

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SIXTIETH SESSION

Summary records of the 1985th to 2005th plenary meetings, held at
Headquarters, New York, from 13 April to 14 May 1976

1985th meeting

Tuesday, 13 April 1976, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. Siméon AKE (Ivory Coast).

E/SR.1985

Opening of the session

1. The PRESIDENT declared open the sixtieth session of the Economic and Social Council.

2. He said that the Council's programme of work for the current year was particularly weighty and that its session was taking place at a critical juncture in international relations. Important initiatives were being taken both within the United Nations and outside the Organization, and the Council, as the central organ of the United Nations for the co-ordination of economic and social policies, must be aware of progress achieved at all levels. The fourth session of UNCTAD would shortly be held at Nairobi (from 5 to 28 May 1976), and the Council would consider the results of that Conference at its sixty-first session, in the summer of 1976. The UNCTAD session would provide a further opportunity for the United Nations to encourage Governments to take concrete measures to promote development, within the framework of international co-operation.

3. The current session of the Council would be devoted primarily to social and human rights questions, representing two of the three major areas of responsibility of the Council. The Council would for the first time give substantive consideration to progress achieved within the framework of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. It would no doubt wish to formulate procedures for the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and it would also consider the report of the Commission on Human Rights and ways and means of implementing the aims of the United Nations Decade for Women.

4. In considering the various agenda items, it was essential to bear in mind that all attempts to build a better society would be fruitless unless a concerted effort was made to eliminate social inequality and injustice, famine and ignorance, as well as violations of human rights, wherever they occurred. Governments must be encouraged to work towards that goal in the interests of peace and social progress.

5. Turning to the important question of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, he expressed the view that, while an *Ad Hoc* Committee of the General Assembly was considering the matter with the active participation of most members of the Economic and Social Council, the Council itself must make a parallel effort to simplify its machinery and procedures. It was, in fact, the only body in a position to deal with certain specific questions and evaluate certain needs.

6. He referred to the tragic earthquake which had devastated Guatemala in February and noted the efforts made by the international community to provide emergency assistance. On behalf of the Council he expressed profound sympathy to the Government and to the people of Guatemala for the suffering they had experienced and also expressed appreciation of the assistance provided by Governments, United Nations bodies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to Guatemala. At its current session, the Council should, as requested by the Secretary-General (E/L.1703), include a supplementary item in its agenda and take action to ensure continued international assistance for Guatemala in its reconstruction efforts.

7. He called attention to a letter dated 18 March 1976 (E/5787), which was before the Council under agenda item 1, addressed to him by the Secretary-General in connexion with resolution 386 (1976) adopted by the Security Council in response to a request from the Government of Mozambique. The situation prevailing in Southern Rhodesia as a result of the stubborn refusal of the white racist minority to allow majority rule, and of the provocative acts of the illegal régime in Rhodesia against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Mozambique, had led the Government of Mozambique to sever its commercial relations and all communications with Southern Rhodesia, in conformity with the pertinent Security Council resolutions.

8. That courageous decision had entailed serious eco-

conomic consequences for the young State of Mozambique and, in his view, the Council should take the necessary steps to invite Governments, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to provide financial, technical and material assistance to enable Mozambique to overcome the difficulties it encountered as a result of its application of economic sanctions against Southern Rhodesia.

9. Lastly he drew attention to document E/5788, which was also before the Council under item 1, and contained a letter dated 9 April 1976 from the Permanent Representative of Madagascar, requesting the inclusion of a supplementary item in the Council's agenda entitled "Measures to be taken following the cyclones in Madagascar". He was sure that the Council would agree to the inclusion of the item and would consider, in co-operation with the delegation of Madagascar, measures for the provision of prompt assistance to Madagascar.

