



## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Resumed Forty-eighth Session  
OFFICIAL RECORDS

Wednesday, 20 May 1970,  
at 3.25 p.m.

NEW YORK

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

In the absence of the President, Mr. FRANZI (Italy),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.

## AGENDA ITEM 10

## Transport questions (continued):

- (a) Review of the activities of the United Nations system of organizations in the transport field (E/4794 and Add.1; E/4795 and Add.1-4; E/4846/Add.4);
- (b) Transport of dangerous goods (E/4783; E/L.1315, E/L.1316);
- (c) Question of convening a United Nations meeting on containerization (E/4796 and Add.1 and 2, E/4846/Add.4)

1. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) introduced draft resolution E/L.1315 which was largely self-explanatory and closely followed the recommendations in the report of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (E/4783). The report attested to the considerable amount of work done in recent years by the Committee of Experts, whose recommendations had been adopted in a number of countries not represented in the Council—a fact which indicated that they were widely acceptable. Progress in harmonizing codes and regulations relating to the transport of dangerous goods had facilitated international trade in, for example, chemicals useful in agriculture and industry. Operative paragraph 2 (a) of the draft resolution took up the recommendation in paragraph 4 of document E/4783. Operative paragraphs 2 (c), 3 (a) and 3 (c) related respectively to paragraphs 23, 21 and 25 of the same document. The draft resolution was not controversial and he hoped it could be adopted without difficulty.

2. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) said that the request in operative paragraph 3 (c) of draft resolution E/L.1315 would have no financial implications provided that the United Nations would not be expected to defray the costs of travel and subsistence of participants in the meetings in question and that the meetings would be convened on dates when conference servicing requirements could be met from existing facilities.

3. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) introduced an amendment (E/L.1316) to the draft resolution. The amendment, calling for the addition of a fifth paragraph to the original draft resolution, was self-explanatory and designed to take account of new processes in the field dealt with by the Committee of Experts.

4. Mr. JHA (India) noted that IMCO was now completing its work on the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code. India had decided to adopt and implement the code

in full but was deferring its incorporation in the national legislation until the section on explosives had been completed.

5. He endorsed the recommendation that the Group of Experts on Explosives should become *de jure* one of the subsidiary bodies of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. He supported also the recommendation to extend the Committee's terms of reference and enlarge its membership.

6. His delegation supported the proposal to convene a United Nations meeting on containerization in either 1972 or 1973. The main responsibility for the meeting should lie with the United Nations, in close co-operation, however, with other competent bodies such as IMCO. New intermodal transport techniques presented very complex problems for developing countries, and innovations must be viewed in the light of the varying needs and circumstances of individual countries. An all-India seminar held at Bombay in 1968 had drawn the conclusion that India's adaptation to new intermodal transport techniques would have to be achieved by a long-term, phased programme. The seminar had recommended that containerization facilities should be gradually introduced on the country's east and west coasts, and the work of the seminar was being followed up by a government interdepartmental working group. The Secretary-General had drawn attention, in paragraph 5 of document E/4796, to the economic, social and labour problems raised by the "container revolution" and their possible repercussions on national economies, particularly those of the developing countries. The whole question was one which required very careful attention. His delegation was in favour of establishing a small co-ordinating secretariat to carry out the preparatory work for the meeting on containerization. However, additional expenses should be kept to the minimum by the judicious redeployment of existing staff.

7. Mr. LEWIS (International Civil Aviation Organization), recalling that some of the organizations of the United Nations family had been described as having out-of-date attitudes and limited vision, said that was not true of ICAO, which had a progressive programme. New techniques in air transport, however, could not be put into effect overnight. Even when, after a preliminary evaluation, a prototype aircraft had been built it had to be subjected to rigorous testing, and, after being approved as technically sound, had still in many cases to undergo further development before a viable aircraft could be built. It had also been said that co-operation with his organization was "a difficult task". ICAO had, however, been making significant contributions to the solution of the problems raised by the "container revolution" ever since 1966. As there had not yet been any thorough joint technical examination of all the matters involved, his organization had suggested that preparation

for a conference on containerization should include a survey by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, covering all the organizations concerned. One reason why complete standardization of containers was not possible was that not all the requirements applicable to shipping could be applied to air freight; for example, ships' decks were of thick steel, whereas the floor of an aircraft was made of thin aluminium alloy.

