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CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-NINTH MEETING

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on Monday, 10 September 1951, at 11 a.m.

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Present:

Chairman: Mr. KOTSCHNIG

Members:

Belgium	Mr. van der SCHUEREN Baron de KERCHOVE d'EXAERDE
Canada	Mr. LESAGE Miss MEAGHER
Chile	Mrs. FIGUEROA
China	Mr. TSAO
Czechoslovakia	Mr. NOSEK
France	Mr. HESSEL
India	Mr. DESAI
Iran	Mr. JAZAERI
Mexico	Mr. CALDERON PUIG
Pakistan	Mr. Atwar HUSSAIN
Philippines	Mr. INGLES
Poland	Miss KALINOWSKA
Sweden	Mr. MICHANEK
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. MOROSOV
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. CORLEY SMITH
United States of America	Mr. LUBIN Mr. CATES
Uruguay	Mr. ALVAREZ OLLONIEGO

Observers from Member States:

Brazil	Mr. MACHADO
Netherlands	Mr. van ASCH van WIJCK
Yugoslavia	Mr. PLEIĆ

Representatives of specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation	Mr. FLORES
Food and Agriculture Organization	Mr. McDUGALL
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Mr. TERNZIO
World Health Organization	Miss HOWELL

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category B and Register

Co-ordinating Board of Jewish Organizations	Mr. WARBURG
International Federation of University Women	Miss MILLS
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Mrs. BAER
World Jewish Congress	Mr. BIENENFELD

Secretariat:

Mr. Steinig	Acting Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Social Affairs
Mr. Hogan	Secretary to the Committee

REPORTS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS COMMISSIONS (item 36 of the Council agenda) (E/1995 and Corr.1, E/1995/Add.1 to 4, E/2073, E/L.176, E/AC.24/L.35, E/AC.24/L.36, E/AC.24/L.38)

The CHAIRMAN suggested that, after a general discussion on the reports of the Ad hoc Committee, the Co-ordination Committee might first consider the question of the regional economic Commissions, including their terms of reference and rules of procedure. It might next deal with the functional Commissions, after which it could take up the question of the delimitation of responsibility between the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the field of freedom of information. Finally, it would have to deal with the organization of the Council itself and with its rules of procedure, together with the proposal to shorten the Council's debates referred to it by the Council at its 543rd meeting.

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) supported the Chairman's suggestion.

The Chairman's suggestion was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN declared open the general discussion on the reports of the Ad hoc Committee (E/1995 and Corr.1, E/1995/Add.1 and 2).

Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) considered the reports of the Ad hoc Committee to be very important. **Those delegations** which had been attending sessions of the Council over a considerable period would appreciate the need for reforming and improving the Council's organization and operation. There was widespread public criticism of profliteration, wastefulness and unnecessary duplication of discussion in the Council and its subsidiary bodies, criticism which had been more or less recognized by the General Assembly. Such criticism obviously demeaned the prestige of the United Nations.

Organizations could only remain healthy so long as they were vital and capable of adapting themselves to changing circumstances. He was not intending to criticize the founders of the United Nations, who had initiated a system offering a reasonable basis for efficient work, when he said that, after six years

of operation, certain elements in the operational structure of the organization should be reformed. As the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs had remarked during the initial discussion in the Ad hoc Committee, although that Committee was a small group performing a more or less abstruse function, the eyes of the world were upon it, because its suggestions would have a considerable effect on the Council's work.

The Ad hoc Committee's function had been to undertake a comprehensive review of the organization and operation of the Council and its Commissions. The recommendations submitted by it referred exclusively to procedures and working methods. Consequently, if a given Commission was abolished, that would not mean that the Council had lost interest in the subject dealt with by that Commission; it would merely mean that the Council was attempting to deal with it by a different method.

During the six years of the Council's existence, a large number of representatives had expressed doubts as to the usefulness of maintaining a considerable number of its permanent Commissions. He had talked with several of the initiators of the existing system, and in particular with Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, who had admitted that the system of large standing bodies was different from what had originally been intended. Those bodies had become permanent inter-governmental Commissions which duplicated the work of the Council. Many delegations felt that, instead of referring a given subject to a series of organs similar in structure and repetitive in their discussions, small ad hoc groups with limited terms of reference should be set up to prepare the basic documentation for submission to the Council, which would then take the necessary decisions at the political level.

