



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Tuesday, 23 March 1965,
at 11 a.m.

Thirty-eighth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

NEW YORK

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President: Mr. Akira MATSUI (Japan).

Present:

Representatives of the following States, members of the Council: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Canada, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Iraq, Japan, Luxembourg, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Representatives of the following States, additional members of the sessional committees: Cameroon, Denmark, Ghana, India, Iran, Madagascar, Mexico, United Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania.

Observers for the following Member States: Australia, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Colombia, Cuba, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Observers for the following non-member States: Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland.

Representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; International Monetary Fund.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 6

Work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields (E/4011)

1. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the note (E/4011) in which the Secretary-General, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1046 (XXXVII), reported on the progress made towards the presentation to the Council at its thirty-ninth session of a work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields.

2. Mr. WURTH (Luxembourg) said that the preparation of a logical work programme and the evaluation of its budgetary implications raised many technical and administrative difficulties. In order to ease the task of the Secretariat, the sponsors of resolution 1046 (XXXVII) had therefore deliberately avoided going into

details. In reality, that resolution was merely a step towards a better presentation of the United Nations budget. It was particularly urgent to improve the budgetary presentation of the work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields; in view of the limited resources of the United Nations and the increasing extent of its activities, a system of priorities had to be established. He trusted that the question would be discussed in greater depth at the Council's thirty-ninth session.

3. The consultations with the secretariats of the regional economic commissions were praiseworthy. Consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would likewise be extremely useful. His delegation was less concerned with the separate presentation of a statement of budgetary resources and a work programme than with the integration of the work programme in the budget. That was why, although it awaited with keen interest the first part of the report referred to in paragraph 3 of the note by the Secretary-General (E/4011), it attached greater importance to the second part, which would combine the details of the work programme (listed under the major organizational units) with an indication of the financial resources required. His delegation also considered that the system sketched out in resolution 1046 (XXXVII) could be worked out in greater detail at a later date in the light of the experience acquired.

4. Mr. WILLIAMS (United States of America) said that the type of information requested was of great importance. If the Council was to ensure maximum concentration of effort and resources in certain fields in which action was particularly necessary, it must have before it the requisite documentation enabling it to analyse the work programme and its budgetary implications. It was worth pointing out, in that respect, that so far the relevant reports had always been submitted too late. Such reports should be submitted as early as possible, so that Governments could take their decisions in good time. It was particularly to be hoped that the report referred to in paragraph 3 of the note by the Secretary-General would be circulated well before the opening of the thirty-ninth session.

5. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed surprise that nothing had yet been done to permit the enlargement of the Council, regarding which recommendations had been made involving a conference for the purpose of reviewing the Charter. It was regrettable that the nine extra members provided for were not able to share in the Council's decisions. Even the developing countries had apparently given up pressing for such a conference, although the participation of some of them in the Council's work could set a new direction for the programmes of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. The need for increased participation by developing coun-

tries in the Economic and Social Council was fully vindicated in General Assembly resolution 1916 (XVIII), which dealt with United Nations activities in the social field, particularly in the developing countries.

6. The developing countries must undertake substantial social reforms. The task of the Economic and Social Council was to help them as much as possible in that endeavour by giving them the benefit of the experience of more developed countries. The USSR delegation had drawn attention on many occasions to the inadequacy of United Nations activities in the social field. Problems such as raising the levels of living and the more equitable distribution of national income were never studied. Similarly, there was never any question of studying ways of enabling the people of developing countries to enjoy such benefits as free medical services, universal education, technical and professional training and the improvement of the level of instruction. Where under-employment was concerned, the Council seemed to feel that it had solved the problem by adopting a resolution on the matter, whereas, on the contrary, it should press the countries concerned to give the problem very serious attention.

7. Under Article 55 of the Charter, the Economic and Social Council was responsible for studying a number of problems independently of any action already undertaken in that connexion by the specialized agencies or the countries affected by those problems. In fact, in the social field the specialized agencies could be said to be waiting for the United Nations to map out a line of action for them. The United Nations organs which dealt with social questions should therefore call on the countries which had experience in particular fields and could give sound advice. For example, the USSR, to name only one country, was perfectly familiar with the question of free medical services. Another important problem was that of children. That problem should not be left to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), but should be the subject of planning at the national level. It was not simply a question of supplying milk to children, but of providing them with schools, physical training and leisure activities. The Council had also neglected the problem of illiteracy, although it was impossible to improve the level of education in a country without dealing with that problem, which affected even developed countries. The United Nations might with advantage study the method used by certain Latin American countries, particularly Cuba, or by Arab States, which had successfully mobilized their national resources to combat illiteracy. The general problem of education was very closely linked with that of development. Literacy was therefore of fundamental importance. No less important was the agrarian problem: in many parts of the world the peasants tilled land over which they had no rights, and great estates belonged to a few very rich landowners, many of them foreigners. The situation was all the more serious as many of the developing countries had predominantly agricultural economies. The United Nations should help the Governments of newly independent countries to improve their system of land tenure, *inter alia*, by organizing exchanges of views on the matter. He understood that only one Secretariat official was assigned to study such questions—clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs. The United Nations should begin immediately to prepare for the World Land Reform Conference which was

to be held in the spring of 1966 on land tenure questions.

