



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Resumed Forty-seventh Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

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at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

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President: Mr. Raymond SCHEYVEN (Belgium).

In the absence of the President, Mr. Maramis (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 10

**Calendar of conferences and meetings for 1970 and 1971
(E/4745 and Corr.1 and 2, E/4756 and Add.1)**

1. The PRESIDENT said that there were three matters which the Council should decide: the date and place of the fifth session of the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade (see E/4756); the opening date of the forty-ninth session of the Council; and the date and place of the twenty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see E/4756/Add.1).

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE**

2. Mr. OSMAN (Sudan) said that, if the Preparatory Committee met at Geneva, developing countries which did not have permanent delegations there would incur the expense of sending representatives from New York or from their national capitals. In addition, many delegations would have difficulty in ensuring the continuity of representation essential to the success of the Committee's work if the meeting were held at Geneva, whereas all the members of the Committee were represented in New York. The Secretariat would also incur expenses if the meeting were held away from Headquarters. For all those reasons, the Council should recommend that the Committee should hold its fifth session in New York.

3. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the position of his delegation with regard to the so-called Preparatory Committee was well known. As to paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's note (E/4756), his delegation failed to understand why the matter had been referred to the Council; the body concerned should itself

decide the date and place of its next session and any financial implications of the decision should be referred to the appropriate bodies for approval. He requested that his delegation's reservations on the subject should be recorded in the Council's report on the item.

4. Mr. RAHMAN (Pakistan) endorsed the comments made by the Sudanese representative. If the developing countries were to participate effectively in its work, the next session of the Preparatory Committee should be held in New York.

5. Mr. MARTIN-WITKOWSKI (France) reminded members that his delegation was not entirely satisfied with the Secretariat's calculation of the estimated cost of holding the session at Geneva, and had requested further study of the matter. It was surprising that countries like Sudan and Pakistan, which were so much concerned with the work of UNCTAD, would be unable to ensure effective representation at Geneva. France would abide by the majority decision on the matter.

6. Mr. GUELEV (Bulgaria) endorsed the comments of the representative of the Soviet Union. There was no reason why the Council should concern itself with the date and place of the next session of the Preparatory Committee.

7. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) explained that the Preparatory Committee had been anxious to make its own decision on the matter. As would be seen from the Secretary-General's note (E/4756), however, it was physically impossible for a meeting to be arranged at Geneva at a time consistent with the Committee's desire to follow, not precede, the resumed ninth session of the Trade and Development Board. Some members of the Committee had felt that, if the Council's calendar were adjusted, the Committee would be able to meet at Geneva. Since it was obvious, however, that it was beyond the Committee's power to discuss the Council's calendar, the Committee had suggested that the matter should be referred to the Council.

8. The financial implications of holding the meeting at Geneva were irrelevant, in that they applied to a date when the Preparatory Committee did not want to meet. As it was physically impossible for the Committee to meet at Geneva on the dates it wanted to, there was no alternative but to meet in New York where accommodation was available, where the question of additional financial implications did not arise and where it was most convenient for the developing countries to work.

9. Mr. PLEHN MEJIA (Mexico) said that it would be more convenient if the Preparatory Committee were to meet at Geneva because members would be in contact with and able to assist their delegations to UNCTAD in preparing UNCTAD's contribution to the Second Development

Decade. Mexico would, however, abide by the majority decision on the matter.

Mr. Scheyven (Belgium) took the Chair.

10. Mr. POSNETT (United Kingdom) proposed that the Preparatory Committee should meet from 24 February to 13 March 1970.

11. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should adopt the Sudanese and United Kingdom proposals and agree that the Preparatory Committee should meet in New York from 24 February to 13 March 1970.

It was so decided.

OPENING DATE OF THE FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

12. The PRESIDENT reminded members that the Council had not yet decided whether its forty-ninth session was to start on 6 or 9 July 1970.

13. Mr. ARVESEN (Norway) said that his delegation would experience difficulty in obtaining the expert assistance it required if the session continued into August. He proposed, therefore, that the Council should hold its forty-ninth session from 6 to 31 July 1970.

It was so agreed.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

14. Mr. MARTIN-WITKOWSKI (France) said that the reasons given in the Secretary-General's note (E/4756/Add.1) for going back on the decision that the Commission on the Status of Women should convene at Geneva in the autumn of 1970 were not very convincing. Why had they not been put forward at the time the decision was taken? Perhaps the Commission's session could be held between those of the Trade and Development Board and the Statistical Commission from, say, 14 September to 3 October 1970.

15. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) asked the Secretary to comment on the French suggestion.

16. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) referred members to General Assembly resolution 2478 (XXIII). A decision to hold a session of a functional commission at Geneva outside the period 28 September to 28 November would probably involve financial implications, but he could not make a definite statement on the subject without first consulting the Controller's office. The dates suggested by the French representative fell partly within the pattern of conferences established in resolution 2478 (XXIII).