In many cases, and he hoped that the number of such cases would increase, it was the task of the Secretariat to undertake the preliminary expert work. Although, in the early days, it had been more difficult, for administrative reasons, for the Secretariat to perform that function, it was nowadays in a much better position to do so. If the Council felt that it should have the best expert information in a given matter, and if the Secretariat was unable to

mobilize all the necessary talent from among its own staff, the Secretariat requested to make appropriate arrangements to enlist the help of outside experts.

The Ad hoc Committee had devoted twenty-three meetings of exhaustive and arduous work to a study of the problem, and its recommendations were therefore not to be lightly dismissed. A spirit of compromise had prevailed in the Committee, and a pragmatic approach had been followed. The recommendations which had emerged from the discussions were, perhaps, not entirely to the liking of any delegation, but they were imbued with the spirit of co-operation; all delegations had sacrificed a part of their original philosophies.

The recommendations were submitted in the light of past experience, and on an experimental basis. They were in two parts, the first setting forth what the Ad hoc Committee considered to be an ideal system, the second containing realistic suggestions which, although falling short of the ideal, could be implemented forthwith. The latter recommendations had been made as flexible as possible.

The Ad hoc Committee had felt that the Council should hold three sessions a year. Many delegations had taken the view that the subjects for discussion at ~~the sessions should be divided~~, in order to avoid long multi-topic sessions with concurrent meetings. Moreover, the Ad hoc Committee appreciated the difficulty, experienced particularly by the smaller delegations, of governments sending sufficient representatives to Council sessions of the present type. It was suggested that the burden of the Council's work could be lightened by holding two specialized sessions earlier in each year. One of those sessions would be devoted to economic, the other to social items. It seemed that it would still be necessary to hold the usual multi-purpose Council session in the summer, but at least the Council's work would be lightened if some of the more important subjects had by then been dealt with at the specialized sessions. He felt that the suggestions for reducing the burden would be especially appreciated.

Mr. TSAO (China) endorsed the United Kingdom representative's observations. The Ad hoc Committee had worked conscientiously, and had contrived a compromise solution which, although it would hardly satisfy all representatives, was, perhaps, the best that could have been expected. Judging by experience at the current session, there was need for a reorganization of the Council's operations. At such multi-topic sessions a great strain was placed on the larger, not to speak of the smaller, delegations, and the Council's work suffered accordingly. He therefore supported the reports of the Ad hoc Committee in general.

Mr. INGLES (Philippines) observed that there appeared to be a tendency to link the conduct of the Council's discussions with the reports of the Ad hoc Committee. But the reports dealt mainly with organizational matters and not with procedure in the conduct of debates.

His delegation supported the general considerations outlined in paragraph 12 of the report (E/1995), although it did not approve of all the suggested recommendations. It was obvious from the recommendations concerning the organization of the Council (E/1995, part III) that there was considerable dissatisfaction with the present system of convening two intensive sessions of the Council each year, a view which he shared. On the other hand, he disagreed with the main recommendation that three sessions should be held. The reasons advanced for making such a change in the Council's operational programme did not support the conclusion. On the contrary, those reasons could be adduced in support of the case against an increase in the number of sessions. Three sessions would intensify rather than diminish the current difficulties.

The first report of the Ad hoc Committee stated (paragraph 13) that "Too many meetings, on too many diverse subjects, are concentrated within a relatively short period. This imposes an undue strain on delegations, and tends to lower the level of discussion". In his view, the remedy would be to lengthen the period of each session rather than to increase the number of sessions. It might also be helpful to distribute items more evenly between the two sessions. Moreover, delegations would prefer to remain longer at the seat



of the Council rather than to travel to meetings of the Council several times each year. He did not feel that longer sessions need impose an undue strain on delegations, because, whereas the General Assembly normally sat for three months in the year, the duration of the Council's sessions was less than two months.

The level of discussion depended more on the state of preparation of delegations than on the length of the session. Again, if a session were too short, there might not be time for adequate consideration of all the items on the agenda.

The first report referred (paragraph 13) to the "waste of the time of experts travelling from their own countries to join delegations, since they may wait several weeks for the discussion of the subjects which concerned them to be completed". He thought that experts should be prepared to stay as long as the subjects interesting them remained on the agenda. But, in any event, that had nothing to do with the number of sessions which the Council should hold. Indeed, if three sessions were held annually, the experts would have to travel even more frequently. The Council's programme should be so arranged as to enable experts to be informed well in advance when the items with which they were concerned would come up for discussion.