8. The problems of unemployment and under-employment were also extremely important, particularly where they affected not only older workers but also the younger generations. The consequences of that social evil were felt in all aspects of economic and social life. It was clearly a problem that could only be solved from within; nevertheless, the United Nations could give useful advice to Governments, act as a catalyst and help to spread information on the subject. The next United Nations report on social problems should be entirely devoted to the unemployment and under-employment of youth.

9. There were other problems requiring study, particularly working conditions, the consequences of automation, the importance of the public sector in economic and social affairs, the organization of medical services, the elimination of the economic and social after-effects of colonialism, and so forth. The United Nations should attack those problems in a more thorough manner, laying stress on the strengthening of national sovereignty and the elimination of foreign domination of the economy of the newly independent countries, the development of education and the use of modern techniques. All those questions were closely linked and deserved careful study, but the agendas of the various United Nations bodies were overloaded with unreal problems and problems of secondary importance. In the field of human rights in particular, there was an enormous amount still to be done. For example, a special recommendation from the General Assembly had been needed before the problem of racial discrimination had been tackled. The implementation of the various principles, declarations and conventions on human rights, colonialism, racial discrimination, apartheid, forced labour and slavery, genocide, equal treatment for men and women, political freedom, etc., was far from being assured. Council resolution 1015 (XXXVII) could constitute a good basis for work in that field. The International Year for Human Rights should not be celebrated solely by ceremonies, but also and above all by the universal and effective observance of human rights. All Member States should begin by ratifying the numerous human rights conventions.

10. He hoped that the report which would be presented to the Council at its thirty-ninth session would be more concrete and more satisfactory than earlier reports. It was certainly praiseworthy to be concerned with the problems of community development, but in such important matters as agricultural development the United Nations must prepare meaningful reports of practical use to the countries concerned. The essential problems must be dealt with first.

11. Mr. ARCA PARRO (Peru) said that he could well understand the astonishment that the brevity of the note by the Secretary-General (E/4011) had provoked. Council resolution 1046 (XXXVII) was possibly rather vague on that point and perhaps the Secretariat was still feeling its way. At all events, it must now come to grips with the matter. To recapitulate yet again the work accomplished within the limits of the United Nations Development Decade, however useful such a recapitulation might be, was not enough; it was necessary to determine to what extent the programmes

undertaken had been successful and had yielded the expected results. Stock-taking was called for, the reasons for successes and failures must be analysed and, in the light of the experience gained, a more rational distribution of resources in accordance with clear priorities should be ensured. The opinion of United Nations experts should be compared with the testimony of recipient countries and non-governmental institutions. It would then be possible to determine whether the economic and social bodies of the United Nations had fulfilled expectations and there would be a sound basis on which to proceed to the review and re-appraisal of the Council's role and functions in the light of the Charter. A clarification and perhaps an extension of the scope of resolution 1046 (XXXVII) would then enable the Secretariat to pursue its task on a somewhat more solid basis.

12. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) remarked that the debate on substantive questions normally took place at the summer session. There were two reasons why the question of the work programme was included in the agenda of the current session: first, the previous report had been considered insufficient, as was indicated in the third preambular paragraph of resolution 1046 (XXXVII); secondly, a report of such importance was generally submitted too late. The Secretariat had therefore been requested to report to the thirty-eighth session on the progress made towards the presentation of the work programme. The Secretary-General's note (E/4011) was certainly brief and shed no light on the

nature of the report to be presented at the thirty-ninth session. One of the Council's great weaknesses was that the volume of its work was increasing while the level of expertise available to it was going down; but considered views could hardly be formed if the Secretariat issued its report so late that Governments were unable to study it properly. He hoped that Governments would receive the next report at least one month before the opening of the thirty-ninth session.

13. Mr. HILL (Deputy Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs) assured the Council that, despite its brevity, the report was the result of numerous consultations and much thought; it was the firm hope of the Secretariat that the report to be presented at the thirty-ninth session would prove more satisfactory than the one preceding it and would enable the Council to examine the work programme with full knowledge of its budgetary implications. The documents would be circulated in good time and the USSR representative's remarks and suggestions would be taken into account.

14. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of document E/4011 and that it should urge the Secretariat to press on with its work and to present its report in time for the Governments to be able to examine it carefully before the opening of the thirty-ninth session.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.