



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Forty-second Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

Friday, 26 May 1967,
at 3.35 p.m.

NEW YORK

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President: Mr. Milan KLUSÁK
(Czechoslovakia).

Present:

Representatives of the following States, members of the Council: Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, France, Gabon, Guatemala, India, Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Observers for the following Member States: Cuba, Japan, Yugoslavia.

Representatives of the following specialized agencies: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Transport development (E/4304 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2)

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (E/4372 AND CORR.1)

1. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to vote on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 5 of the Economic Committee's report (E/4372 and Corr.1).

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 28

Arrangements for the convening of an international conference to replace the Convention on Road Traffic and the Protocol on Road Sign and Signals, done at Geneva, 19 September 1949 (E/4308 and Corr.1)

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (E/4369)

2. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to vote on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 4 of the Economic Committee's report (E/4369).

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Development of natural resources:

- (a) Water desalination (E/4307);
- (b) New sources of energy (E/4303 and Add.1);
- (c) Five-year survey programme (E/4302 and Corr.1)

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE (E/4368)

3. The PRESIDENT said that the report of the Economic Committee which was before the Council contained three draft resolutions (E/4368, para. 13); he invited the Council to first consider and vote on drafts A and B and then to consider draft C.

A. WATER DESALINATION

4. Mr. ATTIGA (Libya) observed that a slight change had been made in the wording of operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A: the word "canalizing" had been substituted for the word "channelling", which had appeared in the text originally approved by the Economic Committee (E/AC.6/L.354/Rev.1).

5. The PRESIDENT said that the appropriate correction would be made.

Draft resolution A was adopted unanimously.

B. NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY

Draft resolution B was adopted unanimously.

C. SURVEY PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

6. The PRESIDENT observed that draft resolution C had received unanimous support in the Economic Committee and that the only point still to be decided was the number of the Ad Hoc Committee's members. Divergent opinions had been expressed on the question. He suggested that the Council should approve the draft resolution and then hold consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee.

7. Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium) endorsed the President's suggestion, but wished to make some comments

on the substance of the matter. A number of pros and cons were involved. A small body was more manageable and therefore more efficient; on the other hand, it might have an unduly narrow outlook. Moreover, an attempt should be made to give adequate representation to the donor countries, all the more because one of the essential sources of financing would be ad hoc contributions. It should be possible to strike a proper balance between those different considerations. The best way to reach agreement would be to hold private negotiations.

8. He himself believed that a membership of twenty-two, which had been mentioned by some representatives, might be suitable.

9. Mr. ATTIGA (Libya), while associating himself with the President's suggestion, wished to make some comments on the substance of the question in reply to the Belgian representative. In his view, it would be a mistake to make an a priori distinction between donors and recipients, since there was no clear-cut basis for it; for example, the first contribution received had come from a developing country.

10. In any case, the Ad Hoc committee should be impartial and function in a completely independent manner. It should be small enough to be efficient. He believed that the Committee should have half as many members as the Economic and Social Council, since otherwise it would be merely a repetition of the Council; twenty-two members seemed too many. He relied on the President's judgement to reach a solution that would meet with the approval of all.

11. Mr. VIAUD (France) agreed with the President that the Council should vote on the draft resolution without specifying the number of the Ad Hoc Committee's members. He wished to make some comments concerning the role and composition of the Ad Hoc Committee.

12. First, it was not intended to be a standing committee; consequently, its composition need not conform to the same rules as the composition of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies. Ad hoc arrangements could be made. Secondly, the role of the Committee was not only to work out ways of implementing the natural resources programme but also to initiate a dialogue between two groups of countries. In that connexion, he believed that goodwill should never be discouraged, and the President should therefore secure the support of all concerned and not place too much emphasis on theoretical considerations. If it proved difficult to agree on a membership much smaller than that of the Council, the President should suggest the figure that would have the broadest support. Being aware of the difficulties raised by the membership of a small body, he trusted that the President would ignore any rivalries between members and assured him of French support.

13. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) said he relied on the President's judgement with regard to the consultations, but wished to suggest some guiding principles.

14. First, he would have preferred the establishment of a genuine working group instead of an ad

hoc committee which would have no hand in the preparation of programmes. In particular, he believed that the Economic Committee had intended in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution to entrust the Ad Hoc Committee with programme study. In view of the nature of the work, he would have expected less attention to be given to political considerations. In his view, a working group, consisting basically of experts with specialized knowledge of the subject, would be better qualified to exercise those functions.

15. As to the number of members, he believed that the figure of sixteen, which had been adopted in the case of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, might be suitable. He certainly did not underestimate the arguments advanced by the French and Belgian representatives and he hoped that the President would be able to reconcile the different opinions expressed.

16. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he would prefer to have the Council take no decision on draft resolution C until it had decided on the number of members of the Ad Hoc Committee. His delegation believed that a happy medium should be found between an unduly large membership, which would take away the working-group character of the Ad Hoc Committee, and a too small membership, which would hamper the success of its work; such a medium might be about nineteen members.

17. Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium) explained for the benefit of the Libyan representative that when he had spoken of donor countries, he had meant those which usually furnished the largest contributions to United Nations programmes. As to the number of members of the Ad Hoc Committee, the figure of twenty-two had been mentioned by several delegations, but his delegation would leave the conduct of the negotiations to the President.

18. Mr. VARELA (Panama) recalled that the Council had been in an analogous situation at its resumed forty-first session, when it had established the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. At that time, his delegation had been the only one to defend the membership of twelve recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, for it was more interested in the quality of the work which such a committee could accomplish than in political considerations, such as representation. After long debate and complicated calculations, the Council had finally decided on sixteen members, a satisfactory number.

19. If the Council itself wished to fix the number of members of the Ad Hoc Committee, it might again become embroiled in lengthy discussions, for in his delegation's view the membership of the Committee should certainly not be determined solely by the extent to which its members might be able to make contributions to the programmes. In view of those facts, he fully supported the President's suggestions and had no doubt that after consultations had been held the President would soon be in a position to suggest a solution to the Council.

20. The PRESIDENT thanked the preceding speakers for their expressions of confidence in him. After consulting all members of the Council individually, he would attempt to suggest a composition for the Ad Hoc Committee that would both ensure equitable representation for the countries concerned and enable that committee to carry out efficiently the rather complicated tasks entrusted to it under operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution.

21. He therefore suggested that the Council should suspend its consideration of draft resolution C until the number of members of the Ad Hoc Committee had been determined, with the understanding that the Council accepted all other provisions of the draft resolution.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.