The first report also mentioned the constant necessity for the Council to divide into several committees in order to accomplish its work in a fixed time, which sometimes led to a repetition of the same discussion in committee and in plenary meeting. It was for the Council to decide whether a given subject should be taken up in plenary meeting or in committee. In that connexion, he approved of the suggestions set forth in the working paper concerning the operation of the Council submitted by the French delegation (E/AC.24/L.35). It might also be possible to arrange for meetings of committees a considerable time before a session of the Council as such opened.

Finally, the first report stated (paragraph 13) that "The system has been accompanied by inadequate preparation for the meetings", but that was irrelevant so far as the number of sessions was concerned; the necessary remedy was simply



to ensure that the preparation for meetings was adequate. In order to improve the Council's method of work, he considered that it would be sufficient to act on recommendations (ii), (iii) and (iv) in paragraph 14 of the first report, on the suggestions put forward by the French representative (E/AC.24/L.35), and on the note by the Secretary-General on the composition and time-table of the Agenda Committee (E/1995/Add.4). In his opinion, recommendations (i) and (v) were irrelevant in the context of the other suggestions.

With regard to the Ad hoc Committee's recommendations concerning the organization of the functional Commissions (E/1995, part IV), he would reserve his position with regard to the maintenance or dissolution of particular Commissions. It should be noted that the Ad hoc Committee had indicated that its recommendations were purely of an experimental character. That being so, he saw no reason why the recommendation that the majority of the functional Commissions should meet only when specially convened by the Council on the recommendation of the Secretary-General should not be extended to all Commissions recommended for abolition by the Ad hoc Committee. Obviously, outright abolition of a Commission could never be regarded as experimental. It might also be worth while to review the terms of reference of the various Commissions, the broadness and vagueness of which were giving rise to considerable difficulty.

One point which had been overlooked in the reports, was where the various sessions of the Council should be held, a point of considerable importance, since it had a decisive bearing on the Council's work. In 1951, the Council had held its twelfth session in Chile and a special meeting in New York, and was now holding its thirteenth session in Geneva. That had imposed an undue strain on certain delegations. He agreed that there might be certain advantages in holding occasional sessions away from Headquarters, but to do so twice in one year was somewhat excessive.

Mr. Atwar HUSSAIN (Pakistan) agreed that certain reforms in the organization and operation of the Council and its Commissions were called for. The general considerations in the first report (E/1995, part II) were particularly valuable, although they did not entirely tally with the suggestions made later in that document. He agreed with the recommendations that the Council should, so far

as practicable, discuss matters in plenary meeting, and that the arrangements for sessions should be such as to facilitate the attendance of the expert advisers of member Governments, particularly in connection with technical matters. It was also important that there should be a most thorough preparation of subjects before they were discussed in the Council, and that the agenda and other basic documentation should be prepared well in advance of each session.

He could not support the recommendation that the Economic, Employment and Development Commission and the Transport and Communications Commission should be discontinued. He also disagreed with the recommendation that there should be three sessions of the Council each year, since that would lead to increased expenditure, and since small delegations like his own would experience considerable difficulty in attending more than two sessions.

Mr. JAZAERI (Iran) thought that it would be preferable for the Council to hold three sessions a year. Even if the majority of the Committee thought otherwise, he considered that it would still be advisable for at least one session to be devoted to social questions.

Mr. HESSEL (France) attached particular importance to the discussions in the Co-ordination Committee on the question of the reorganization of the Council and its subsidiary organs. There had been a wide measure of agreement among the members of the Ad hoc Committee on the considerations which should be borne in mind when making proposals for reorganization designed to increase the effectiveness of the Council and its subsidiary bodies as instruments for implementing the provisions of the Charter. Members of the Ad hoc Committee had recognized the need for reforming the methods and organization of the Council in the interests of simplification. With regard to the means to be used to that end, France had already reserved her position in the Ad hoc Committee. It had been very difficult for that Committee to formulate the principles on which reorganization of the Council and its subsidiary bodies should be based, and the Co-ordination Committee would be well advised not to reopen discussion on those issues. It should, however, consider whether the reorganization could be carried out by other methods than those recommended by the Ad hoc Committee.

Consequently, he would prefer not to give an opinion on that subject until the Committee came to examine and discuss the Ad hoc Committee's recommendations in detail.