AGENDA ITEM 1

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/5770, E/5787, E/5788, E/L.1703, E/L.1704 and Corr.1 and 2, E/L.1705)

10. Mr. CORDOVEZ (Secretary of the Council) said that the provisional agenda (E/5770) had been prepared in strict conformity with the programme of work adopted at the organizational session for 1976. The supplementary item entitled "Review of the situation in Guatemala in consequence of the earthquake of 4 February 1976" (E/L.1703) was being proposed by the Secretary-General on the basis of consultations he had held with Latin American representatives. It had been felt that, since the Council was about to meet, it would be preferable for the matter to be discussed by the Council itself rather than at an emergency session of ECLA. The supplementary item proposed by the Secretary-General and the one proposed by the representative of Madagascar (E/5788) appeared together in a supplementary list of items proposed for inclusion in the agenda (E/L.1705).

11. As to the letter from the Secretary-General to the President (E/5787), it was for the Security Council to decide what action should be taken in pursuance of its resolution 386 (1976), whereby the Economic and Social Council was requested to consider periodically the question of economic assistance to Mozambique. He informed the Council that the Secretary-General had appointed a mission to organize assistance which would enable Mozambique to carry out its economic development programme and increase its capacity to implement sanctions. The mission was expected to complete its work towards the end of April.

The agenda, as contained in document E/5770, including the supplementary items listed in document E/L.1705, and an item entitled "Assistance to Mozambique" (E/5787) was adopted.

12. Mr. CORDOVEZ (Secretary of the Council) said that, in adopting its programme of work for the current year, the Council had originally scheduled the item on natural resources for its sixty-first session. However, one delegation had pointed out that the Council might need to take action at its current session on some of the recommendations that might be contained in the report of the Committee on Natural Resources on its first special session (E/5778). It was now apparent that the Committee's recommendations

should indeed be implemented before the sixty-first session. The Secretary-General proposed, therefore, that the item should be included in the agenda for the sixtieth session.

13. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) asked whether the report of the Committee on Natural Resources and the item relating to Mozambique would be considered in plenary meetings or whether the Economic Committee would meet to discuss them.

14. The PRESIDENT said that the two items would be considered in plenary meetings.

The agenda was revised to include an item entitled "Natural resources".¹

15. The PRESIDENT suggested, with regard to the supplementary items approved by the Council, that the items entitled "Review of the situation in Guatemala in consequence of the earthquake of 4 February 1976" and "Measures to be taken following the cyclones in Madagascar" should be considered during the first week of May when the Council took up the item entitled "Assistance to the drought-stricken areas of Ethiopia"; he suggested that the report of the Committee on Natural Resources should be considered on 19 April and that the Council should decide on an appropriate time to discuss the item entitled "Assistance to Mozambique".

16. Mr. SINGH (Malaysia) felt that the agenda adopted by the Council was not sufficiently heavy to justify a six-week session, and proposed that the session should be shortened in order to encourage the Council to work at a faster pace.

17. Mr. BRUCE (Canada) felt that it was important to consider the report of the Committee on Natural Resources at an early date since decisions had to be taken to enable the Secretariat to proceed with preparations for the United Nations Water Conference. With proper organization the Council should be able to complete its work in four weeks; he therefore supported the proposal by the representative of Malaysia.

18. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that delegations had not yet had time to consider the report of the Committee on Natural Resources or to refer it to their Governments for comments. The proposed date of 19 April therefore seemed too early for consideration of the item on natural resources. Besides, the items relating to Guatemala and Madagascar were more urgent. Although the proposal by the representative of Malaysia was a reasonable one, he considered it premature for the Council to decide when it would finish its work before it had even started it.

19. Mr. OLIVERI LOPEZ (Argentina) said that his country, as host to the United Nations Water Conference, hoped that decisions relating to the Conference would be taken urgently, on 19 April. The decisions needed were not substantive but merely organizational in nature.

20. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that he would defer to the wishes of the representative of Argentina.

21. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council decided to consider the report of the Committee on Natural Resources on 19 April.

It was so decided.

¹ The revised agenda, as adopted at this meeting, was circulated as document E/5789.

22. The PRESIDENT said that the proposal by the representative of Malaysia could be implemented if the Council made the most efficient use of its time. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the time-table proposed in document E/L.1704 and Corr.1 and 2, as amended.

