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President: Mr. Manuel PEREZ GUERRERO (Venezuela).

AGENDA ITEM 19

Implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies (E/4460 and Add.1, E/4493 and Add.1-7)

1. The PRESIDENT noted that the Council had before it a report by the Secretary-General (E/4460 and Add.1) on the implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination was to consider the report during the second part of its second session; the Council might therefore wish to confine itself to a preliminary discussion of the report and to consider it in detail at its forty-fifth session, when the comments and the final report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination^{1/} would be available.

2. Mr. GREGH (France) supported the President's suggestion. He stressed his delegation's concern at the Secretary-General's report (E/4460 and Add.1) from which it was clear that nothing had been done since September 1967 to implement the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations concerning long-term planning and programming contained in its second report.^{2/} It was to be hoped that the palliatives employed in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report did not in fact mean a shirking of the task, and that the Council would have before it at its summer session precise proposals by the Secretary-General and more positive and specific declarations of intent than those at present submitted to it.

3. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) commended the Controller and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs on their efforts to bring the programme and budget into closer juxtaposition and on having formed a joint review group for that

purpose, which had apparently done good work. The review group had the task of making a detailed study of the estimates submitted by the main organizational units of the Secretariat, in order to ensure comparability between those estimates and the available resources, in the light of the priorities across the board. It was to be hoped that in due course a more consistent pattern would thus be achieved. It must be acknowledged, however, that the question of over-all priorities still did not seem to be under complete control. His delegation had noted that some programmes had undergone considerable modifications which had not been submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination for prior study and it hoped that attempts at co-ordination within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would be intensified and would reflect the comments he had made.

4. He was pleased to note that the expenditure estimates under section 19 of the budget estimates for 1968 (UNCTAD) would be classified on a programme basis; he regretted that the same method could not have been adopted in the case of section 20 (UNIDO),^{3/} and he hoped that it could be applied to that section in the next budget estimates. In view of the President's suggestion, his delegation would reserve its more detailed comments until the forty-fifth session of the Council.

5. Mr. ZAKHAROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stressed the importance of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts, whose reports and recommendations had been unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly. In the view of his delegation, those recommendations, as ratified by the General Assembly, should be implemented as thoroughly and as quickly as possible. It was the Council's duty to keep a very close watch on their implementation, and he believed that the detailed discussion which so important a matter warranted could best be deferred until the forty-fifth session.

6. Mr. GONSALVES (India) supported that suggestion. He welcomed the efforts which had been made to match programming to resources. However, such a process sometimes meant that programmes were dropped or given a lower priority, owing to shortage of funds. While not intending to dispute the need for that procedure, his delegation felt that care should be taken to ensure that programmes which had been duly approved were not abandoned for lack of budgetary resources.

7. Mr. CAHEN (Belgium) supported the President's suggestion, and stressed that so important a matter ought to be thoroughly discussed at the forty-fifth session, when he hoped that the Council would be able

^{1/} To be issued as Supplement No. 9 of the forty-fifth session.

^{2/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 80, document A/6343, chap. VII.

^{3/} Ibid., Twenty-second Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/6705 and Corr.1).

to consider the report on the subject prepared by the Secretary-General for the twenty-third session of the General Assembly.^{4/} The report submitted to the Council at its forty-fourth session (E/4460 and Add.1) was hardly adequate; it merely reiterated information which had been provided at the twenty-second session of the General Assembly and which the Assembly had considered inadequate. He noted, in connexion with document E/4460/Add.1, that implementation of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations by the subsidiary bodies of the Council was very uneven; some of them, including the Commission on the Status of Women, had not provided the replies that his delegation had expected.

8. Mr. MEYER PICON (Mexico) supported the President's suggestion, and said he hoped that the matter would be thoroughly discussed at the Council's forty-fifth session. He would like some clarifications regarding the changes of attitudes and methods called for in an integrated system of planning, programming and budgeting, referred to in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report (E/4460)—a paragraph which caused his delegation considerable concern.

9. In 1969, the Secretary-General would be submitting his budget estimates for the financial year 1970, which were to be prepared on a programme basis and not in terms of budgetary resources; consequently, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the functional commissions of the Council and the Council itself should attach particular importance to medium-term and long-term planning, so as to facilitate the establishment of priorities and enable Member States to be informed of the volume of estimated expenditure in the economic, social and human rights fields. The prime consideration was the urgency and importance of a programme the implementation of which must not be hampered by a financial veto.

10. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) supported the President's suggestion. His delegation had wholeheartedly endorsed the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts, and it welcomed the progress made in their implementation, as recorded in the Secretary-General's report. The programme-budgeting method was still in the experimental stage, and it would be wrong to embark on an entirely different system of budgeting without knowing the results of the first experiments with such a system.

11. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Secretariat would do all it could to explain its intentions in more detail. At the forty-fifth session of the Council, member Governments would have before them the budget estimates in their new form and would be able to see the improvements which had been made in the programming and budgeting procedure in accordance with the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

12. In connexion with the integration of planning, programming and budgeting, he said that the relevant paragraph of the second report of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts,^{5/} which enumerated the stages to be followed, clearly showed the difficulties mentioned

by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report (E/4460). It was neither simple nor easy to change well-established budgetary procedures; the Secretariat had nevertheless tried to do the utmost without disregarding the ideas of Member Governments and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. He did not think that the Secretariat, in its zeal for reform, was failing to keep pace with the thinking of Governments or with the comments which had been made in the Fifth Committee at the twenty-second session of the General Assembly. There had been no very clear formulation by the legislative bodies, which had not gone beyond the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations concerning an integrated system of long-term planning, programming and budgeting. His own impression was rather that the Secretariat was ahead in that respect; the comments he had submitted at the opening meeting of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the first part of its second session^{6/} had been intended to show how anxious the Secretariat was to press forward as far as possible with reforms. The complexity of the task and the hesitation shown by the legislative bodies accounted for the fact that the Secretariat had been able to proceed only at a certain pace.

13. With regard to the Mexican representative's question concerning the changes of attitudes and methods mentioned in the second sentence of paragraph 5 of document E/4460, he pointed out that the matter was to be dealt with in detail at the forty-fifth session of the Council. He wished, nevertheless, to stress that the Secretariat, recognizing the extent of its responsibilities with regard to programming, had long since stated its readiness to implement the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts, at least in certain sectors, and in particular with regard to the reform of budget presentation and budget approval, with a view to relating the budget more closely to programmes, since that was the surest means of identifying a number of priorities and, consequently, of achieving the objectives sought in the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts. However, the competent organs, namely, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, had not yet taken a position on the question of such reform.

14. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) associated himself with the doubts expressed by the representative of Mexico concerning the progress made by the Secretariat in the implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts. Although it was true that the introduction of a sophisticated budgetary system of the PPBS (Planning Programming Budgeting Systems) required time and called for many changes in attitudes and methods, it was nevertheless the duty of the Secretariat to submit to the inter-governmental bodies programmes, in one form or another, proposing certain priorities. Yet the task of assessing priorities was often neglected by the Secretariat, which was apparently by no means ahead of Governments and inter-governmental bodies in that respect in that it was not using the tools it had in hand.

^{4/} Document A/7124.

^{5/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 80, document A/6343, para. 73.

^{6/} See document E/AC.51/SR.91.

15. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) replied that that involved a political and constitutional problem; for it was questionable to what extent the Secretariat could or should determine and submit an order of priorities for programmes which were established by Governments themselves. That was a very broad interpretation of the powers of the Secretariat, whose role should in fact be confined to endeavouring to keep programmes and budgetary resources in line.

16. Mr. MEYER PICON (Mexico) said it was an undeniable fact that the reports submitted by the Secretariat usually provided the basis for the debates of the legislative organs of the United Nations, and that it therefore bore considerable responsibility in the matter. Without going so far as to establish programme priorities itself, the Secretariat should at least present programmes in a sufficiently circumstantial and detailed form to enable Governments to take an informed decision on the order of priorities.

17. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) agreed with the representative of Mexico that, if the Secretariat submitted more precise reports, suggesting priorities at an early stage, the Council, as the legislative body primarily responsible, would be in a better position to take a decision on the order of priorities; the legislative power disposed, but the executive must propose. As matters stood, however, it was the Secretariat which took the final decision by reconciling programmes and budgetary resources. There was thus a crypto-decision on priorities.

18. Mr. GONSALVES (India) noted some inconsistency between the statement of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs that the Secretariat was ahead of the most advanced countries with regard to the improvement of programming techniques and the fact, according to paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report (E/4460), that, for a number of reasons, the introduction of a budgetary system would require some time if adverse repercussions on the functioning of the present system were to be avoided. Judging by the documents before the Council, the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts were being implemented at a disturbingly slow pace. He pointed out, in particular, that those recommendations concerned not only the reconciliation or programmes and budget, but, what was most important, the development of machinery to permit longer-term planning. Progress in the latter connexion seemed to have been even slower. His delegation hoped that efforts would be undertaken to that end by the secretariats of the functional commissions and the various units of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with a view to establishing an order of priority among different programmes. Some units had already taken such action.