Mr. GATES (United States of America) explained that his Government attached great importance to the activities of the Council, and therefore hoped that its work would be reorganized in such a way as to ensure maximum efficiency. It was unfortunate that experts attached to delegations should be obliged to waste a considerable time waiting until their specialized subject came up for consideration, and that the agenda of any one session of the Council should contain such a variety of economic and social items. The deliberations of the Ad hoc Committee had been long and arduous, but it had succeeded in producing reports which would be of great assistance to the Co-ordination Committee, since they focused attention on the most outstanding problems calling for solution. He hoped that it would not be necessary to repeat in the Co-ordination Committee what had already been said at length in the Ad hoc Committee. Further, it might facilitate the Committee's work if the Secretariat were asked to prepare a draft resolution on the basis of the various recommendations put forward in the reports. That would bring the issues into sharper relief and give the Committee something more concrete to act on.

Since the reports had been issued, a suggestion had been put forward by the French delegation (E/AC.24/L.36) to the effect that certain of the Council's Commissions might meet every two years instead of every year. In view of the general position of the United States Government with regard to intensive annual programmes of meetings, and of the action taken by the specialized agencies on the Committee's recommendation, he was inclined to favour that suggestion.

He also agreed with the recommendation that the Council should meet three times a year, but doubted whether it would be feasible to concentrate the great variety of social and human rights issues into one winter session. Moreover, if all the items connected with human rights were, as had been suggested, put on the agenda of a session which was due to meet some considerable time after the session of the Commission on Human Rights, a considerable part of the discussion would be

rendered unrealistic. His Government's views on points of detail would be made known at the appropriate time.

Mr. MACHADO (Observer for the Brazilian Government), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that the reorganization of the Council's work would directly affect its authority and prestige. The question before the Committee could not be dealt with exclusively by procedural methods. The problem was whether the vast number of subjects of human interest could be dealt with by the delegations to the Council. Unlike the Secretariat, the Council could not summon extra members to assist it. The tasks assigned to the United Nations and its specialized agencies related to nearly a thousand different topics.

Delegations were supposed to study at home items proposed for discussion in the Council, while at Council meetings they had to act not only in the interests of their governments but also in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. He therefore felt that either the duration of each session should be extended, or some list of priorities should be established. The Council was endeavouring to do too much at once. Moreover, it was almost physically impossible for delegations to digest the vast mass of documentation placed before them.

As the Philippines representative had pointed out, the place of the Council's sessions was an important consideration. The composition of delegations in New York was different from that in Geneva, and that fact had a bearing on the substantive value of the discussions. It was necessary to maintain continuity in the consideration of a given subject, and it was not entirely satisfactory that governments should be obliged to call on, for example, local consular officials to represent them in the Council. Moreover, the holding of meetings in Geneva entailed considerable difficulties for the Secretariat. He therefore considered it necessary for the Council to adopt a permanent decision as to where it intended to meet, so that delegations could make appropriate arrangements. That was a practical question which could not be ignored.

He agreed with the United Kingdom representative that the recommendations put forward in the reports of the Ad hoc Committee constituted the best compromise solutions which that Committee could have reached.

Mr. CALDERON PUIG (Mexico), paying tribute to the constructive work done by the Ad hoc Committee with the object of increasing the efficiency of the Council as a basic organ of the United Nations, said that he agreed with almost all of the Committee's recommendations. He also agreed with the United Kingdom representative that the discontinuance of any of the subsidiary bodies of the Council would not imply that no more work would be done on the topics which had hitherto been entrusted to them. He could not approve of the recommendation that the Council should hold three regular sessions a year. It would be preferable to hold two sessions, if necessary of longer duration. Experience had shown that certain countries already had great difficulty in making up their delegations for sessions of the Council, and their difficulties would be greatly increased if the recommendation in question was adopted. So far as concerned the meeting-place for Council sessions, he agreed that there was some advantage in the Council meeting in various countries in turn. But it was essential, from the point of view of administrative efficiency, that the Council should normally meet at United Nations Headquarters, where Member States maintained permanent delegations which could more readily provide adequate representation in the Council. In addition, when sessions were held away from Headquarters government experts had perforce to travel long distances, and were also frequently obliged to wait until the Council took up the questions with which they were concerned, the result being a considerable expenditure of time and money.

As to the specialization of sessions, recommended by the Ad hoc Committee, he considered that economic and social questions were closely related and could hardly be separated.

In conclusion, while agreeing with the Ad hoc Committee's constructive recommendations, he reserved the right to revert later to the particular points he had just mentioned. At all events, no hasty changes should be made in the structure of the Council. Subsidiary bodies could not be discontinued unless their activities could be taken over by others; otherwise, the public would be given the impression that the Council was ceasing to take an interest in certain questions which were of special importance at the present juncture.



