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CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE NINETIETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Monday, 10 September 1951, at 3 p.m.

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Present:

Chairman: Mr. KOTSCHNIG

Members:

Belgium	Mr. van der SCHUEREN Baron de KERCHOVE d'EXAERDE
Canada	Miss MEAGHER
Chile	Mrs. FIGUEROA
China	Mr. YU Mr. TSAO
Czechoslovakia	Mr. NOSEK Mr. LEJNAR
France	Mr. ABELIN Mr. HESSEL
India	Mr. DESAI
Iran	Mr. JAZAERI
Mexico	Mr. CALDERÓN PUIG
Pakistan	Mr. Atwar HUSSAIN
Philippines	Mr. REYES
Poland	Miss KALINOWSKA
Sweden	Mr. MICHAŁEK
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. MOROSOV
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. OVERTON
United States of America	Mr. LUBIN Miss BELL
Uruguay	Mr. ALVAREZ OLLONIEGO

Observers from Member States:

Brazil	Mr. MACHADO
Netherlands	Mr. van ASCH van WIJCK

Representatives of specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation	Mr. COX
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Mr. TARENZIO
World Health Organization	Dr. FORREST Mr. BERTRAND

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:Category B and Register

International Catholic Press Union	Mr. THOMAS
International Federation of University Women	Miss MILLS
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Mrs. BAER

Secretariat:

Mr. Steinig	Acting Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Social Affairs
Mr. Lukac	Director, Division of Transport and Communications
Mr. Malinowski	Division of Economic Stability and Development
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/L.274, E/AC.24/L.35, E/AC.24/L.36, E/AC.24/L.38, E/AC.24/L.39) (continued)

(2) General discussion (continued)

The CHAIRMAN requested the Committee to continue its general discussion of the reports of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Organization and Operation of the Council and its Commissions.

Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) said that although the Czechoslovak delegation had not been represented on the Ad Hoc Committee, it had followed its work with much interest, and had carefully studied the reports it had submitted. The improvement of the organization and operation of the Council was of the greatest importance if it was to fulfil the tasks assigned to it under the Charter, but hitherto the activities of the Council had been so broad in scope as to prevent it from discharging those basic functions. It was impossible, however, for him to agree with the views of some members of the Ad Hoc Committee. He concurred with the opinion of the Soviet Union representative that the Ad Hoc Committee had laid too much emphasis on organizational reforms, and had thus failed to come to grips with the crux of the problem, which was that the Council and its Commissions should always keep before them the basic tasks prescribed for them in the Charter, and so organize their work as to ensure that they were carried out in the quickest way possible. The Council should concentrate on the solution of only such questions as were directly connected with those fundamental tasks, and not waste time and energy on secondary matters. The agenda of each session of the Council and its Commission should be drawn up with that principle in mind, and should be carefully documented. He was convinced that if those principles were constantly kept in view the organizational and technical problems of the Council would be easily solved.

Mr. van der SCHUEREN (Belgium) outlined the background of the question before the Committee, and quoted the provisions of Chapters IX and X of the Charter, which laid down clearly and precisely the functions and powers of the Economic and

Social Council. The Ad Hoc Committee had considered how the Council had performed, and would in future perform, its task, and how it might develop into the body directing the vast joint effort to achieve the purposes of the Charter.

He quoted some passages from the speech of the President of the Council at the opening meeting of the present session (see document E/SR.481, paragraphs 26, 28 and 29). He agreed with the President that public opinion exercised an important influence on the decisions of governments, but he also felt that the competent authorities ought to lead, channel and direct that opinion rather than be led by it, a task which called for great confidence, sincerity and courage. In all countries in which it could express itself freely, public opinion was undoubtedly hostile, or at least indifferent, to the many international organizations set up since the Second World War. Few people understood or appreciated the attempts to realize international co-operation that had been made in nearly every field to preserve peace and to promote the well-being of mankind. Governments were partly responsible, since they clearly only too often failed to inform their public of the exact extent of such international co-operation. But the public attitude was justified by the poor, often disappointing, results achieved, and by the frequently unsatisfactory working methods and organization of international meetings. As a result, many people thought that international co-operation as at present practised cost more than it was worth.

