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PROBLEMS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Report of the Second Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Mohamed WARSAMA (Somalia)

1. At its 1758th plenary meeting, on 20 September 1969, the General Assembly allocated to the Second Committee agenda item 21 entitled "Problems of the human environment: report of the Secretary-General".
2. The Committee considered this item at its 1276th to 1278th meetings, held on 10 and 12 November and at its 1306th and 1307th meetings, on 11 and 12 December 1969.
3. The Committee had before it the following documents:

A/7707 - A note by the Secretary-General, in paragraph 3 of which was reproduced the text of Economic and Social Council resolution 1448 (XLVII) recommending a draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly, and in paragraphs 5 to 7 of which were reproduced the revised financial implications for holding the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment;

A/7514 - A note by the Secretary-General, which transmitted to the Members of the General Assembly a communication from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations;

A/7780 - A letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Romania to the President of the General Assembly;

E/4667 - A report of the Secretary-General on problems of the human environment;

A/7603 - The report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session (chapter V, section D).^{1/}

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3.

4. At the 1276th meeting, the representative of Sweden, on behalf of a number of delegations, informed the Committee of their intention to submit a draft resolution which might replace the text which the Council had recommended.

5. The draft resolution (A/C.2/L.1069 and Add.1) was before the Committee at its 1277th meeting. It was sponsored by the delegations of Afghanistan, Algeria, Canada, Chile, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran, the Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Yugoslavia and Zambia, and read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"In pursuance of its decision in resolution 2398 (XXIII) to convene in 1972 a United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and to begin immediately preparations for the Conference,

"Having considered with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General (E/4667) called for in the above-mentioned resolution,

"Having considered the relevant chapter of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/7603),

"Taking into account the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council in the matter,

"Having taken cognizance of the note by the Secretary-General of 21 October 1969 (A/7707),

"Reaffirming the importance and urgency of the problems of the human environment and underlining the necessity for complete preparatory arrangements for the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment to become operative as soon as possible,

"Recognizing the important work on the problems of the human environment that is at present being undertaken and planned by the organizations in the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and national Governments,

"1. Endorses in general the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General regarding the purposes and objectives of the Conference;

"2. Affirms that it should be the main purpose of the Conference to serve as a practical means to encourage, and to provide guidelines for, action by Governments and international organizations designed to protect and improve the human environment, and to remedy and prevent

its impairment, by means of international co-operation, bearing in mind the particular importance of enabling developing countries to forestall the occurrence of such problems;

"3. Entrusts to the Secretary-General the over-all responsibility for organizing and preparing for the Conference, bearing in mind the views expressed during the debates of the forty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Council and the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly;

"4. Establishes a Preparatory Committee to advise the Secretary-General consisting of highly qualified representatives nominated by the Governments of

"5. Requests the Secretary-General to set up immediately a small conference secretariat, by drawing, with the agreement of the specialized agencies concerned, particularly upon regular staff of the United Nations system, and to appoint, at the appropriate time, a Secretary-General of the Conference;

"6. Further requests the Secretary-General to pursue the consultations on the preparations for the Conference, undertaken by him in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII), to take account of the results of other international conferences such as the Conference on the Problems of Environment organized by the Economic Commission for Europe and scheduled to take place at Prague in 1971, and to draw on contributions from appropriate intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

"7. Invites the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development to collaborate closely with the Secretary-General in the preparations for the Conference and to assist, as appropriate, in the work of the Preparatory Committee;

"8. Invites the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to lend every possible assistance in the preparations for the Conference;

"9. Requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Preparatory Committee, to take the necessary steps, as part of the preparations for the Conference, to bring to public attention the nature and importance of the problems of the human environment;

"10. Believes it essential that all participating countries be enabled to take an active part in the preparations for the Conference and the Conference itself, and requests the Secretary-General to investigate what concrete steps could be taken to this end;

"11. Notes the outline of the range of the possible financial implications for the United Nations of the holding of the Conference presented in the Secretary-General's reports (E/4667 and A/7707) and requests the Secretary-General, in the light of the views expressed during the debates of the forty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Council and the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, to make all efforts to reduce the costs of the Conference;

"12. Decides that the Conference should be of two weeks' duration and requests the Secretary-General to take full account of this fact in preparing for the Conference;

"13. Believes that, in order for the Conference to achieve its objectives, it is essential that its agenda be selective, its organizational structure be simple and efficient, and that the documentation be kept reasonably limited;

"14. Accepts with appreciation the invitation of the Government of Sweden (A/7514) to hold the Conference in Sweden in June 1972;

"15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a brief progress report to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session through the Economic and Social Council at its forty-ninth session;

"16. Decides to consider the progress of the preparatory work and to take the necessary further decisions at its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions."