19. He agreed with the representatives of Mexico and the United States that it was the duty of the Secretariat, involving no constitutional or political problems, to provide delegations with documents which were sufficiently precise to enable them to determine the priorities which should be accorded to the various programmes, on the basis, first, of their respective importance to Governments and, secondly, of the budgetary resources available.

20. Mr. CAHEN (Belgium) pointed out, with reference to a remark made earlier by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, that, although the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, at its twenty-second session, had not given the Secretariat specific indications concerning some of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts, particularly with regard to the form of the budget and the budget cycle, it had nevertheless taken decisions on many other questions, including the necessity of developing an integrated system of programming and budgeting, so as to facilitate the establishment of priorities, and resolutions had been adopted on the subject, in particular resolution 2370 (XXII). He considered that the General Assembly, the inter-governmental body par excellence, had thus provided the Secretariat with sufficiently clear indications to enable it to make headway in that direction.

21. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) observed that, when delegations had before them, at the forty-fifth session of the Council, the document relating to the provisional estimates, they would appreciate that the Secretariat had done all it could to implement the recommendations of the General Assembly and that genuine progress had been made towards the integration of programmes and budget.

22. Mr. MEYER PICON (Mexico) said that that was precisely the state of affairs which was to be avoided; for, if that procedure were followed, delegations would know nothing about the provisional estimates until the forty-fifth session of the Council, and when the relevant document was submitted to them they would be more or less forced to approve it as submitted by the Secretariat, since they would not have time to study it thoroughly. It was for delegations to establish the priorities to be accorded to programmes, on the basis of the Secretariat's suggestions, and they should be able to take an informed decision, having regard, first, to the importance of the respective programmes and, secondly, to budgetary resources.

23. Mr. GONSALVES (India) said that he would like to know exactly what the situation was—whether the Secretariat was really making all the necessary efforts to establish an integrated system of planning and budget preparation, so that delegations would be able to note genuine progress in that respect when the budget estimates were submitted to them at the forty-fifth session of the Council, or whether the Secretariat's position in the matter was still the same as was apparent from paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report (E/4460).

24. Mr. CAHEN (Belgium) said that the question of priorities did not really arise at the stage of the provisional estimates. The latter were computed on basis of the programmes as initially outlined, and it was only after they had been sifted, and perhaps trimmed, by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly that the question of priorities really arose.

25. The PRESIDENT said that the preliminary debate on agenda item 19 had proved extremely valuable, since it had shown how much importance all the members of the Council attached to the question of the inte-

gration of programmes and budget and to the need to study it thoroughly and realistically before referring it to the General Assembly, especially as it was a question of prime importance for Governments and inter-governmental bodies, in view of its financial aspect.

26. However, as the members of the Council did not at present have before them all the documentation which they would need for a detailed discussion, he repeated his earlier suggestion, which a number of delegations had supported, that consideration of the item should be deferred until the forty-fifth session of the Council.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 20

Work programme of the United Nations in the economic, social and human rights fields (E/4463 (Parts I and II and Part II/Amend.1) and addenda, E/4463 (Annex)/Rev.1, E/4504 and Corr.1, E/4493 and Add.1-7, E/L.1212)

27. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that the Council had already considered the eight sections of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the first part of its second session (E/4493 and Add.1-7) as a part of its agenda (see also agenda item 19 above), but had decided to resume consideration of them at its forty-fifth session in view of the fact that the Committee itself did not expect to finish studying the work programmes or to formulate any general conclusions until the resumption of its session in June. The same problem arose in connexion with the note by the Secretary-General (E/4504 and Corr.1) setting out the financial implications of the recommendations of the Council's commissions and committees. That document had already been examined by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, but the latter had not stated any general conclusion concerning it. It would, therefore, be wise to postpone consideration of that document also until the Council's forty-fifth session.

28. He also drew the Council's attention to draft resolution E/L.1212, which had been submitted by a number of delegations and had just been circulated to members.

29. Mr. GONSALVES (India) said it would be particularly necessary for the Council to examine that question in depth at its forty-fifth session as the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination intended to reach some final conclusions in the meantime as to how it could best contribute to the work of the Council.

30. Some delegations had stressed the need to make the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination a more effective advisory body of the Council but it seemed that efforts to devise appropriate procedures had so far failed. It was in order partly to remedy that failure that draft resolution E/L.1212 had been submitted to the Council, which should have no difficulty in adopting it, since it concerned only procedural decisions.

31. During previous debates on that question the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had apparently not been given due attention. His

delegation attached great importance to those reports and considered that they should be examined separately in detail at the same time as the agenda item to which they related.