The Economic and Social Council could be criticized for the fact that it had only rarely taken decisions of any importance, and for having failed to play the very important part expected of it. It might, of course, be said in the Council's defence that in the last resort it was the governments of States Members which took the decisions, and that it was consequently they who were responsible for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, but the fact remained that the way in which the Council worked had gradually smothered the interest of governments in its activities. He was sure that none of the States Members of the United Nations wished to turn the Council into an academic body devoid of all political significance. The Council must therefore find the courage to reorganize itself.

The first defect of the Council's working methods was repetition of the same discussions at different levels: in the functional Commissions, then in the Economic or Social Committee, and finally in the Council itself. The functional Commissions had been set up to prepare the Council's work; their members should be experts independent of governments, acting on their own responsibility, so that their preparatory work should be of the greatest help to the Council. On the other hand, the discussions in the Economic and Social Committees were too frequently repeated at plenary meetings, whereas it had been intended that those Committees should relieve the Council of some of its work. The composition of the Council was the same as that of its committees of the whole, and, generally speaking, the same individuals took part in the work on any given question. Arguments already advanced in committee were repeated in the Council, whereas the Council should, in principle, confine itself to carrying on the discussion from the point at which the Committee had left it, and to formulating the necessary conclusions.

The Council could also be criticized for the order in which it examined the various items on its agenda. There could be no question that, generally speaking, the Council's agenda included economic or social questions of the first importance. But it also included some secondary questions, the consideration of which unfortunately took up a great deal of time; and public opinion, and even governments, inevitably lost sight of the main issues to which special attention should more properly be given.

Lastly, the Council's sessions were generally very long, and, as it was impossible to foresee at all accurately when the examination of any given question would begin, expert members of delegations were kept cooling their heels for several weeks, a circumstance which could not fail to make it more difficult to call upon the services of qualified persons.

The distribution of documents was also open to criticism, as they were circulated late, and often in a language other than the one desired. That defect prevented members of delegations from preparing their cases adequately, and impoverished the discussions. Without wishing to underestimate the efforts made by the Secretariat, he considered that no question should be placed on the agenda until

governments had been given the opportunity of studying the relevant documents and instructing their delegations accordingly. Finally, he recalled the criticisms in that respect made by the President of the Council himself in his inaugural address at the present session (see document E/SR.481, paragraphs 38 and 39).

To remedy the defects he had just pointed out, he thought that it would be advisable, first, to separate important questions and secondary questions by drawing up an adequate agenda published well in advance of each session and strictly adhered to. He did not venture an opinion on the question whether items coming within one or the other category should be dealt with during one and the same session - some at the beginning others at the end of it. Such a scheme would, however, enable statesmen of the first rank or experts of reputation to come and take part in discussions scheduled to begin on definite dates. The question whether the examination of an item should take place in a Committee or in the Council itself was also one of considerable importance.

Secondly, it would be advisable to circulate well in advance the documents which were intended to serve as the basis for the discussions; the appropriate departments of the governments concerned would thus have time to make a thorough study of the relevant documentation.

Thirdly, it would be advisable to decide, as a preliminary, in which body the discussions should take place. That would obviate the repetition of identical discussions, marked by the same arguments and the same votes, in committee and in plenary meeting.

Finally, there would be good ground for grouping, for examination at the same time, items of the agenda dealing with related questions. A priori, that method of work would seem to be incompatible with the separate examination of economic and of social questions recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee.

Turning to the specific recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, he noted that that Committee advocated the retention of the regional commissions; such was also the intention of General Assembly resolution 409 (V). With regard to the functional Commissions and Sub-Commissions of the Council, the Committee proposed the discontinuance of a certain number of them, and the retention of others; again, it



recommended that certain Commissions should meet only once every two years. The Belgian delegation reserved the right to express its views on the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations concerning the functional Commissions and Sub-Commissions when the Committee came to examine those recommendations in detail.

In general, the Belgian delegation considered that the Co-ordination Committee's recommendations should discourage the examination of economic and social questions at separate sessions of the Council; it believed, indeed, that such a method would very rapidly lead to the creation of two distinct Councils - an Economic Council and a Social Council. The arguments advanced in favour of such a course did not seem to be convincing, the chief one being that economic and social questions should be examined by experts. The Belgian delegation considered, on the contrary, that the Economic and Social Council was primarily a political body, and that if the questions placed on the Council's agenda were to be examined only by experts, the tendency would be to attach too little importance to political considerations.

