



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Resumed Forty-eighth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Thursday, 28 May 1970,
at 3.30 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 13

Elections (concluded)*

1. Mr. MATHIS (Italy) proposed that the election of one member of the Commission on the Status of Women should be postponed until the forty-ninth session to allow members of the Western European and other groups time for further consultations.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 14

Consideration of the provisional agenda for the forty-ninth session (E/L.1297/Rev.1, E/L.1322, E/L.1326)

2. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council), introducing the relevant documents, pointed out that the symbol "E/4790" should be replaced by "E/4820" in the description of item 9 in the preliminary annotations to the list of agenda items for the forty-ninth session (E/L.1297/Rev.1, para. 9). Document E/L.1297/Rev.1 would be brought up to date in the light of developments since it had been issued.

3. With reference to document E/L.1322, concerning the organization of work of the forty-ninth session, he said that it would be useful if members would hold informal consultations on item 28, concerning measures to improve the organization of the work of the Council, prior to the opening of that session, with a view to overcoming the co-ordination difficulties encountered in the past.

4. Referring to document E/L.1326, concerning documentation for the forty-ninth session he said that some documents would not be available six weeks prior to the opening of the session: some were reports based on recent meetings, others required lengthy consultations with various specialized agencies, and the preparation of others had placed a heavy burden on the Secretariat because of the crowded calendar of conferences. Every effort would be made to have the statement to be made by the Secretary-General at the formal celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations on the morning of 6 July 1970 available a few days in advance.

5. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) said that his delegation attached considerable importance to item 9, concerning the outflow of trained personnel from developing to developed countries. As insufficient attention had been devoted to the question in the past, he wondered why the Secretary-

General's report would not be available until the end of June. He felt that the Secretary-General's opening statement at the forty-ninth session should be made available earlier than a few days prior to the opening of the session, in order that it might serve to give direction to the general debate.

6. In the light of changes within the Economic Commission for Africa and recommendations by the Organization of African Unity, he felt that the report of the Commission should be made available earlier than anticipated so that it could be examined with the requisite care.

7. The agenda for the forty-ninth session was very heavy and he doubted whether the Council would be able to consider certain items in depth. In particular, he feared that it would not have sufficient time to consider items 16 (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment) and 4 (Financing of economic development of the developing countries) if they were left until the end of the session.

8. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) said that the Secretary-General's report on item 9 would not be available until the end of June for a number of reasons. First of all, consultations with several of the specialized agencies would be required. The country case studies had been delayed because of lack of funds. The shortage of professional staff in the competent Secretariat division had presented further problems. Lastly, some statistics submitted had been incomplete or incorrect, requiring substantial revisions, and a number of studies had had to be rewritten.

9. The Secretary-General's opening statement could not be made available earlier than anticipated because the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade was only now completing its work. The report of the Economic Commission for Africa would be delayed because ECA itself had submitted it late. Item 16 required extensive consultations with the specialized agencies concerned and the views expressed at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment had to be taken fully into account. If the item was discussed too early in the session, members would not have had sufficient time to consider the progress report. It was expected that item 4 (a) would be covered in part during the general discussion of international economic and social policy. While item 4 (b) was important, it had been felt that it could suitably be scheduled for discussion during the fourth week of the session.

10. Mr. DUNN (United States of America) said that the agenda for the forty-ninth session was extremely complex and diverse and he expressed the hope that careful consideration would be given to item 28 with a view to arriving at a fundamental and radical reorganization of the

* Resumed from the 1677th meeting.

Council's work. He fully recognized that the calendar of conferences, the preparation of documents and consultations with subsidiary organs of the Council and other bodies within the United Nations system presented certain difficulties. He supported the Secretariat's suggestion that Council members should hold informal consultations on item 28 prior to the forty-ninth session with a view to presenting a plan of action at that session. A sharper focus was required and items should be considered in a more logical sequence by grouping related subjects together. For example, an item of central importance—such as the Second Development Decade—could be highlighted and certain related items—multilateral food aid, manpower, natural resources and science and technology—could be considered as sub-items and thus dispensed with more rapidly. Other main headings could be International Education, the Human Environment, Humanitarian Services, and co-ordination matters with relevant items grouped around them. Furthermore, the Council's future reports to the General Assembly should be drafted along more rational lines.

11. Although his delegation would have preferred to see some items allocated in a different manner, it could accept the recommendations in document E/L.1322.

12. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) agreed with the United States representative that the whole question of the Council's agenda required a thorough review. Certain general, non-controversial items could be disposed of by the Council without debate—for example item 10, on multilateral food aid, which might be included under a general heading devoted to the Second Development Decade. Such items could be included in the agendas of the Economic and Social Committees on the understanding that they could be referred to the Council in plenary. In that connexion, he drew attention to paragraph 18 of document E/L.1297/Rev.1 which recalled the Council's decision that the annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would be retained on the agenda on the understanding that it would be transmitted to the General Assembly without debate unless the Council were to decide otherwise.

13. Mr. MARTIN-WITKOWSKI (France) said that the United States representative's comments were very much to the point. The Council had to decide whether it was not time for a complete review of the whole question of its agenda. The previous year, the Council had been informed that the division of its work into virtually three sessions would ensure the more timely receipt of documentation. Nevertheless, the documentation for items 11, 13 and 15, for example, was to be distributed late—despite the fact that it was being prepared pursuant to resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third session. That situation showed that the present system was not working well. The Organization's twenty-fifth anniversary would be an appropriate occasion for the full discussion of the subject, which was necessary. All delegations agreed on the need to discuss measures to improve the Council's methods of work, yet at every session the item concerning the agenda was taken up late, leaving insufficient time for a thorough discussion. He suggested that the Co-ordination Committee should consider the item during the first week of the next session with a view to its eventual consideration in plenary.

14. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) agreed with the representative of France on the need for a real discussion of the Council's agenda, particularly as the Council had failed to improve its working methods during the current session. There was much to be said for taking up the item before the fourth week of the next session, possibly in conjunction with item 29 on the calendar of conferences. He would support a proposal to that end. Referring to paragraph 5 of document E/L.1322, he suggested that, as the Council's agenda was extremely heavy, more items should be scheduled for discussion in the committees during the first week of the session even if that meant foregoing full attendance at plenary meetings.

15. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) said that item 28 needed much thought and careful, informal consultation among delegations, with Secretariat participation. For practical reasons, those consultations would have to continue during the first week of the session so that, if positive proposals were to be made, the item should be taken up later in the session.

16. Mr. ROUAMBA (Upper Volta) said that he wondered to what extent the early or late consideration of item 28 at the next session would have immediate practical implications for the organization of the Council's work at that session. Would immediate action result even if the item were taken up at the beginning of the session? Whatever measures were eventually adopted could hardly be implemented before the Council's first session in 1971.

17. Mr. MARTIN-WITKOWSKI (France) said that whatever preliminary and informal consultations took place, the likelihood of immediate, practical measures was remote. Formal debate of the issue was necessary, however, and item 28 should be taken up at the beginning of the session.

18. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) observed that the order of the items in document E/L.1326 was provisional; the final decision was for the Council to take at the opening of its next session.

19. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the various suggestions and proposals in the documentation relating to consideration of the provisional agenda for its forty-ninth session.

It was so decided.

*Credentials of representatives to the
forty-eighth session of the Council (E/4871)*

20. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the report of the President and Vice-President on the credentials of representatives to the forty-eighth session of the Council in document E/4871.

Closure of the session

21. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the PRESIDENT declared the Council's resumed forty-eighth session closed.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.