


ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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<i>Agenda item 12:</i>	
<i>Basic programme of work of the Council in 1969 and consideration of the provisional agenda for the forty-sixth session (continued)</i>	1

President: Mr. Manuel PÉREZ GUERRERO
(Venezuela).

A G E N D A I T E M 1 2

Basic programme of work of the Council in 1969 and consideration of the provisional agenda for the forty-sixth session (continued) (E/L.1241 and Add.1 and 2, E/L.1243 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1)

1. Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT (United States of America) said that his Government was deeply committed to the work of the Council and his delegation had therefore been extremely gratified when members of the Council had begun to question its methods of work during the first part of the current session. For the same reason he welcomed the Secretary-General's suggestion that the process of self-examination should be continued at the forty-sixth session.

2. It was his delegation's impression that all members of the Council agreed that in future years the resumed summer session should not be required to deal with substantive issues, with the exception of the reports of the World Bank Group, IMF and the Trade and Development Board, which could not usefully be considered at any other time of year. The fact that for various reasons the Council had not been able in recent years to fulfil its duty of discussing substantive items thoroughly and submitting its conclusions in good time to the General Assembly had placed an undue burden on the Second and Third Committees. It would be preferable, when the Council found that it could not deal with an item as fully as it should, for the item to be deferred until the appropriate session of the following year.

3. The Council would also have to find ways of reducing the number of items on the agenda for each session. It should make every effort to reduce the frequency of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General and the subsidiary bodies of the Council; the discussion of such subjects as desalination and even the financing of economic development, for instance, would be much more productive if reports were produced once every two years rather than on an annual basis.

4. There were equally good reasons for lengthening the interval between sessions of the Council's subsidiary organs; under the existing arrangements, the Council was unable to give more than summary consideration to the very important reports of the

regional economic commissions, but the submission of biennial reports would make it possible for their work to be given the attention it deserved. Similarly, the activities of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development were probably hindered, rather than helped, by the holding of annual sessions. The reports of both bodies could be prepared more carefully, with emphasis on the really significant developments, if their sessions and reports to the Council were biennial. The Statistical Commission provided a useful illustration of a functional commission which met every two years and submitted a report so competently drawn up that neither the Council nor the Assembly needed to discuss it at length.

5. His suggestions concerning the Council's subsidiary bodies did not apply to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, which, it was to be hoped, would ultimately undertake a substantial part of the Council's work on the co-ordination of programmes within the United Nations system.

6. Another way of reducing the volume of debate on individual agenda items was to combine related items. With regard to the draft list for the forty-sixth session in document E/L.1241, items 11, 12 and 13 could well be discussed together; similarly, in the case of the draft list for the forty-seventh session, items 3 and 4 could be considered together, as could items 5 and 6. His delegation was somewhat concerned at the Secretary-General's suggestion that science and technology might be one of the topics on which the Council might focus attention at the forty-seventh session (see E/L.1241/Add.1), because the major item on science and technology was on the draft list for the forty-sixth session (item 8). It might be best to concentrate on science and technology at the spring session, leaving the subject of the impact of science and technology on the human environment to be dealt with at the summer session.

7. The practice of devoting the spring session mainly to United Nations activities and the summer session to co-ordination was a sound one but should not be followed in cases where it might lead to discussion of the same subject at both sessions; the subject of tourism was a case in point. He therefore suggested that item 6 on the draft list for the forty-sixth session should be transferred to the list for the forty-seventh session, and considered in conjunction with item 16.

8. Virtually every delegation had on occasion felt compelled to speak on an item on which it had nothing new to say, in order to forestall accusations of lack of interest. His delegation, for example, was most interested in the activities of UNITAR, but it did not believe that a general debate on the annual report of that body served any useful purpose. It might even be worth while considering whether UNITAR should

be required to report at all to the Council; it might be invited instead to take part in the discussion of any issue involving its sphere of competence.

9. There were many other circumstances in which delegations might be invited to exercise self-restraint. Members of Committees should be urged to submit draft resolutions on agenda items before the items were due to be discussed, in order to obviate two separate debates on each item and to focus debate on the decision-making process. Similarly, such bodies as the Social Committee of the Council should be encouraged to fulfil their proper role in preparing material for discussion by the Main Committees of the Assembly.

10. In conclusion, he hoped that the Secretariat would treat his suggestions and those made by other members of the Council as material for its proposed consultations with delegations, and use them to work out a revised provisional agenda and proposals for expediting the work of the Council. Moreover, it might be helpful if there were to be consultations on the subject within the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination itself.

11. Mr. MARTIN WITKOWSKI (France) said that his delegation endorsed many of the United States representative's suggestions on improving the efficiency of the Council's work but expressed doubt about the suggestion that consultations should take place within the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, which already had an extremely heavy programme of work for its spring session and should not be asked to do more.

