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President : Mr. A. 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: Denmark, Ghana, India, Iran, Mexico, United Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania.

Observers for the following Member States: Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Central African Republic, China, Italy, Philippines, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Observers for the following non-member States: Federal Republic of Germany, Holy See, 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, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization, Universal Postal Union, World Meteorological Organization.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Opening of the session

1. The PRESIDENT declared open the thirty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Council.

AGENDA ITEM 1

Adoption of the agenda (E/4018 and Corr.1)

2. Mr. KITTANI (Secretary of the Council) made a statement on the preparation, translation and distribution of Council documents (see the annex to this record).

3. Mr. BILLINGHURST (Argentina) said that, while he sympathized with the difficulties which the Secretariat had encountered in connexion with the preparation, translation and distribution of documents, his and other delegations would be unable to express their views on certain items for want of the relevant documentation in their own language. The suggestions made by the Secretary of the Council were acceptable, and he hoped that the Council would first take up those items on which complete documentation had already been distributed in all the working languages.

4. Mr. GUMUCIO (Chile) endorsed the observations of the Argentine representative and agreed that priority should be given to items on which complete documentation was available. Any proposal to amend rule 14 of the Council's rules of procedure should, however, be considered with great care.

5. Mr. VIAUD (France) welcomed the statement by the Secretary of the Council. His delegation would examine the suggestions and make every effort to find practical solutions for the difficulties described.

6. Mr. RAE (Canada) said it was vital for governments to receive complete documentation well in advance of the Council's sessions if they were to be in a position to take responsible and meaningful decisions.

7. Mr. WILLIAMS (United States of America) said that, in view of the Secretary's statement, which would be carefully studied by his delegation, the Council did not appear to be in a good position to adopt the provisional agenda at that meeting. He therefore suggested that its adoption should be deferred to the following day so as to give delegations time for informal exchanges of views on the matter.

8. His delegation also considered that the question of documentation and of its impact on the Council's work, as well as the problem of scheduling Council sessions, should be referred to the Co-ordination Committee.

9. Mr. PONCE y CARBO (Ecuador) supported the United States representative's suggestion; the provisional agenda should be carefully studied by delegations in the light of the information submitted by the Secretary of the Council. He also agreed that the questions of substance raised by the Secretary should be referred to the Co-ordination Committee.

10. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that the situation with regard to the issue of documents relating to item 12 of the provisional agenda (Questions relating to science and technology) was particularly unsatisfactory. Such docu-

ments as were available had been issued so recently that the competent French authorities had not had sufficient time to examine them. His delegation was therefore in a rather difficult position; if it proposed that consideration of item 12 should be deferred, the work of the Council as well as that of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development and of the specialized agencies concerned might be seriously hampered. If the item were to be considered, on the other hand, his delegation's contribution to the discussion would perforce have to be confined to French experience in science and technology.

11. He also thought that insufficient time had been accorded to that item under the proposed organization of the work of the thirty-ninth session in the Secretary-General's note (E/L.1071/Rev.2). He proposed that the Co-ordination Committee should be given more time to consider the item and that it should therefore be taken up in plenary during the last week of the Council's session.

12. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Secretary of the Council had painted a dark picture of the situation concerning the provision of documents for the Council. Indeed, it had been suggested that, in some cases, the Council should dispense with documents altogether and that delegations should simply express their views and wishes. If that procedure were followed and the Council's discussions were divorced from the documents prepared by the Secretariat, it was difficult to see how and when delegations would be able to draw attention to shortcomings in those documents. In fact, it was doubtful whether they would be read at all.

13. He recalled that recently at a General Assembly session, the Second Committee had been deprived of the opportunity of discussing the world economic situation. If members of the Economic and Social Council were to be deprived of documentation on that subject, the international community would be completely unable to express its views on world economic problems. It was vital that the Council should be provided with the documents which were basic to its work.

14. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that the Council was faced by two problems: the long-term problem of how to ensure the prompt distribution of documents and the more immediate problem of how to organize its work at the current session. His suggestion with regard to the latter problem was that the Council should proceed to adopt the provisional agenda at that meeting, but that it should not yet attempt to reach a decision on the items whose consideration might have to be postponed until a later session. That procedure would give time for the Secretary's statement to be circulated in all the working languages and for delegations to study it and hold informal consultations about the order in which items should be considered; more documents would also become available, and it would be easier to decide which items could not be discussed.