Again, he felt that excessive repetition should be avoided. To that end, the rules of procedure should make it possible to set a limit to the time granted to each delegation to speak in plenary meeting on questions which had already been examined in committee. The rules should also contain a provision designed to prevent speakers from wandering too far from the subject and abusing freedom of speech. The suggestion made on point by the Canadian delegation at the 542nd plenary meeting of the Council deserved very careful attention.

Next, important questions should be separated from secondary questions in the discussions. It might perhaps be advisable to provide for a short session, as proposed in the French draft resolution E/AC.24/L.35, at which the Council would deal only with questions of the first importance.

Lastly, the agenda and the documents relating to the questions placed on it should be transmitted to governments well before the opening of the session.

In conclusion, he recalled the fact that the Belgian Government had made known to the Ad Hoc Committee its desire that the Council should hold only one session each year. He admitted that that view had found few supporters. He reserved the right to speak again when the Committee began the examination of specific proposals. He emphasized, however, the point that any reform decided upon by the Council at its present session should be regarded as temporary, and enforced for a limited period only.



Mrs. FIGUEROA (Chile) considered that not all the difficulties encountered by the Economic and Social Council were attributable to its structure. No doubt the defects of that structure were responsible for many of them, but that was neither the only, nor, indeed, the main cause. In any case, recognition of the necessity for reform did not constitute a reflexion on anyone. It was quite normal for any organization to have to change its working methods and structure in order to keep pace with changing circumstances, the experience it acquired and the changing nature of the problems it was called upon to solve. Moreover, it was noteworthy that all the suggestions for reform were essentially concerned with improving the Council's efficiency.

The fact that she was entirely in agreement with the general considerations set forth in the Ad Hoc Committee's reports did not necessarily mean that the Chilean delegation would unreservedly accept all that Committee's recommendations and proposals. For example, with regard to the structure and organization of the Council itself, she felt that the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations were not always fully justified by the reasons given in support of those conclusions. The Chilean delegation would examine the various recommendations and proposals in the light of the practical results their adoption was likely to yield.

She did not think that to hold specialized sessions of the Council would remove all the difficulties with which the Council had been faced during its last few sessions. The Ad Hoc Committee's hopes of that proposal were not, she feared, entirely justified, and the third annual session, to be held prior to the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly, would find on its agenda not merely the questions earmarked for it, but a number of technical questions on which the Council had failed to reach agreement at either of the two specialized sessions held earlier in the year in question. It might perhaps be more to the point to consider the separate examination of economic and social questions at one and the same session. Some such procedure might possibly lead to more constructive results.

The problem of drawing up and circulating the Council's agenda could not be disregarded. The preparatory work carried out by interested governments, delegations

and the Secretariat in connexion with the questions on the agenda was of fundamental importance. It might perhaps even be possible to achieve considerable progress without greatly changing the Council's existing structure, if the agenda were improved by having related questions grouped together, with an indication of the definitive order in which they would be examined, and the fixed dates on which the discussion on them would open. It would also be very useful to study the way in which the various items on the Council's agenda were allocated to the Economic Committee, the Social Committee, the Co-ordination Committee and the Council proper.

The Chilean delegation considered that, from a practical standpoint, it would be advisable if the Committees of the whole did their work in such a way as to ensure that the Council would not have to examine again from the outset matters already examined by those committees. That would lighten the task of the Council itself, and in that respect the Agenda Committee could, she felt, simplify the Council's task enormously.

The Secretary-General's note on the financial and administrative implications of the proposed reforms (E/1995/Add.3) gave useful pointers as to the economies to be realised through modifications in the Council's structure. It was also helpful in any discussion of the question whether the abolition of certain commissions and their replacement by groups of experts would actually mean any saving. The Committee should pay full attention to the observations in the Secretary-General's note.

In conclusion, the Chilean delegation did not reject the Ad Hoc Committee's conclusions out of hand, but urged the present Committee to proceed with the utmost caution. It reserved the right in due course to submit detailed observations on each of the various recommendations.

Mr. MICHANEK (Sweden) said that as a newcomer to the Council the Swedish delegation found it difficult to take up a definite position at so early a stage in

the debate. However, his delegation greatly appreciated both the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee and its reports, and was generally in favour of its approach to the problem and of many of the solutions it had recommended. He considered that the Council was dealing with too many questions simultaneously, and he had the impression that it was often over-anxious to avoid deferring decisions.

His delegation accepted in principle the proposals concerning the functional and regional commissions, but would like to go a little further in some cases. He considered that the French working paper on the subject (E/AC.24/L.36) provided a good starting point for the discussion.

