training.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2009/57), whose recommendations Morocco supported, it would be necessary to further strengthen the human capital of the Institute, so that it could fully discharge its mandate.

His delegation expressed its gratitude to donors who provided continuous financial support to the activities of the Institute.

Ms. Lidskog (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro, Norway, Ukraine and Armenia aligned themselves with her statement.

The European Union welcomed the implementation of strategic reforms by the Institute, in particular the importance attached to results-based management and gender balance. The Union supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2009/57) regarding the appropriate role of the Institute in the future.

With regard to the strategic plan for 2010-2011 and the many varied activities of the Institute, she would appreciate further information on the experience gained by the Institute in the implementation of its various programmes. In particular, she wished to know what the comparative advantage of the Institute was in the various fields of its activities and whether it planned to focus on a particular area.

She requested more information on the development of research capacities in partner countries and how the Institute coordinated its activities with Member States and how those capabilities could be further strengthened.

Noting that the report stressed the importance of developing strong and sustainable relationships with strategic donor countries, she indicated that the Union looked forward to establishing such a dialogue and ensured the Institute of its continued support.

Mr. Lopes (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and Director of the Staff College United Nations) said that the points covered by the current reform had been outlined in the report submitted in 2007 by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/62/377) and that the dialogue established with the Council, various monitoring bodies and the Second and Fifth Committees had led to a change in orientation.

The increase of 50.5 per cent in the Institute's budget over two years was due primarily to special-purpose grants, as the general fund had always attracted less interest among donors. That trend had accelerated in recent years, and the Institute was struggling to fund the

core diplomatic training programme. The Institute trained about 2,000 diplomats each year, but special-purpose grants allocated to that training covered only about 50 per cent of needs, the rest being covered by the general fund.

Great efforts had been made to redress the imbalance in the geographical origin of the staff of the Institute, and the committee on appointments and promotions had been instructed to give preference to underrepresented regions so as to remedy the situation gradually.

Discussions with the South African Government regarding the Institute's office in Pretoria were moving forward but progress has been delayed by the change of Government. The office in Brasilia should be fully operational by the end of 2009.

The reform plan of the Institute planned to focus not on issues but on training methods. The Institute's comparative advantage lay in the fact that it had fully mastered management training and short-term training techniques and had the most modern methods. Training and research themes should reflect the wishes of Member States, changing from one year to another, even if some activities are consistently part of the programme, such as international law or training in multilateral diplomacy.

Training on the financial crisis has been proposed for the current year in order to meet strong demand from Member States and the Institute had had to quickly organize a course on financial regulation.

Training on climate change formed part of the broader context of debates on the environment and the economy. The Institute had proposed comprehensive training to the secretariats of various United Nations conventions on the environment. All of the secretariats had, for the first time, agreed that a single institution should provide training for them on issues relating to the environment. That was a very good example of the type of action that the Institute would seek to develop in the future. The Institute sought to excel at converting thematic knowledge existing within the United Nations system into training for officials.

Regarding the development of research capacities in developing countries, the Institute was currently working in three areas: a quality control mechanism for certifying training that could be offered to other United Nations training institutions, teaching techniques suited

to adults engaged in professional activity, satellite imagery and applications of satellite technology. That latter area had been introduced only recently in the Institute. UNOSAT was a highly successful satellite applications programme that, until recently, had been concerned only with the interpretation of images for humanitarian organizations. The knowledge gained through research made it possible to establish various training modules.

The peacekeeping training programme had been completely revamped and now had an advisory board consisting of peacekeeping specialists who represented different sensibilities and approaches to that issue.

Draft resolution E/2009/L.27: United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy

Ms. Lidskog (Sweden), introducing draft resolution E/2009/L.27, entitled "United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy", said that the report of the Director of the United Nations System Staff College (E/2009/77) contained a proposal to strengthen the governance structure of the College, and the European Union was pleased to present a draft resolution on the subject. The proposed changes, designed to enhance the effectiveness of the College, had been determined following an extensive process of consultation with United Nations agencies and had no budgetary impact.

The President said that, if there were no comments or objections, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution E/2009/L.27.

The draft resolution was adopted.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.