15. Mr. WALDRON-RAMSEY (United Republic of Tanzania) agreed with previous speakers about the difficulties of holding the current session in view of the serious lack of documentation.

16. His delegation wished to suggest that consideration of item 10 of the provisional agenda (Report of the Trade and Development Board) should be deferred until a later session. Its consideration at the current session would raise major constitutional and procedural difficulties, as the report had not yet been adopted by the Board. Delegations were in the process of formulating their comments on a draft text at the request of the rapporteur, and it would not be possible to adopt an amended text until the Board's second session, which was to be held in August/September 1965.

17. Mr. AKWEI (Ghana) said he hoped that, in order to expedite its work, the Council would proceed with the discussion of the provisional agenda. He was sure that there was wide agreement on the desirability of discussing the items for which documentation was available, and a decision on the others could be taken at a later stage. He did not think that rule 14 of the rules of procedure need prevent the Council from discussing even items on which full documentation was not available, since the rule contained the word "normally" and the present situation was clearly far from normal.

18. Mr. TREU (Austria) said that little would be gained by deferring the discussion of the provisional agenda until the following day, since the situation was unlikely to change for the better by then. He suggested that the Council should adopt the agenda provisionally, and should then decide as quickly as possible which items it could properly take up. It was important to the success of the Council's work that an early decision should be reached on the programme of work, so that delegations could arrange for the presence in Geneva of those of their members who specialized in matters relating to certain items and who could not attend the entire session.

19. Sir Keith UNWIN (United Kingdom) said he supported the procedure suggested by the representative of Iraq. Once the agenda had been adopted, a beginning could be made with the consideration of the items for which documentation was already available; those for which documentation became available later could be considered as time permitted. A decision could be left until later in the session on whether discussion of any item would have to be postponed until a later session.

20. Mr. WILLIAMS (United States of America) said that his delegation did not wish to press its suggestion that further discussion of the provisional agenda should be deferred. He did not, however, think that it would be feasible for the Council to adopt a provisional agenda provisionally. The Council had to decide whether or not it wished to adopt it finally.

21. Mrs. WRIGHT (Denmark) suggested that it might be possible to proceed on the basis of the provisional agenda, which could be finalized when the Council had had time to study the situation in regard to documentation.

22. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he, too, was in favour of immediate adoption of the provisional agenda which had been approved by the Council at its thirty-eighth session.

Although the situation in regard to the documentation was undoubtedly disturbing, the Council should proceed with its work without undue delay.

23. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said he still thought it would be unwise to decide, at that early stage, which agenda items should be deferred until the next session for lack of the relevant documentation in all the working languages, although the Council was, of course, free to delete items on other grounds, as for example, those advanced by the Tanzanian representative with respect to item 10.

24. In reply to a question from Mr. WALDRON-RAMSEY (United Republic of Tanzania), Mr. KITTANI (Secretary of the Council) drew attention to the information given under item 10 of the provisional agenda (E/4018) and said that the Council might decide to arrange for its resumed thirty-ninth session to take place before the annual report of the Trade and Development Board was considered by the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its twentieth session.

25. Mr. AKWEI (Ghana) said he would have no objection to the adoption of the provisional agenda, provided that the Council would agree to consider item 10 at its resumed

session before the Board's annual report was examined by the General Assembly.

26. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that it was important for the Council to meet again to consider the annual report of the Trade and Development Board before that report was taken up by the Second Committee of the General Assembly. Practical steps should be taken to that end when the Council considered the organization of its work.

The provisional agenda (E/4018 and Corr.1) was adopted.

Organization of work (E/L.1071/Rev.2)

27. The PRESIDENT drew attention to paragraph 3 of document E/L. 1071/Rev.2 and suggested that the Council should decide, as it had done in previous years, that it was not necessary to establish a committee on questions relating to the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

ANNEX

Text of statement made by the Secretary of the Council *

Before the Council adopts its agenda and confirms its decisions regarding the order of consideration of items, I feel obliged to give some additional information regarding the state of preparation of the various reports to be discussed. Unfortunately — and as a result of a combination of circumstances into which I shall not enter at this stage — the situation is bad. A number of documents have not yet been distributed even in the original language.