With regard to the question of the Council's sessions, the Swedish delegation was in favour of more concentration, but on somewhat different lines from those suggested by the Ad Hoc Committee; nor did he feel quite happy about the part of the French working paper (E/AC.24/L.35) which dealt with that question. Without committing his delegation in advance, he thought it possible to say that it would like to see some major economic questions handled separately by the Council - in some way or other. The present session had clearly shown the need for such a division.

The note by the Secretary-General regarding preparations for meetings and the role and composition of the Agenda Committee (E/1995/Add.4) seemed to him most useful.

The Swedish delegation was in favour of proposals to increase the Secretariat's responsibility. Although that would add to the Secretariat's work in some cases, he was convinced that it would reduce it in others.

Miss KALINOWSKA (Poland) emphasised the point that an improvement in the organization and operation of the Council and its commissions depended on the attitude of its members to the basic tasks prescribed for the Council in the Charter. The record of the last five years had been far from satisfactory. There was a

tendency to swamp important matters in a sea of procedure. There had been numerous examples of the accent being shifted from the substantive merits of a proposal to its procedural aspects. She detected the same tendency in the reports of the Ad Hoc Committee.

She agreed with the opinion expressed in paragraph 13 of the Ad Hoc Committee's first report (E/1995), that there were too many meetings. That circumstance placed a very heavy burden on member governments. She was surprised, however, to find that the Ad Hoc Committee's report then went on to make what seemed to her the illogical recommendation that the Council should hold three sessions each year instead of two.

The CHAIRMAN declared the general debate closed.

(b) Regional Commissions

The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that at his request the Secretariat had prepared a working paper (E/AC.24/L.39) which presented the proposals of the Ad Hoc Committee (E/1995/Add.1) in a systematic form, and covered the subject in a more detailed and complete manner than the working paper submitted by the French delegation (E/AC.24/L.36). He asked the Committee to decide which of the two documents it would prefer to take as the basis for its discussion.

Mr. ABELIN (France) said that there was no incompatibility between the French draft resolution and the working paper submitted by the Secretariat. Hence he could agree to the latter being taken as the basis for discussion. The French delegation would in fact sponsor the draft resolution contained in the Secretariat's memorandum, while reserving the right to submit certain amendments to it.

The CHAIRMAN accordingly suggested that the Committee should first discuss whether the regional commissions should be continued (sub-paragraph (i) in the first operative paragraph of the draft resolution contained in document E/AC.24/L.39).

Mr. HESSEL (France) considered that, among all the bodies that had been created by the United Nations in the economic and social field, there were few that had so plainly demonstrated their usefulness and efficiency during the past few years as the regional commissions. The results already achieved by those commissions, and especially by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), were highly encouraging. In every case the principles of effective regional co-operation had been established. The fact could not be disguised, however, that the regional commissions were still far from attaining the objectives laid down in their terms of reference. They should be continued, so that they could further develop their activities.

The French delegation therefore unreservedly supported the recommendations in paragraphs 5 to 10 of the second report of the Ad Hoc Committee (E/1995/Add.1), in so far as those recommendations were designed, through the indefinite continuation of the regional commissions, to afford greater stability to their work and to strengthen the ties which bound them to the Council.

With regard to the relations between the regional commissions and non-governmental organizations, the French delegation wished to see those relations develop in such a way that the commissions would enjoy all possible support from the non-governmental organizations, without prejudice to the effective prosecution of their activities. It was to that end, and also with a view to simplifying the provisions defining the status of non-governmental organizations in relation to the regional commissions, that the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had adopted the recommendation which was reproduced in paragraph (a) (5) of the draft resolution contained in the French working paper (E/AC.24/L.36).

He hoped that the Committee would adopt those recommendations, which entailed no radical change in the activities of the regional commissions.

Mr. OVERTON (United Kingdom) pointed out that the document prepared by the Secretariat (E/AC.24/L.39) did not refer to the general principles set forth in paragraphs 5 to 10 of the Ad Hoc Committee's second report (E/1995/Add.1).

The CHAIRMAN explained that the working paper prepared by the Secretariat dealt exclusively with the regional commissions. If it was so desired, the general principles might be included in the draft resolution, but consideration of the future of the regional commissions was only one small part of the work of the Co-ordination Committee, and the general principles might therefore well be discussed later.