6. The following delegations joined in sponsoring the draft resolution:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Cameroon, Ceylon, Congo (Democratic Republic of), Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Romania, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Upper Volta.

7. With respect to operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the representative of Sweden, on behalf of all the sponsors, informed the Committee, at the 1278th meeting, that consultations had led to the conclusion that the number of Governments to be nominated to serve on the Preparatory Committee should be twenty-seven and that the Chairman should be entrusted with the task of establishing the list of twenty-seven Governments to be named in that paragraph and should submit this list to the Committee for its approval.

8. Subject to this proposal of the sponsors, the draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the Committee at the same meeting (see paragraph 12 below).

9. At the 1307th meeting, the Chairman presented to the Committee, for its approval, the list of twenty-seven Governments to be named to the Preparatory Committee. The Governments were as follows: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, France, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore, Sweden, Togo, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Arab Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Yugoslavia and Zambia.
10. The list of Governments was approved by the Committee for insertion in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.
11. The Committee agreed that any interested Member State not appointed to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment may designate highly qualified representatives to act as accredited observers at sessions of the Committee, with the right to participate in its discussions (see paragraph 13 below).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

12. The Second Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

The General Assembly,

In pursuance of its decision in resolution 2398 (XXIII) of 3 December 1968 to convene in 1972 a United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and to begin immediately preparations for the Conference,

Having considered with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General^{2/} called for in the above-mentioned resolution,

Having considered the relevant chapter of the report of the Economic and Social Council,^{3/}

Taking into account the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council in the matter,

^{2/} E/4667.

^{3/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/7603), chap. V, sect. D.

Having taken cognizance of the note by the Secretary-General of
21 October 1969,^{4/}

Reaffirming the importance and urgency of the problems of the human environment and underlining the necessity for complete preparatory arrangements for the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment to become operative as soon as possible,

Recognizing the important work on the problems of the human environment that is at present being undertaken and planned by the organizations in the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and national Governments,

1. Endorses in general the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General regarding the purposes and objectives of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment;

2. Affirms that it should be the main purpose of the Conference to serve as a practical means to encourage, and to provide guidelines for, action by Governments and international organizations designed to protect and improve the human environment, and to remedy and prevent its impairment, by means of international co-operation, bearing in mind the particular importance of enabling developing countries to forestall the occurrence of such problems;

3. Entrusts to the Secretary-General the over-all responsibility for organizing and preparing for the Conference, bearing in mind the views expressed during the debates of the forty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Council and the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly;

4. Establishes a Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment - consisting of highly qualified representatives nominated by the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, France, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore, Sweden, Togo, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Arab Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Yugoslavia and Zambia - to advise the Secretary-General;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to set up immediately a small conference secretariat, by drawing, with the agreement of the specialized agencies concerned, particularly upon regular staff of the United Nations system, and to appoint, at the appropriate time, a Secretary-General of the Conference;

6. Further requests the Secretary-General to pursue the consultations on the preparations for the Conference, undertaken by him in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII), to take account of the results of other international conferences such as the Conference on the Problems of Environment organized by the Economic Commission for Europe and scheduled to take place at Prague in 1971, and to draw on contributions from appropriate intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

7. Invites the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development to collaborate closely with the Secretary-General in the preparations for the Conference and to assist, as appropriate, in the work of the Preparatory Committee;

8. Invites the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to lend every possible assistance in the preparations for the Conference;

9. Requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Preparatory Committee, to take the necessary steps, as part of the preparations for the Conference, to bring to public attention the nature and importance of the problems of the human environment;

10. Believes it essential that all participating countries be enabled to take an active part in the preparations for the Conference and the Conference itself, and requests the Secretary-General to investigate what concrete steps could be taken to this end;

11. Notes the outline of the range of the possible financial implications for the United Nations of the holding of the Conference presented in the Secretary-General's reports^{5/} and requests the Secretary-General, in the light of the views expressed during the debates of the forty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Council and the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, to make all efforts to reduce the costs of the Conference;

^{5/} E/4667 and A/7707.

12. Decides that the Conference should be of two weeks' duration and requests the Secretary-General to take full account of this fact in preparing for the Conference;

13. Believes that, in order for the Conference to achieve its objectives, it is essential that its agenda be selective, its organizational structure be simple and efficient, and that the documentation be kept reasonably limited;

14. Accepts with appreciation the invitation of the Government of Sweden^{6/} to hold the Conference in Sweden in June 1972;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a brief progress report to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session through the Economic and Social Council at its forty-ninth session;

16. Decides to consider the progress of the preparatory work and to take the necessary further decisions at its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions.

13. In addition, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following decision:

"The General Assembly decides that any interested Member State not appointed to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment may designate highly qualified representatives to act as accredited observers at sessions of the Committee, with the right to participate in its discussions."