8. There seemed to be an impression that the hopes of the developing countries lay only in the United Nations itself. In his view, that impression was erroneous. His own organization had a membership of well over 100 States, and made appropriate provision for regional representation in its Council. As he had indicated earlier, ICAO was engaged in a far-reaching study aimed at more balanced development, a matter of prime interest to those countries which had difficulty meeting the need for certain services.

9. Mr. FAROOQ (Pakistan) said that the development of transport would have a vital impact on economic and social progress during the next decade, directly affecting the living conditions of the masses and the capacity of the developing countries to close the development gap. His delegation accordingly felt that the United Nations should play its full part in transport development and that the subject should be given high priority.

10. The developing countries were hampered not only by a scarcity of resources but also by the ever-widening scientific and technological gap, and a reorientation in planning was urgently needed in order to ensure adequate dissemination of knowledge. It was imperative that national efforts should be backed by international assistance. His delegation therefore supported the proposal to establish a transport centre. In its view, the centre should be established at United Nations Headquarters; however, since a variety of opinions had been expressed on that point, his delegation would not object to the matter being referred to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination for discussion at its next session, on the understanding that such a postponement could be expected to lead to the adoption of a positive decision and perhaps also to a thorough examination of the centre's terms of reference. There appeared to be adequate assurances that the activities of the centre would not duplicate the work of any of the specialized agencies. Indeed, IBRD, IMCO and UNCTAD had already expressed their interest in the establishment of such a centre. The latter would be a useful clearing-house for information; in that connexion, he noted that the IBRD representative had referred to research gaps which must be filled—a task for which the centre could be used. The centre, as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had said, should be regarded as a service and not as an authority; it could play an active role in the service of the entire international community.

11. With regard to the question of containerization, his delegation felt that the points made by the Kenyan representative at the previous meeting deserved consideration.

12. His delegation endorsed the United States representative's proposal concerning the cataloguing of dangerous goods, and it would support the draft resolution submitted

by the United Kingdom and Norway (E/L.1315), together with the draft amendment proposed by the Soviet Union (E/L.1316).

13. Mr. SEKYIAMAHA (Ghana) said that his delegation had no difficulty in supporting the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom and Norway on the transport of dangerous goods and found the Soviet draft amendment acceptable.

14. Since the question of improvements in transport was vital to the developing countries, his delegation felt that any move to keep those countries abreast of technological advances in transport was to be welcomed by developed and developing countries alike. However, the proposal to establish a transport centre had raised the question of possible duplication of efforts and was not whole-heartedly supported by all delegations or by the specialized agencies. His delegation, therefore, was unable to support the proposal at the present stage; the matter could perhaps be considered jointly by the agencies concerned and then taken up by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its next session. That Committee was, in his delegation's view, the appropriate body to consider the establishment of such a centre and he did not think that to refer the matter to it would be an evasion of the issue. Following consideration by the Committee, the matter could be taken up again by the Council at its forty-ninth session.

15. A conference of ministers responsible for transport would have little prospect of achieving positive results, for few ministers would be likely to have time to attend it. His delegation saw more merit in a conference of governmental experts, at the regional level to begin with, as suggested by some delegations.

16. With regard to the proposed conference on containerization, his delegation would adhere to the consensus in the Council.

17. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) said that his delegation supported the proposal to establish a transport centre; however, the question of co-ordination would have to be solved before the proposal could be adopted. A final decision could be taken at the Council's next session.

18. With regard to the question of containerization, he observed that the transport revolution was accompanied by certain administrative and financial problems, such as the need to alter existing port and handling facilities in order to deal with large-capacity vessels and containers, which could be solved only at the international level. His delegation therefore thought that a conference on containerization was necessary, and that it should be held in 1972.

19. A conference of ministers responsible for transport might be useful, but only if it was preceded by intensive preparation. His delegation saw more merit in regional conferences, especially since regional differences in transport condition were considerable.

20. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that it seemed clear from the debate that no decision would be taken by the Council

at its current session on the possible establishment of a United Nations centre for transport development and that the question would require further debate. It had been asked why the United Nations Secretariat had not reached an agreement with the secretariats of the interested specialized agencies on the establishment of the proposed centre before bringing the question to the attention of the Council. In general, the Secretariat agreed that it should resolve as many problems as possible at the executive level before submitting a new project to an intergovernmental body. However, the new global approach and the trend towards integrated systems called for a continuing dialogue between the United Nations Secretariat, the specialized agencies and intergovernmental bodies. Progress would be seriously retarded if the United Nations Secretariat and the specialized agencies were required to reach full agreement on all points before the Council would examine new proposals. He felt that the Council's debate on the proposed centre had been of great value.