Specifically, while Part I of the *World Economic Survey, 1964* (E/4046 and Add.1-6) has been issued in English and Spanish and while it is hoped to complete the distribution in French within the next few days, it will not be possible to issue the whole of Part II, even in the original language, in time for the debate in plenary. Only Chapter I is likely to be available by Monday next. In order to minimize the inconvenience to delegations, the Secretary-General proposes to distribute with it a short summary of Part II. The remaining Chapters — II, III and IV — will be distributed as received, beginning next week and will, it is hoped, be available in time for the Committee debate. The report on economic progress during the initial years of the Development Decade has also been delayed, but it is hoped to issue it in English early next week. It is also hoped to issue in English early next week the Secretary-General's report under Council resolution 1035 (XXXVII) on economic planning and projections. Preparation of the documentation for item 8, Financing of economic development, has likewise been delayed, but it is expected that the required

reports will be issued before the debate is due to begin in the fifth week of the session.

As regards item 9, Inflation and economic development, document E/4053 has been distributed in English. It contains the first seven replies received from governments. A further fourteen replies, received only recently, will appear in an addendum which is now in production, but is unlikely to be available by the time the debate was scheduled to begin, i.e., next week.

Again, in the case of item 5, which is concerned with the role and functions of the Council, most of the replies of governments are still to be received. They are being distributed as they come in as addenda to document E/4052. Under the same item, the factual report by the Secretary-General (E/4040) has been issued in English and should be available in French and Spanish by the beginning of next week.

Production of the report on the work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields has also progressed more slowly than had been hoped; but the first part of it is now available in English. The second part, which contains budgetary information, was shown to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions this week pursuant to the Council's request and should shortly be available in Geneva together with the comments of the Advisory Committee.

The situation is, of course, still more critical as far as the French and Spanish texts of reports are concerned. To those documents which I have already mentioned must be added a number of others of which the translation cannot be made

* Circulated as document E/L.1075.

available in time for discussion as planned. In particular, the extensive report of the Special Rapporteur on Slavery (E/4056) will not be issued in French or Spanish in time for the debate. It is hoped to distribute the French version of the report on land reform (E/4020 and Add. 1 and 2) this week, but the Spanish will not be available until a later date. The consolidated report on the Development Decade (E/4033) should be available in French and Spanish within a few days, as should the special report (E/4071 and Corr. 1). The report of the Social Commission (E/4061), which has been distributed in English, will be distributed today in French and on Friday in Spanish.

In the light of all this, the Council may wish to consider whether or not it has become necessary to postpone consideration of one or more of the items before it for which the documentation is particularly inadequate. In addition, some slight rearrangement might be possible in the order of consideration of items in Committee and the Council might wish to suggest to the Committees that they examine the timetable with that in mind.

This then is the dark picture at the present moment and how I would suggest that the Council might handle it during the present session. However, I think that we cannot let matters rest here. The situation is, quite frankly, too unsatisfactory, and the Council is too handicapped in its work to let the matter drop without further thought. Furthermore it is not just this year or last year that the Council has faced serious difficulties over late documentation. It is a chronic problem with which we have been faced in a more or less acute form at summer sessions for many years. The present arrangements are not working well and have never worked well, and we in the Secretariat are ready to join with you in making a determined effort to study ways and means of solving the problem in a constructive way.

Rule 14 of the rules of procedure reads in part as follows:

“ The Council shall normally include in its agenda for the session only items for which adequate documentation has been circulated to members six weeks before the beginning of the session of the Council. ”

If this means that documents should be available in all working languages six weeks ahead of time, it follows that most documentation, including all long reports, should be submitted at least ten weeks ahead of time, say by mid-April, and that some papers would have to be submitted much earlier than that. Since the preparation of long reports and their clearance is a time-consuming process, material reaching the Secretariat or developments taking place much later than January and February could not be included in these reports. In some cases, where reliance on data or replies from governments is crucial, the result might be to have reports which were technically on time but too fragmentary or too out-of-date to be very helpful to the Council.