32. It was essential that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should receive from the Council all the support and encouragement which it deserved; it was to be hoped that the Council would take appropriate action at its forty-fifth session after it had examined the Committee's complete report.

33. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) thought it difficult at the present stage to make any over-all evaluation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination which, while it had not completely fulfilled the hopes placed in it, had nevertheless made progress in accomplishing the essential part of its task. It had, however, encountered several problems in the course of its work.

34. First of all, there was the question of its calendar of meetings and the date on which it reported to the Council; the reporting date prescribed had never been adhered to since it had been fixed without regard for the United Nations budgetary cycle. As a result, it was impossible for the Committee to complete the task assigned to it at its spring session. The matter should be considered and the Committee's calendar of sessions altered accordingly.

35. Secondly, neither the Secretariat nor the Committee had been able to devise a system of documentation which would enable the programme to be considered as a whole; each aspect of the programme continued to be examined separately, and co-ordination suffered accordingly. The Committee must try to make further progress in that regard during the next few years.

36. Thirdly, it appeared from the remarks of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination had reviewed the programme drawn up by the Secretary-General. However, since that programme was based on decisions which had been approved by the Council largely on the basis of determinations of its subsidiary bodies, it would seem difficult for the Committee to reach any valid final conclusions unless it addressed itself to the programme determinations of such subsidiary bodies.

37. On some of the questions raised in the Council concerning the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (E/4493 and Add.1-7), his delegation's position differed somewhat from that of the Indian delegation. It was true that the Council should place its authority behind the Committee's report if that report was to be effective. However, if, when considering the report of the Social Committee, the Council did not take into account the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination which was not yet available to it and approved the Social Committee's report before it had examined that of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, it would be unable to act on the latter Committee's recommendations on the matters with which the Social Committee had dealt. The Council must endeavour to remedy that situation by requesting its sessional committees to take into account the views of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination so that its final decision

on the various reports would reflect the position of that Committee.

38. In conclusion, he agreed with the representative of India that the Council should have no difficulty in adopting draft resolution E/L.1212.

39. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (E/4493 and Add.1-7) had not been given sufficiently careful consideration at the Council's current session. It had not even been mentioned during the debates of the Council's Committees, which had decided to refer the entire question for discussion in plenary meeting; however, the agenda of the plenary meetings was already very full and it would be impossible for the Council to give the report the attention it deserved. Yet the eight sections of its report contained precise and constructive suggestions which should be followed by concrete measures. The Council should accept or reject the Committee's conclusions but it would be most regrettable if the Council did not examine the report at all or take it into consideration. It seemed, in the circumstances, that the Committee had only a very minor role and that the money it cost was being spent unproductively. His delegation considered that that situation should be remedied.

40. There were several impediments to the work of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. First of all, its terms of reference were much too narrow. Secondly, the information given to it was inadequate. Thirdly, its calendar of meetings was unrealistic since the Committee was currently considering programmes which had in fact already been approved. Lastly, the Council did not yet pay enough attention to the Committee's conclusions and recommendations. It was obvious that in those circumstances the Committee could only have limited effectiveness and could not fulfil its proper role with regard to planning and co-ordination.

41. His delegation considered, however, that the Committee was on the right path, had a clear idea of its role and was doing everything in its power to increase the effectiveness of planning, programming

and co-ordination with a view to making the best use of available resources.

42. The Council would have the necessary documentation available to it at its forty-fifth session so that it would then be possible for the various delegations to make concrete and specific proposals aimed at increasing the Committee's effectiveness. For the present, his delegation considered that the Committee should not review too many questions but should concentrate upon four or five items and examine them thoroughly. At present it had very little time in which to study the documents before it with the proper care. It would be easier for the Committee to make specific and detailed recommendations if it considered a few questions only, particularly those to which the Council was unable to devote sufficient time, for example, the question of transport. If the Council had before it a detailed report from the Committee when examining questions of that kind, the effectiveness of its work would be increased.

43. His delegation considered that the work of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination itself must be organized. At present the Committee held two sessions each year, in spring and in autumn. When it met for its spring session, the Secretariat was not in a position to furnish it with statements of the financial implications of the various projects. The Committee's debates accordingly remained excessively abstract and it sometimes even discussed programmes which had already been approved. In those circumstances the effectiveness of its work was questionable. The Committee should hold only one session each year, in summer; it would then be in possession of all the necessary documentation and of the Council's directives regarding the direction which its work should take.

44. His delegation hoped that all the necessary documents would be available to the Council at its forty-fifth session, including, in particular, the final report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. It would then be possible to give the matter the attention it deserved and to take the appropriate decisions aimed at increasing the Committee's effectiveness.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.