There being no objection, the CHAIRMAN assumed that the Co-ordination Committee would recommend to the Council that the regional commissions should be continued.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN then declared discussion on the terms of reference of the regional commissions open, starting with the first amendment to the terms of reference of ECE (E/AC.24/L.39).

Economic Commission for Europe

New paragraph 13

Mr. MOROSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked the French representative to explain the reasons for the proposal to add a new paragraph 13 to the terms of reference of ECE.

Mr. HESSEL (France) explained that the proposal contained in document E/AC.24/L.39, which replaced sub-paragraphs (1) to (4) and (6) of paragraph (a) of the French draft resolution (E/AC.24/L.36), had been directly inspired by the Ad hoc Committee's recommendations. The Ad hoc Committee had thought fit to recommend the inclusion of a paragraph in the rules of procedure of the regional commissions on the relations between non-governmental organizations and the regional commissions, with a view to bringing them more into line with the principles adopted by the Council. The Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had made a similar recommendation.



Mr. OVERTON (United Kingdom) thought that the report of the Council NGO Committee on the rules governing relations with non-governmental organizations should be taken into account. The proposed new paragraph 13 in the terms of reference for ECE stated that the Commission was to make arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations "in accordance with the principles approved by the Council for this purpose". Those principles were set out in parts I and II of Council resolution 288 (X) B; but that resolution also contained detailed arrangements regarding consultative arrangements with the Council itself and with various subsidiary bodies. He felt, therefore, that it would be wiser to specify that the recommendation in the new paragraph 13 referred only to principles, that was, to parts I and II alone of Council resolution 288 (X) B.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether the United Kingdom representative would move a formal amendment to the wording of document E/AC.24/L.39, which was, he pointed out, the exact wording proposed by the Ad hoc Committee.

Mr. OVERTON (United Kingdom) proposed that the words "and contained in parts I and II of its resolution 288 (X) B" should be inserted in the new paragraph 13 after the words "for this purpose".

Mr. MOROSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not consider that the question under consideration was being properly dealt with. The Soviet Union delegation had not had sufficient time to study the proposed draft resolution, which should not, in his opinion, be put to the vote at the present meeting.

The French representative had explained that the French delegation's object in submitting a proposal had been to achieve uniformity between the rules of procedure of the three regional commissions and to bring them into harmonious relations with the Council's rules. The Soviet Union delegation considered that there was no need to impose uniform rules of procedure on the regional commissions. The latter were autonomous bodies, and each had its own special problems. A decision on the lines proposed could serve no useful purpose. The regional



commissions, moreover, were themselves in the best position to say how their work could be harmonized, and could very well decide if any changes in their working methods were called for. The Soviet Union delegation therefore objected to any decision which would make the regional commissions the ward of the Council in that respect and limit the powers they had hitherto exercised.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a decision on proposed new paragraph 13 should be deferred until the next meeting.

He added that there was no need to discuss those amendments which were designed merely to change the order of the paragraphs in the Commission's terms of reference.

It was so agreed.

Former paragraph 19 (new paragraph 20)

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the wording of paragraph 19 of the terms of reference of ECE was no longer appropriate, as it related to the special review of commissions by the Council which had already been undertaken. The wording proposed for the new paragraph 20 was as follows:

"The Council shall, from time to time, make special reviews of the work of the Commission".

There were no further comments on new paragraph 20.

Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East

The CHAIRMAN asked the Committee to consider next the amendments to the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) set out in document E/AC.24/L.39, section B. Most of these amendments had been proposed by ECAFE itself in its report on its seventh session.

Paragraph 1

There were no comments on the amendments to paragraph 1.

Paragraph 2

There were no comments on the amendment to paragraph 2.

Paragraph 3

There were no comments on the amendment to paragraph 3.

Paragraph 3 A (i) (new paragraph 4)

There were no comments on new paragraph 4.

New paragraph 5

Mr. MOROSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was asked to prefer to introduce his amendment to new paragraph 5 at the following meeting.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the discussion on new paragraph 5 and the Soviet Union amendment thereto, should be deferred until the following meeting.

It was so agreed.

Former paragraph 3 A (iii) (new paragraph 7)

Miss BELL (United States of America) enquired whether she was right in thinking that under the amendment Associate Members would only be entitled to vote in the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, not in the Commission itself.

In reply, and also answering a similar enquiry from Mr. DESAI (India), Mr. MALINOWSKI (Secretariat) said that that was indeed the correct interpretation. Associate Members were to have the right to vote in subsidiary bodies of the Commission. The amendment gave formal effect to the practice that had grown up in the Commission since its inception, the old terms of reference having been interpreted as enabling Associate Members to vote in subsidiary bodies.