12. The preliminary annotations to the draft list of items for the forty-sixth session indicated that under item 3 the Council would have before it a progress report by the Economic Committee on the second United Nations Development Decade. In view of recent developments, the report was likely to be out of date and he suggested that the item should be transferred to the draft list for the forty-seventh session. His delegation was not satisfied that there would be any new developments to be considered by the Council in connexion with item 5 (c) of the list, but suggested that it should remain on the agenda.

13. The arrangements suggested for the forty-seventh session indicated that item 21 would probably be dealt with at a resumed session to be held during or shortly after the twenty-fourth session of the Assembly. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the United States suggestion that no substantive items should be considered at the resumed session and therefore proposed that the Enlarged Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should be urged to complete its 1969 work programme in time for its report to be considered at the first part of the summer session in 1969.

14. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) thanked the representative of the United States for his interesting and important statement, with virtually all of which he agreed. It was undoubtedly unsatisfactory that so many items should be postponed to the resumed session. The United States representative's reminder that there was no necessity for representatives to speak if they had nothing new to say was both timely and pertinent. He agreed that to schedule debates on

tourism for both the forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions of the Council was unsatisfactory: a single and thorough debate in the course of the year would be better.

15. Although, in theory, agenda items 3, 4, 5 and 6 for the forty-seventh session were distinct, they were very closely allied and it would be more sensible to group them in a single item or, at most, two items. The United States representative's suggestion that item 8 for the forty-sixth session might more suitably be included in the summer session had some merit in that representatives did not know exactly what the reports to be submitted would cover. The Director of the Office for Science and Technology might be able to give the Council some indication of what those reports would contain.

16. Mr. BILLNER (Sweden) said, with reference to General Assembly resolution 2398 (XXIII) on problems of the human environment, that the Secretary-General explained in section (o) of document E/L.1243 and Corr.1 and 2 why it might be difficult to provide the Council with a report by its forty-seventh session. His delegation was well aware of the Secretariat's difficulties and did not wish to place any undue burden on the Secretary-General. Nevertheless, it sympathized with the United States suggestion and would much prefer the Council to be in a position to consider the item on problems of the human environment as a specific item at its forty-seventh session. The Secretary-General might be able to provide a preliminary report.

17. His delegation agreed with the action recommended by the Secretary-General, in section (p) of document E/L.1243 and Corr.1 and 2, concerning General Assembly resolution 2436 (XXIII) on the world social situation, but would also like the resolution to be a main document before the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade. It would be most useful for that Committee to be aware of the social as well as the economic aspects. In the circumstances, he would like an addition made to the action recommended in the document.

18. Mr. DECASTIAUX (Belgium) said that the comments of the United States representative included much with which his delegation whole-heartedly agreed. He might, possibly, have gone even further. The very existence of the resumed session made it far too easy to postpone items and it should not be held at all unless absolutely necessary. In any case, the resumed session should not be divided into so many fragments.

19. He agreed that to discuss tourism twice in one year was excessive. The whole matter of the periodicity of items should be gone into. Since his delegation had received the relevant document only a short time ago, he had no specific suggestions to make which had not already been covered. It would be useful if, in future, documents could be received a little earlier.

20. Mr. MARTIN WITKOWSKI (France) said he noticed, from the annotation to agenda item 5 (c) for the forty-sixth session, that a further session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Survey Programme for the Development of Natural Resources established by Council resolution 1218 (XLII) was to take place in

1969. Unless new factors had arisen which gave reason to suppose that such a session would be fruitful, it seemed pointless to hold it.

21. Mr. BRADLEY (Argentina) said that many of the suggestions made by the United States representative were useful and important, particularly that concerning annual reports. In many of the subjects covered by subsidiary organs of the Council, matters changed so slowly that annual reports seemed unnecessary. Like previous speakers, he deprecated the idea of discussing tourism twice in one year.

22. In view of the limited time at the Council's disposal, he suggested that tentative approval should be given to the suggested agendas and that the Secretariat should be asked to modify them in the light of opinions expressed during the debate. The modified agenda for the forty-sixth session would be submitted for final approval at the beginning of that session, while the agenda for the forty-seventh session would also be reconsidered on that occasion.

23. The PRESIDENT said that the Secretary of the Council would probably wish to comment on the views expressed. The Argentine suggestion appeared interesting and, if acceptable to the Council, could greatly facilitate its work.

24. Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT (United States of America) said that his reference to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had apparently been misunderstood. There would clearly have to be consultations with representatives first, but it would be useful if the Committee could give very brief consideration to a document before the Council met at its spring session.

25. The United Kingdom representative had also misunderstood him. He was suggesting that the subject of science and technology should be considered at the spring session and human environment at the summer session.

26. None of his comments should be interpreted as reflecting on the work done by the Secretariat in preparing the documentation before the Council. The Secretariat had done splendid work of which his delegation was highly appreciative.

27. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said the remarks of the United States representative concerning the organization of the Council's work were extremely interesting and would be borne in mind by the Secretariat, in particular his and other representatives' comments on conferences, periodicity of reports, etc. Agenda item 21 for the forty-sixth session was to be retitled "Organization of the work of the Council". Consultation would be held well before the opening of the forty-sixth session and it was hoped that some, at least, of the suggestions made could be put into effect. The basic question was how the Council's work should be arranged with relation to the Second Committee. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination might well be able to advise the Council on the subject at its spring session.