21. Some delegations, in particular those of the United Kingdom and the Upper Volta, had advanced the criticism that the report (E/4795) neglected the problems faced by developing countries in establishing elementary transport systems. While the Secretariat did all that it could to assist Governments in finding solutions to such problems, it had not been felt that they involved major policy issues which needed to be brought to the attention of the Council. That general principle was applied by the Secretariat in the preparation of documentation in all areas of activity. The Secretariat thought that the questions dealt with in the report were of vital importance to developing countries. The economies of most developing countries were externally oriented and, as a consequence, were directly affected by new developments in maritime and intermodal transport, and this to a considerable extent.

22. It was natural that those specialized agencies which were concerned with complex advanced technologies should be the most cautious in their approach to integrated systems and the most concerned to ensure that economic considerations did not prevail over technical ones. That was true in other fields as well, notably in energy. The fact remained, however, that the Economic and Social Council and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were essentially concerned with general planning and economic factors. He could only hope that greater flexibility would gradually develop in the positions of all concerned. The proposal to establish a United Nations centre for transport development was a minimal solution. Although it would not immediately remedy all the complex problems existing in that area, it was a sound concept. The Secretariat was ready to endeavour to reach agreement with the specialized agencies concerned on the points of difference which had emerged during the debate, and he hoped that it would be possible to establish the centre in the not too distant future.

#### AGENDA ITEM 9

##### The role of the co-operative movement in economic and social development (*continued*)\* (E/4807 and Corr.1; E/L.1314)

\*Resumed from the 1680th meeting.

23. Mr. RAHMAN (Pakistan), introducing draft resolution E/L.1314 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the Council's exhaustive debate on the co-operative movement had shown that there was almost unanimous recognition of its role in promoting economic and social development. The third preambular paragraph related to the decentralization of responsibility with a view to involve the mass of the people, and the fourth to the role of the co-operative movement as a framework for the mobilization of resources. Operative paragraph 1 took account of the view expressed by numerous speakers during the debate that the co-operative movement was a vital supplement to traditional methods of promoting development and one which had implications for all sectors of the economy. As to operative paragraph 2, many delegations had referred to the need to avoid duplication and the sponsors appreciated the action already taken to that end by FAO, among other agencies. Referring in that connexion to the statement in paragraph 80 of document E/4807 that the United Nations, the ILO, FAO, UNESCO and the International Co-operative Alliance were ready to join in a programme of concerted action to assist Governments to further technical assistance and research on a long-term basis, he said that the sponsors realized that some agencies might have difficulty in adapting their long-term research to a joint programme. Operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution was designed to mitigate the paucity of resources, which was the most serious problem facing the co-operative movement. With regard to operative paragraph 6, the sponsors hoped that UNDP would continue to consider with special sympathy requests for assistance in the development of co-operatives, particularly in view of the movement's dovetailing with the country approach. The fact that the movement had a catalytic effect would mean that better use was made of the United Nations Capital Development Fund. Referring to operative paragraph 7, he said that the movement's value had long been recognized by many developing countries, even though the Council had taken up the subject as a whole only in 1969.

24. Mr. GUZMAN (Peru) recalled that his delegation had stated its views on the co-operative movement during the general debate and in the Third Committee. It was gratified that many of those views had been taken up in draft resolution E/L.1314 of which it would therefore like to be a sponsor.

25. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that his delegation was vitally interested in the co-operative movement, which had existed in his country since the beginning of the century, and was fully aware of its extremely beneficial action. Consequently, he proposed that the words "should be" in operative paragraph 1 should be replaced by "is". In operative paragraph 2, he suggested that the words "the Secretary-General and" should be deleted and the words "with the Secretary-General" inserted after "to collaborate closely". That would show that the Secretary-General took an over-all view of the action in question.

26. In operative paragraph 4, he proposed the deletion of the words "which have experience and knowledge in the field of co-operatives".

27. Mr. MARSH (Jamaica) said that his delegation was keenly aware of the potential role of the co-operative movement in development. He proposed that in operative

paragraph 3 the words “concerned non-governmental organizations” should be amended to read “appropriate non-governmental organizations”. While many such organizations might be concerned with the co-operative move-

ment their concern might not, in many cases, be appropriate.

*The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.*