


**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

*Resumed Forty-eighth Session*  
**OFFICIAL RECORDS**

*Thursday, 21 May 1970,  
 at 11.5 a.m.*

**NEW YORK**

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

**AGENDA ITEM 12**

**Work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields (E/4787, E/4793 and Corr.1-4, E/4793 (annex), E/4837 and Corr.1 and Add.1, E/4846 and Add.1 and 2, Add.3 and Corr.1, Add.4-15; E/L.1312)**

1. The PRESIDENT read out the documents which the Council had before it in connexion with the consideration of agenda item 12. He drew attention to an error in document E/4846/Add.13, annex III, in which "E/4793" should be replaced by "E/4793/Corr.4".

2. Mr. ARVESEN (Norway) said that in view of the importance of the work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields, it was regrettable that the relevant documentation had been made available to the members of the Council too late for them to be able to study it in detail. In the circumstances, his delegation considered that the Council was not in a position to discuss the agenda item in a serious and meaningful way. The Secretariat was not to blame for the situation, any more than the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, which had only concluded its fifth session on 8 May 1970. However, the Council should take measures to avoid a recurrence of the situation. For example, it would either have to examine the question at its summer session, or see to it that the session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) did not immediately precede the spring session of the Council. It was important for Governments and delegations to have ample time to consider the Secretary-General's proposals and suggestions concerning the work programme in the light of comments, conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

3. The Secretary-General and CPC, had emphasized that United Nations activities in the economic and social fields should be geared to the objectives of the Second United Nations Development Decade. Accordingly, his delegation felt that there should be a gradual annual increase in the activities of the United Nations in those fields. The increase should be reflected not only in voluntary contributions, but above all in the relevant sections of the regular budget of the United Nations. In that context, his delegation had taken due note of the assessment of the future activities of the United Nations with regard to population questions, and particularly the substantial extension anticipated for the activities of the Population Division as well as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, to which his Government had recently pledged a contribution of \$300,000 for 1970, a 50 per cent increase over the previous year.

4. His delegation supported the proposal to establish interdisciplinary planning advisory teams, on the understanding, as CPC had stressed, that the utmost care would be taken to avoid duplication with the organizations concerned in that particular field. The teams would make it possible to strengthen and streamline the regional economic commissions.

5. With respect to the procedure for establishing priorities, his delegation agreed with the view expressed in paragraph 22 of the report of CPC (E/4846/Add.11) that the absence of a budget system on a programme basis was an obstacle in the process of a rational determination of priorities. It would be interesting to know the views and recommendations of CPC on the report on programming and budgets in the United Nations family of organizations,<sup>1</sup> which CPC would consider in the light of the comments of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

6. It was the function of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to undertake a comprehensive review of the proposed changes in the work programme, with special reference to proposals concerning new programmes or the expansion of existing ones. His delegation hoped that CPC would also bear in mind the possibility of limiting or even discontinuing some existing programmes.

7. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that in view of the volume of documentation before the Council in connexion with the agenda item, it might be useful if the Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination indicated the questions which CPC felt should receive the highest priority.

8. Mr. SKATARETIKO (Yugoslavia) said that, for the reasons already given by the Norwegian representative, his delegation was not in a position to comment on the work programme. His delegation noted that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, whose function was to assist the Council in its work, occasionally made things difficult for the Council by the impractical way in which it organized its own work. Furthermore, it was regrettable that CPC had not been capable of submitting clear suggestions or recommendations to the Council.

9. The PRESIDENT stated that the Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination would be in a position to submit the report of CPC at the next meeting of the Council.

10. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that the statement by the Chairman of CPC would be of value only if it was in greater detail than the report of CPC. It would,

<sup>1</sup> Document A/7822, annex.

for example, be useful if the Chairman of CPC prepared a list of three categories of questions: those which CPC had discussed and on which the Council would be in a position to take a decision; those which CPC had not discussed, but which were regarded as sufficiently urgent for the Council to consider directly; lastly, those questions which it would be premature for the Council to take up and which it should refer back to CPC.

11. Mr. GUPTA (India) explained that CPC was unable to put forward definite suggestions on the questions submitted to it because some delegations insisted that their views should be reflected in the report; as a result, no consensus was reached. In fact, almost all the questions mentioned in document E/4846/Add.14 could now be considered by the Council.

12. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Upper Volta) said that his delegation had always had misgivings about the need to reconstitute CPC. If it was incapable of making specific recommendations to the Council, and if the Council was compelled to consider certain problems directly, CPC was quite redundant. Moreover, the veritable flood of documentation submitted to the Council at the last moment created difficulties for the smaller delegations.

13. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) observed that the Council must assume primary responsibility for a situation where CPC's task exceeded its capabilities, because the Council was steadily increasing the number of questions submitted to CPC for consideration. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that it was not CPC's function to take decisions on the questions submitted to it.

14. He was afraid that the Chairman of CPC would do little more than summarize the report. On the other hand, the representative of the Secretary-General might be asked to indicate the questions which, in the opinion of the Secretariat, should receive the highest priority and on which a decision could be taken immediately.

15. Mr. AYOUB (Tunisia) recalled that his delegation, too, had been opposed to the reconstitution of CPC. In view of the delay in submitting documents, he wondered whether it might not be possible to defer consideration of the agenda items so that it could be discussed with full knowledge of the facts.

16. Mr. SKATARETIKO (Yugoslavia) said he wondered whether the Council might not take note of the documents submitted to it and thus conclude consideration of the agenda item. Later, each of the proposals or suggestions of CPC would be considered when the relevant issues were before the Council.

17. Mr. AHMED (Secretary of the Council) said that the Council had already dealt with a number of questions considered by CPC, either in plenary or in the Social Committee, and had taken the latter's suggestions into account. Its task now was to proceed to a general discussion of the work programme. A draft resolution would help to focus attention on certain issues; in that connexion, he noted that certain delegations were preparing a draft resolution.

18. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) felt that the Council should follow its usual practice when it took up a new agenda item: generally, a representative of the Secretary-General introduced the main documents. Moreover, in present circumstances, the Chairman of CPC might present the Committee's views. It was true that the work of CPC was open to criticism, but it was only fair to point out that in view of the tremendous task it had to do, the Committee had ultimately accomplished quite a lot. He therefore suggested that consideration of the agenda item should be deferred until the representative of the Secretary-General and the Chairman of CPC had presented their reports.

19. Mr. GUPTA (India) thanked the United Kingdom representative for his constructive suggestion and said that his own delegation had already circulated a draft resolution on the item under consideration (E/L.1318).

20. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) endorsed the comment of the Tunisian representative concerning the difficult position in which delegations had been placed by the delay in the submission of the documents of CPC. However, CPC was not solely responsible for that delay; the Council should recognize how difficult its task was. It was responsible for supervising and co-ordinating all United Nations services in the economic, social and human rights fields and had to formulate in a very short period of time the mass of documents it considered. As the representative of Greece had said, CPC had to examine all those documents carefully, discuss their content from the standpoint of co-ordination and decide on priorities. Its role was not to take decisions, but, bearing in mind all the views expressed on the various issues under consideration, it submitted an opinion to the Council enabling the latter to make a final decision.

21. He also felt that there was no reason to question the possibility that the Council could consider agenda item 12. While the report of CPC had been submitted rather late, another basic document, the Secretary-General's report (E/4793 and Corr.1-4), had long been available to delegations; moreover, as the Indian representative had pointed out, a group of delegations had already formulated an opinion on the substance of that document, and had embodied it in a draft resolution. His delegation, for its part, was prepared to begin consideration of item 12.

22. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) shared the view of the Soviet representative. He noted further that the adoption of a draft resolution was not always the solution to a problem. The Council's function was to examine the work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields. That was a very broad subject, and a statement by the Chairman of CPC would certainly help members of the Council to clarify the issues. From another point of view, a statement by a representative of the Secretary-General would also be very helpful.

23. Mr. OLDS (United States of America) said that while his delegation was prepared to comment on the question under consideration, it wished to hear the opinion of the Secretariat first. In view of the complexity of the subject and the large number of documents submitted, it would be desirable for the President of the Council to define the strategy to be followed; a statement by a representative of

the Secretariat would help the Council to establish an order of priority among the various issues and to focus its discussion on specific points.

24. Mr. FAROOQ (Pakistan) said that inasmuch as CPC was a consultative body of the Economic and Social Council, the Council's criticism of that body reflected on the Council. He added that the Council should perhaps issue directives to CPC to guide it in the performance of its functions.

25. Mr. BUITER (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) said that the interests of his organization covered many items on the Council's agenda, from the development strategy for the Second Development Decade and the protection of human rights in general to such specific questions as the transport of dangerous goods. One

of the basic tasks of the Confederation was the defence of trade-union rights and the rights of workers to form trade unions. Trade-union rights were an integral part of human rights and trade unions could perform their function—the defence of the economic and social rights of the worker—only in a democratic society founded on respect for human rights in the economic, social, cultural and political fields.

26. He pledged his organization's support for the Council in its efforts to strengthen respect for human rights, and said that he would express once again the concern of the Confederation over continuous violation of basic human and trade-union rights in many countries when agenda item 4 was taken up (Allegations regarding infringements of trade-union rights).

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*