There were no further comments on new paragraph 7.

Former paragraph 3 A (iv)

In reply to a question by Mr. DESAI (India), Mr. MALINOWSKI (Secretariat) said that the reason why it was proposed to delete former

paragraph 3 A (iv) was that all the non-self-governing territories referred to in paragraph 3 A (i) had become Associate Members of ECAFE, so that there was no longer any need to make special provision for consultation with non-self-governing territories which were not Associate Members of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the question of the deletion of former paragraph 3 A (iv) might be considered as related to new paragraph 5 and the Soviet Union amendment thereto. It should therefore also be considered at the following meeting.

It was so agreed.

New paragraph 12

The CHAIRMAN suggested that new paragraph 12 was identical with proposed new paragraph 13 of the terms of reference of ECE, on which no decision had been reached, consideration of the former should also be deferred until the next meeting.

It was so agreed.

Former paragraph 14 (new paragraph 19)

There were no comments on new paragraph 19.

Former paragraph 15 (new paragraph 20)

The CHAIRMAN noted that the amendment to former paragraph 15 was similar to the amendment to former paragraph 19 of the terms of reference of ECE.

There were no further comments on new paragraph 20.

Economic Commission for Latin America

Paragraph 1

Miss BELL (United States of America) said that the United States delegation agreed to the amendment to paragraph 1 of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), and also to those which had been proposed to paragraph 1 of the terms of reference of ECAFE, but would like

to make it clear that, in the view of the United States Government, the rôle of the regional commissions and their secretariats in the technical assistance programme was important, but was still mainly one of assisting the central authorities - both the Council itself and the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration - in carrying out the United Nations programmes of technical assistance. The United States delegation felt strongly that the programme must be administered from Headquarters, as contemplated in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. It also felt that there should not be separate technical assistance programmes directed independently by each of the regional commissions. All requests must be channelled through the Technical Assistance Board, in order to make sure that effective co-ordination was achieved.

There were no further comments on the amendments to paragraph 1.

#### Paragraph 16

The CHAIRMAN explained that the proposed amendment to paragraph 16 was similar to the amendments to former paragraph 19 of the terms of reference of ECE and former paragraph 15 of the terms of reference of EC/AFE.

Miss BELL (United States of America) fully supported the text of paragraph 16, but hoped that the Council would take the opportunity of reviewing the work of the regional commissions when it next reviewed the work of the Council and the functional commissions.

There were no further comments on the amendment to paragraph 16.

#### Part D (E/AC.24/L.39)

Mr. HESSEL (France) proposed the addition of the following text to the recommendation contained in part D of document E/AC.24/L.39, which was taken, except for the final phrase, from the original French proposal (E/AC.24/L.36):

"In any case, at least 12 months must elapse between two successive sessions of any one regional economic commission, unless the Council decides otherwise".

The regional commissions should bear that recommendation in mind.

With regard to the question raised in the last paragraph of part D of document E/AC.24/L.39, he did not think it advisable for two separate reports to be submitted to the Council on the same question. In his opinion, the Co-ordination Committee should adopt the recommendation of the Council NGO Committee concerning the rules of procedure of the regional commissions governing consultation with the non-governmental organizations. That decision of the Council NGO Committee was incorporated in sub-paragraph (5) of paragraph (a) of the original French draft resolution (E/AC.24/L.36), which should replace the last paragraph of document E/AC.24/L.39.

Miss KALINOWSKA (Poland) suggested that to avoid confusion a single document might be issued combining all the French proposals.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the recommendation to the regional commissions to consider the advisability of amending their rules of procedure governing consultation with non-governmental organizations, which was at present contained in paragraph (a) (5) of the original French draft resolution in document E/AC.24/L.36, should be issued as an addendum to document E/AC.24/L.39.

Mr. OVERTON (United Kingdom) recalled the fact that the original intention had been that item 36 of the Council agenda should be discussed in plenary meeting. He suggested that the relevant portion of the report of the Council NGO Committee should be discussed by the Co-ordination Committee, and that recommendations based on it should be included in the latter's own report. The Council in plenary meeting could then consider the whole subject of consultative relations with non-governmental organizations as a single item.

The CHAIRMAN said that he would take the matter up with the President of the Council.

