

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Twenty-first Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Friday, 27 April 1956,
at 10.45 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Opening date of the twenty-second session of the Council (concluded)	87
Organization of the Council's work	88

President: Mr. Hans ENGEN (Norway).

Present:

The representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Greece, Indonesia, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

Observers from the following countries: Bulgaria, Chile, Hungary, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, World Health Organization.

**Opening date of the twenty-second session
(concluded)***

1. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs), replying to a question asked by the Yugoslav representative at the 907th meeting, said that for the twenty-second session of the Council the Secretariat would have to prepare 4,000 pages of documentation in the three working languages. To comply with rule 14 of the rules of procedure, the documentation would have to be distributed six weeks before the beginning of the session, that is, during the month of May. Unfortunately, that would not be possible except for the reports of the functional commissions. There was a delay owing, on the one hand, to bottle-necks in the translation and publication services and, on the other, to the time required for the drafting of the documents in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which was faced with a very heavy work load. The *World Economic Survey* would be issued in two volumes so that the first volume, at least, could appear within a relatively short time. That had been feasible since the report for the current year would consist of a review of economic conditions during the first ten years of the existence of the United Nations and of a study of economic conditions in 1955. It would also be impossible to comply with the six-week rule for the general survey of water resources in Africa and for the report on the international flow of private capital.

2. The Secretariat would therefore be most grateful to the Council for any additional time it could be given,

* See 907th meeting.

both for its own sake and for that of the Governments which would have to examine the reports in question.

3. Sir Alec RANDALL (United Kingdom) maintained that there were other considerations than those put forward by the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs which should also be taken into account. Any change in the opening date of the session might have serious consequences. Many arrangements had been made on the basis of the calendar of conferences. People whose time was valuable had made arrangements to attend the summer session of the Economic and Social Council. Furthermore, the Council would have a very full agenda and a postponement of the opening date of the session would obviously affect the closing date. Every endeavour should therefore be made to adhere to the dates already decided.

4. Mr. STANOVNIK (Yugoslavia) thanked the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs for his remarks, which supported the Yugoslav delegation's suggestion that the opening of the twenty-second session of the Council should, if necessary, be postponed. The only reason for that suggestion had been a desire to increase the effectiveness of the Council's work. The United Kingdom representative had expressed the view that a change in the programme might create difficulties, but, after all, the Council's agenda was adopted provisionally and the opening and closing dates of sessions were therefore presumably also provisional. Furthermore, in its resolution 557 B II (XVIII), the Council laid down that the second regular session each year should begin in the second week of July and last not longer than four weeks; the Yugoslav delegation's suggestion was that the opening date should be postponed from 3 to 10 July. There seemed to be no particular advantage in the Council's opening its summer session on 3 July at all costs, with the attendance of the important persons mentioned by the United Kingdom representative, if it were unable to take up the main questions on its agenda. The Under-Secretary had explained that the Council would receive the documents concerning those important questions only a few weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session. Delegations however needed time not only to read and grasp the 4,000 pages of documentation they were promised but also to confer with their Governments about them.

5. He was, therefore, formally proposing that the Council should postpone the opening of its session from 3 to 10 July. The Technical Assistance Committee would then be able to meet before the Council and thus assist the Council to work more effectively.

6. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) said that his delegation shared the apprehensions of the United Kingdom representative but nevertheless realized the difficulties which might be caused to the Secretariat and Governments if the date fixed were maintained. He therefore proposed a compromise solution, namely, that the Administrative Committee on Coordination should meet on 2 and 3 July, as provided,

and the Technical Assistance Committee on 4 July, the Council session should begin on Monday, 9 July, and the closing date for the twenty-second session should be not later than 10 August. In order to finish by that date, the Council might if necessary shorten its agenda by postponing the examination of some questions to its twenty-third session.

7. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) admitted that the members of the Council must have time to study the documentation and shared the concern expressed by the Yugoslav representative. Nevertheless he felt that before coming to a decision on the opening and closing dates of its twenty-second session the Council should study the agenda, on which the length of the session would depend.

8. Mr. STANOVNIK (Yugoslavia) accepted the United States representative's proposal.

9. In reply to the USSR representative, he pointed out that the closing date decided for the twenty-second session of the Council had been 4 August. It had now been proposed that the Council should meet one week later and complete its work one week later, the length of the session remaining unchanged. The Council ought to take a decision on the subject immediately. As the United Kingdom representative had pointed out, a number of important persons had to arrange their timetable and make travelling arrangements. Moreover, the Secretariat should know as soon as possible how much time it had to get the documents ready. If the opening date of 3 July was maintained, it would have to speed up its work and the documents might be less well prepared. The Council should therefore decide at once on the opening and closing dates of its next session, regardless of any decision it might take about its agenda.

10. The PRESIDENT remarked that in considering the provisional agenda of its twenty-second session, which was item 21 of the agenda of the current session, the Council should fix the date on which it would begin the consideration of each question. Before deciding on its programme of work it must therefore know how long the twenty-second session would be.

11. Sir Alec RANDALL (United Kingdom) accepted the proposal made by the Yugoslav and United States delegations.

12. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America), replying to the USSR representative, pointed out that although he had proposed that the closing date should be not later than 10 August, the Council could always close the session earlier if it had completed its agenda.

13. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the Yugoslav proposal as amended by the United States.

The proposal was adopted unanimously.

Organization of the Council's work

14. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that at the first meeting of the current session (900th meeting) the Council had adopted a proposal by the United Kingdom delegation that item 12 (Slavery) should be considered in plenary session before being referred to the Social Committee, since his delegation intended to propose that the draft supplementary convention on slavery should be referred to a conference of plenipotentiaries. If the Council were to reject that proposal when considering item 12, the Social Committee would have to examine the draft convention, which would take time. It might therefore be advisable to reverse the proposed order of the two next questions and to consider item 12 before item 11 (Forced labour) so as to give the Social Committee time, if it needed it.

15. Mr. SCOTT FOX (United Kingdom) said the United Kingdom delegation was willing to consider the item on slavery before that on forced labour, but thought it would be better to postpone it to the next meeting so as to give all delegations time to prepare for the debate.

16. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed to that suggestion. He would be willing to make a formal proposal to that effect.

17. After an exchange of views between Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America), Mr. ABDEL-GHANI (Egypt) and Mr. CHENG (China), the PRESIDENT proposed that the consideration of the question of slavery should be postponed to the next meeting.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.