For a number of years now, the bulk of the reproduction and translation of the Council's papers has been done in the latter part of May and throughout June. This is mainly because the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has not found it possible to finish work on its reports any earlier. These delays are, for the most part, unavoidable ones, resulting from the late arrival of essential data and the limited staff available during the peak period of 2-3 months when the Council's documents are being prepared.

I should like, if I may, to dwell on this last aspect for a moment because it lies at the heart of our difficulties. Unavoidably, in every area from which the Council documentation comes in quantity, there is a growing pressure on research staff during the winter and the spring months. There is a corresponding relaxation of pressure during the summer and autumn months. We face, therefore, an internal problem in not having sufficient staff to meet the peak periods. It is thus not econo-

mical or even possible to have all the Council's papers ready at a fixed date in April, or even at a fixed date in May. The only way that it could be done without undue staff expense would be to present the Council with papers prepared months in advance — a procedure which might be all right for some papers but not for the majority where up-to-date information or policy proposals are required.

There is a further difficulty. The period from mid-March to mid-May is the busiest for the Council's subordinate bodies, and we have now to expect that many of UNCTAD's subordinate organs will be meeting during this period. It is also a very busy time for organs outside the economic and social field. For this reason, it is now a peak period for the translation and reproduction services, and even if they received the vast body of documentation needed for the Council in March and April it is unlikely that they could have it all available in all languages by the middle of May. This is because the documentation of meetings in session is given priority, and thus the Council's work begins to receive high priority only after most of these other meetings are finished or well under way.

Finally, since much of the Council's documentation consists of the reports of its subordinate bodies and of other organs reporting to it, and most of their sessions are concentrated in April, May or on into June, their reports are often late and sometimes very late. I may cite the reports of the Committee for Industrial Development, the Technical Assistance Committee, the UNICEF Executive Board and the Governing Council of the Special Fund as examples falling in the second category, but the reports of the Social Commission and the Statistical Commission were also far from being out on time in all languages.

I think that for all these reasons the Council has to recognize that, with the best will in the world, rule 14 in its present form is unworkable, and that some alternative arrangements will have to be worked out. The situation is, as you know, a complicated one, and the details of what can be done will have to be evolved gradually. However, I have certain ideas which I should like to share with you and on which I should be grateful if you would give your reaction either to me personally or, if it seems preferable, at a subsequent meeting of the Council arranged for this purpose. They are as follows:

(i) The Council might ask the Secretariat to submit for its approval at each winter session suggestions as to the documents to which it would give priority and to propose target dates for their distribution, taking into account the difficulties I have already described in detail. These documents would then receive special treatment, both in preparation and in translation and reproduction. The Secretariat might also be invited to propose the postponement of items for which documentation could not be made available in good time.

(ii) Longer reports might also be accompanied by short synopses giving conclusions and recommendations, and these might be issued separately and scheduled to appear in advance of the “ parent ” document.

(iii) The Council might consider whether certain types of documentation might be discontinued and whether efforts should be concentrated on the preparation and production of policy and action-oriented papers which would seem even more essential to its work. In the opinion of many observers, the Council is now faced with more material than can be readily absorbed and utilized.

(iv) The Council might allow the Secretariat more time to prepare special reports, and might recommend that the General Assembly do likewise, in order to permit an even distribution of the work-load throughout the year.

(v) The Council might organize its work in such a way that more items are taken up at the winter session; this would achieve the same purpose by easing the pressure on the summer session.

(vi) Finally, we may all have to recognize that there are cases in which deviations from the six-weeks' rule are inevitable and may even be desirable in cases where up-to-date material is essential. This recognition will facilitate better planning for the preparation, translation and reproduction of documents than has hitherto been possible.

Let me conclude by saying that the Secretariat as a whole is deeply disturbed by the present situation, that it is casting around for ways and means of ensuring that it will be avoided next year, and that it invites all members of the Council to join in overhauling arrangements, the ineffectiveness of which is now so apparent.