28. Consultations would also be held on the suggestion that various items for the forty-seventh session

should be combined. The subject would, of course, be further considered at the forty-sixth session. It was unfortunately true that resumed summer sessions were necessary. Some items such as that currently under discussion could not be dealt with earlier. Elections had to be held towards the end of the year and the reports of the Trade and Development Board and the World Bank Group became available about the same time.

29. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had often expressed its view that the Council, as one of the principal organs of the United Nations, should play a more effective role in the implementation and co-ordination of United Nations economic and social activities. In particular, it had advocated that there should be longer intervals between meetings of the Council's subsidiary bodies, and its views on that and other matters coincided to a great extent with those of the United States representative. It was to be hoped that the organization of the Council's work would be discussed in detail at the forty-sixth session, taking into account the views expressed in recent meetings of the Second Committee. At that time, the Soviet delegation would have specific comments and proposals to make. Agenda item 21 for that session should therefore be considerably expanded and divided into sub-items.

30. Mr. GRESFORD (Secretariat), referring to agenda item 8 (a) for the forty-sixth session, recalled that the reports of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development had, in recent years, contained a general review of the Committee's activities during the period covered. The sixth report of that Committee, which was in course of preparation, would contain such a review of the ninth and tenth sessions, as well as more detailed sections on certain items such as the transfer of technology and the increase in the production and use of edible protein. However, since that report would be the last by the present members of the Advisory Committee, it would also include general observations on the Committee's achievements since its inception and on its future work. In previous years, the Council had requested the Committee to submit its report during the spring session, but it was to be hoped that the sixth report could be submitted to the summer session, particularly since other scientific and technological matters were to be discussed at that session.

31. The Council had requested the Advisory Committee to submit the report on the human environment at its summer session but, in view of the great complexity of that report, he hoped that it might be possible to defer its consideration until the resumed forty-seventh session. In any event, the Advisory Committee would do its best to prepare the report for the summer session.

32. The Council might wish, at its forty-sixth session, to include an additional item on the Advisory Committee's future work in the agenda for its forty-seventh session.

33. Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT (United States of America) said that he wished to clarify two points in his earlier statement. The United States fully agreed that some

items could only be discussed at a resumed session and his comments on such sessions had been intended to ensure that sufficient time was available for the discussion of items which could only be considered then. The proposed agenda for the forty-seventh session was already extremely heavy and would be greatly overburdened by the addition of the item on science and technology. He had therefore suggested that the item should be discussed at the forty-sixth session, although the particular aspect of the human environment might be considered at the forty-seventh session.

34. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should approve the draft programme of work of the Council in 1969 on the understanding that consultations would be held with members of the Council with a view to preparing a provisional agenda for consideration at the forty-sixth session.

It was so decided.

35. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the action recommended by the Secretary-General for the disposal of items arising out of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly, as contained in document E/L.1243 and Corr.1 and 2, and Add.1, paragraph by paragraph.

PART I. SECTIONS (A) TO (F)

36. Mr. DANIELI (United Republic of Tanzania) proposed that the Council should decide to "refer" the resolutions to subsidiary bodies rather than "transmit" them, as recommended by the Secretary-General in a number of cases.

It was so decided.

The action recommended in paragraphs (a) to (f) was approved.

SECTION (9)

37. Mr. DUBEY (India) asked whether the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development might not be in a position to make preliminary proposals regarding the item on edible protein during 1969 in view of the fact that the Secretary-General had been requested, in paragraph 5 (a) of the draft resolution referred to in

section (g), to propose appropriate measures from time to time.

38. Mr. GRESFORD (Secretariat) said that the Advisory Committee intended to review its activities relating to that item at its eleventh session, beginning on 31 March 1969, and would make its views known to the Secretary-General on the conclusion of the session.

The action recommended in section (g) was approved.

SECTIONS (H) AND (I)

The action recommended in sections (h) and (i) was approved.

SECTION (J)

39. Mr. MARTIN WITKOWSKI (France) noted that a number of amendments had been proposed in the Fifth Committee to the draft resolution referred to in section (j), and suggested that some provision should be made for that draft resolution, or a revised version of it, to be considered by the Council even if it was not adopted by the General Assembly.

40. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that the draft resolution in question had been revised since document E/L.1243 had been issued. The Secretariat would take that and any further revisions into account in preparing material for the item relating to the organization of the Council's work, and would transmit the final text of the draft resolution to Member States, so that it would be possible for the Council to consider it.

41. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that the Council could approve the action recommended by the Secretary-General on the understanding that it would relate to the final version of the draft resolution.

42. Mr. ZAKHAROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed and also supported the suggestion of the French representative.

The action recommended in section (j) was approved, on the understanding that it would relate to the final version of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.