Mr. ALVAREZ OLLONIEGO (Uruguay) said that, although he approved of the general principles underlying the ad hoc Committee's report, he was unable, at that moment, to give any definite indication of the attitude of the Uruguayan Government towards certain specific suggestions contained in it; however, he would state his Government's views on those questions as the various recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee were considered in turn by the present Committee. He wished, however, at once to state that he considered it essential to avoid repetition of discussions, and to seek a solution which would simplify the Council's work. In particular, means must be found of ensuring that the Council would not have to study social, economic and co-ordination questions at one and the same session. His country was in favour of specialized sessions for economic and social questions. Of some relevance in that connexion was the fact, to which attention had already been drawn by the representative of Mexico, that certain countries had difficulty in getting together an adequately representative delegation, and in releasing experts to attend sessions of the Council, since such experts often wasted a considerable amount of time in waiting for the Council to take up the questions on which they were competent.

Miss MEAGHER (Canada) reserved the right of the Canadian delegation to take part in the discussion of specific recommendations made by the Ad hoc Committee. In 1950, Canada had been one of the sponsors of that Committee's creation. Though convinced of the value of the Council's work, the Canadian delegation was watching its methods with growing concern. A vast volume of resources, both of time and manpower, seemed to result in disproportionately small achievement, and the Canadian delegation would support any change in methods susceptible of eliminating duplication of effort and of increasing efficiency.

Though Canada had not been a member of the Ad hoc Committee, it had submitted certain recommendations to it which were more radical than the Committee's own; the Canadian position was not, however, inflexible. Subject to minor modifications, the Canadian delegation would support the recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee for a reduction in the size of the Council's operational machinery (Commissions, Committees and so on); for the arrangement of the Council's work to enable

questions of a related nature to be grouped together and dealt with at separate sessions; and for a trial basis for any changes, which should be subject to modification, if necessary, within two or three years.

Mr. MOROSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) considered that a clear conception of the shortcomings of the Council's work was an essential basis for a proper appraisal of the Ad hoc Committee's proposals.

The Ad hoc Committee apparently considered that one such shortcoming was that the Council met only twice a year, and that an additional third session might bring about a radical change for the better, and enable the Council more adequately to discharge its task. In the view of his delegation, however, the fundamental weaknesses of the Council's work did not arise from the holding of two sessions rather than three. The Council had been set up to deal with problems laid down in the Charter, particularly those specified in Article 55. The only objective answer which could be given to the question whether it had solved those problems was "No", and that failure was not due to the fact that only two sessions were held each year.

Under pressure from the United States of America and other countries, the Council had evaded its fundamental tasks. The basic aim of the Charter was the maintenance of international peace and security, and the primary tasks of the Council should be to halt the armaments drive, to increase civilian production, to reduce the price of consumer goods, to bring down taxation, to ensure that appropriations for health, housing and education were increased, and to promote normal economic and trade relations between States. Instead, as the Soviet Union delegation had already pointed out, the Council had not concentrated on those tasks, but on minor activities outside its true field of activity. Until the Council really set about solving the most pressing problems of the century, and living up to the terms of reference prescribed for it in the Charter, it would inevitably fail in its purpose. Though the recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee were undoubtedly of some importance, its reports, unfortunately, made no mention of a change of policy.



Two principle organizational shortcomings had been noted by the Ad hoc Committee. First was the fact that there were too many meetings on too many questions, entailing undue expenditure of time and money. In that connexion, he would point out that, for the present session alone, a long list of unnecessary tasks, divorced from the Council's proper functions but none the less taken up by it, could be drawn up. The reports of the Transport and Communications Commission, the Fiscal Commission and the Statistical Commission were cases in point. Nevertheless, instead of making recommendations for the avoidance of minor issues and for concentrating the Council's attention on its proper functions, the Ad hoc Committee proposed that the number of sessions to be held each year should be increased. Any such proposal must be rejected forthwith; otherwise the Council's shortcomings would be intensified, and the cost of running the Secretariat increased.

Secondly, the Ad hoc Committee had rightly drawn attention to the delay in circulating documents. Every session was marked by complaints that not only governments, but even delegations, had no opportunity of studying reports in detail, because they had been issued unduly late, in defiance of the rule of procedure which laid down that all the relevant documentation should be circulated not later than the time of despatch of the provisional agenda to governments. Yet the Ad hoc Committee had been unable to propose any solution to that problem. The Council could easily carry out its work with one, or at most two sessions a year, if it were content to confine itself to its functions as laid down in the Charter. If the Ad hoc Committee's recommendation to hold three sessions were adopted, the existing defects in organization would only be aggravated and more money wasted.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.