The organization of work, as contained in document E/L.1704 and Corr.1 and 2, including the proposals made by the President, was adopted.²

23. Mr. MOURAD (Council of Arab Economic Unity), speaking at the invitation of the President, thanked the Economic and Social Council for deciding that the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) be designated to participate in its work on a continuing basis (decision 109 (LIX) of 23 July 1975). It was to be hoped that such participation would be beneficial to both organizations.

24. The ultimate goal of CAEU was the attainment of complete economic unity through economic integration and trade expansion among Arab States and acceleration of their economic and social development.

25. CAEU had already taken a number of steps towards the creation of a free trade area, the establishment of a customs union, economic co-ordination, and planning of financial and monetary policies, social and labour affairs, and transportation and communication. In addition CAEU had established the Arab Common Market.

26. CAEU, comprising 13 Arab States, sought to achieve economic unity among Arab countries acting as an economic bloc. All its members were developing countries which were usually most vulnerable to prevailing world economic difficulties. In an effort to solve some of the problems besetting Arab countries, CAEU had urged the establishment of the Arab Monetary Fund, with an estimated capital of 250 million Arab accounting dinars, in order to restore equilibrium in the balance of payments of member countries, ensure stability in exchange rates of Arab currencies and encourage Arab monetary co-operation. To further the development of resources and increase output, the General Secretariat of CAEU had drawn up a programme providing for specific measures which would lead to co-ordination of Arab development plans as of 1981.

27. At the same time, CAEU advocated the establishment of Arab joint ventures as a practical and appropriate means of achieving Arab economic integration. Three joint companies had already been

² The organization of work, as adopted at this meeting, was also issued in document E/5789.

established: the Arab Company for Mining, with headquarters at Amman, the Arab Company for the Development of Animal Wealth, with headquarters at Damascus, and the Arab Company for Medical Supplies, with headquarters at Baghdad. In addition, a number of Arab specialized federations had been set up to ensure co-ordination among the existing industries.

28. Arab countries, and especially those that were dependent on agriculture rather than on industry, were seriously concerned about the world food problem, and recognized the need to place more emphasis on their agricultural productivity. Accordingly, CAEU was taking steps to establish an Arab Company for Agriculture and Food Production.

29. Realizing the difficulties encountered by the least developed Arab countries in the process of economic and social development, CAEU had established a Technical Assistance Section to study methods of offering assistance to those countries.

30. Relations between CAEU and other regional and international bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council and ECWA, were being established on the basis of mutual understanding and in a spirit of co-operation for the benefit of all concerned.

31. CAEU observed with satisfaction the efforts deployed by the Arab countries in assisting developing countries through the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries with a view to alleviating the burden of increasing oil prices. The Afro-Arab Fund for Oil Assistance had been established in January 1974 to assist African countries in particular, in the face of rising oil prices. Moreover, further economic aid by OPEC had been initiated with the recent establishment of a new special fund, with a capital of \$5 billion, to finance the development process in the developing countries of the third world. Arab countries had also participated in the establishment of three banks, all of which extended economic and technical assistance to African and other developing countries. In addition, loans granted by some Arab countries to the World Bank had helped the Bank to expand the scope of its assistance to developing countries in the third world. Moreover, many direct loans had been made by OPEC members as economic aid to the Governments of some Arab and other developing countries.

32. He expressed the hope that co-ordination and co-operation between the Council and CAEU would provide the necessary conditions for a new economic order, giving all countries an equal opportunity to achieve economic and social development that would benefit their peoples.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

1986th meeting

Monday, 19 April 1976, at 10.55 a.m.

President: Mr. Siméon AKE (Ivory Coast).

AGENDA ITEM 13

Natural resources (E/5778 and Add.1)

1. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should concentrate on the recommendation, draft resolutions and other decisions adopted by the Committee

on Natural Resources at its first special session (E/5778, chap. I). He invited the Council to approve the recommendation of the Committee for a second special session to discuss proposals to be submitted to the United Nations Water Conference.

The recommendation was adopted.

E/SR.1986