Mr. OVERTON (United Kingdom) considered that each part of the final resolution adopted by the Co-ordination Committee should include two sections, the first rejecting or adopting the general principles formulated by the Ad hoc Committee, the second dealing in detail with the changes proposed thereto. He

pointed out, in that connection, that paragraphs 5 to 10 of the second report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Organization of the Council and its Commissions (E/1985/L.36, 1) dealt with general principles.

In reply to questions by the CHAIRMAN and Mr. HESSEL (India), he said that he was prepared to submit a formal proposal to that effect in the form of a draft resolution.

Mr. HESSEL (France) admitted that it would be fairly easy, in the case of the regional commissions, to take up paragraphs 5 to 10 of the Ad hoc Committee's second report and to incorporate them in a draft resolution. He pointed out, however, that that part of the Ad hoc Committee's report which dealt with the principles that should govern the organization of the Council and of the functional commissions was much longer. It might therefore be better to make use of a general formula, similar to that employed in the preamble to the draft resolution originally submitted by the French delegation, and to say: "Approves the general principles which guided the Committee in its deliberations and in the formulation of the general conclusions it has reached". In any case, reference would have to be made to the actual text of the Ad hoc Committee's report.

Mr. OVERTON (United Kingdom) suggested that he and the French representative should consult and prepare a joint draft resolution on the lines he had proposed, the general principles being restated in an annex.

It was so agreed.

There were no further comments on part D of document E/AC.24/L.39.

#### (c) Functional Commissions

Mr. HESSEL (France) drew attention to that part of the original French draft resolution relating to the functional Commissions and their Sub-Commissions (E/AC.24/L.36, paragraph (b)). The French delegation fully recognized the soundness of the principles by which the members of the Ad hoc Committee had been guided in studying the organization and working of the

functional Commissions. In particular, it felt that the calendar had in recent years provided for an excessive number of sessions of commissions and sub-commissions whose agenda were not always satisfactory, since they contained a large number of items, many of which appeared every year even if their re-examination was not justified by the work done on them during the preceding year - items on which the documentation prepared by the Secretariat was not always complete, and which the experts on the Commissions were not therefore in a position to consider as they should be considered.

On the other hand, there were fields in which the preparatory work could more suitably be assigned to groups of highly specialized experts, while final decisions could be taken direct by the Council; that appeared to apply particularly to economic questions - employment and economic development, transport and communications, and the highly technical questions at present dealt with by the Sub-Commissions.

Was it necessary to go still further and do away with nearly all the functional Commissions, replacing them by a number of temporary bodies for the study of special questions? He did not think so; the Commissions should indeed play a very important part, which would be to decide, taking account of both political and technical considerations, what practical work the United Nations could and should undertake in connexion, for example, with narcotic drugs, public finance, population and social welfare problems. Should, then, the recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee be adopted without change? Their adoption would in practice result in the maintenance of the status quo, and it would never be possible to know for certain when the sessions of Commissions would be held, since a Council decision would be required in every case.

In those circumstances, the French delegation proposed that the majority of the existing commissions should meet every other year. If such a formula were adopted, the Council would not have to examine in any one year more than five reports of functional commissions and three reports of regional commissions. That recommendation, moreover, was in harmony with the proposal that the Council should examine the work of the specialized agencies only every other year. At present, the Council examined every year eleven reports of specialized agencies,



nine reports of functional commissions, three reports of regional commissions and three reports of sub-commissions: in all, twenty-six reports. If the French delegation's formula was adopted, that number would be reduced to twelve or thirteen, and the Council would be in a position to make a much fuller examination of each report.

Moreover, the fact that certain commissions would only meet every other year would give both governments and the Secretariat more time to prepare, with the necessary care, the documentation and studies without which the bodies concerned could only adopt resolutions of a formal and general character. The programmes of activities were at present sufficiently well defined for the Secretariat to undertake studies and to assume the tasks assigned to it by the commissions without the latter meeting every year.

With regard to the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press, his own delegation and the Indian delegation had submitted a joint draft resolution (E/AC.24/L.38), because they were particularly interested in the questions within that Sub-Commission's province. The Co-ordination Committee was at present dealing with the subsidiary organs of the Council, but not with their activities. Clearly these activities neither could nor should be interrupted if the Council decided to abolish the actual bodies now carrying them out.

The CHAIRMAN asked representatives to submit any amendments to the French proposal as soon as possible, in order that there should be no undue delay in disposing of the item under consideration.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.