17. Mr. ARVESEN (Norway) said that the session of the Commission on the Status of Women should not clash with that of the General Assembly. His delegation had no strong views on the alternative proposals in the Secretary-General's note (E/4756/Add.1), but was inclined to favour the one mentioned in the first sentence of paragraph 2, since it would entail no additional conference servicing costs.

18. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation could accept either of the proposals in the Secretary-General's note (E/4756/Add.1), but was inclined to favour a session at Geneva. If the Commission's session were convened on the dates suggested by the French representative, it would clash with the Seminar on the participation of women in the economic life of their country to be organized in Moscow under the programme of advisory services in human rights.

19. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) asked if it would be difficult for the Secretariat to service the Seminar and the Commission simultaneously.

20. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) replied in the affirmative.

21. Mr. MARTIN-WITKOWSKI (France) admitted the validity of the Soviet argument. Nevertheless, the Commission on the Status of Women had expressed its desire to meet at Geneva. He proposed, therefore, that it should be convened at Geneva from 23 March to 10 April 1970.

It was so agreed.

22. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) said that the Secretariat would have to make the necessary adjustment to the dates for the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Joint Meetings of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, in view of the decision to bring forward the opening date of the summer session of the Council to 6 July. He added that he had not been able to understand the financial figures given concerning the holding of conferences at Geneva and he hoped that his colleagues in the Fifth Committee would have an opportunity of discussing the matter with Secretariat experts who would be able to explain the financial implications of the Council's decision that the Commission on the Status of Women should meet at Geneva.

23. Mr. JHA (India), referring to document E/4745 and Corr.1 and 2 requested a slight alteration in the dates fixed for the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights (17 February to 23 March). For some time the Commission had believed that its work would be facilitated if its meetings could be held somewhat later in the year. In 1968, its session had begun on 1 February, in 1969 in mid-February, and the date proposed for 1970 was 17 February. A postponement of the opening date had been suggested by a small working group of the Commission and had been endorsed both by the Commission itself and by the Council at its May/June session. One reason for the suggested deferment of the opening date was that the members found it difficult to obtain their documents in good time because the Secretariat was overburdened with meetings on human rights in January and February. As a result, documents for the Commission on Human Rights came out so late that it was very difficult for members of the Commission to read them properly and consult their Governments. The aim should be for the documents to be available about two weeks or ten days in advance of the meeting of the Commission. He realized that the calendar of conferences was prepared with great care, but proposed that the Commission on Human Rights should meet from 23

February to 27 March. That would require a slight postponement in the resumed forty-eighth session of the Council, at present scheduled to open on 23 March; perhaps it could meet from 30 March to 10 April.

24. Mr. POSNETT (United Kingdom) said he had no objection to that proposal. He presumed that the Commission would be reporting to the Council at its session of 18 to 29 May, and not at the earlier session in February/March.

25. Mr. JHA (India) said that the postponement he had suggested was not related to the consideration of the report of the Commission by the Council in May. He had suggested postponing the Council's session in case some representatives attending the session of the Commission might also have to attend the Council's session.

26. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) said that he sympathized with the desire for a postponement of the session of the Commission on Human Rights, but wondered whether it was really necessary or desirable to postpone the Council's session in March; he believed that at that session the Council would be dealing mainly with economic matters and that questions relating to social affairs would not be considered until the May session. Since the Preparatory Committee on the Second United Nations Development Decade was to meet on 6 April, it might inconvenience some representatives if the dates for the Council's session were 30 March to 10 April.

27. Mr. WALDRON-RAMSEY (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the United States representative was correct in stating that the March session of the Council would deal exclusively with economic matters and that social questions, including the report of the Commission on Human Rights, would be considered at the main session. There seemed no need to make any change in the dates of the Council's May session, since the period between the proposed new date on which the session of the Commission on Human Rights would end and the opening of the Council's May session would be sufficient for the preparation and submission of the Commission's report to the

Council. He endorsed the Indian proposal that the Commission's session should be from 23 February to 27 March, although he would have preferred an even later opening date. The later the Commission began its work, the better its chances of completing its agenda. Even if the Commission postponed the opening of its session to 23 February, there might still be constitutional problems, since some important reports were to be submitted to the Commission by a working group; it was to be hoped that that would not lead to difficulties. He also agreed with the United States representative that there was no need to change the dates fixed for the resumed forty-eighth session of the Council.

28. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania had correctly described the situation. The only proviso was that the Office of Conference Services must be consulted about the slight overlap in the meetings of the Commission and the Council because of servicing requirements. If the Council recommended the General Assembly Committee on Conferences to take the proposed change in dates into account, the dates could be negotiated; they could not be finally agreed on at the present stage.

29. The Tanzanian representative had also been correct in stating that the Council would confine its attention in March and April to economic matters; if any questions relating to social affairs were considered, arrangements could be made for them to be discussed at the end of the session, in order to avoid any conflict with the discussions of the Commission on Human Rights.

30. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should accept the Secretary's suggestion and recommend to the General Assembly Committee on Conferences that it should take account of the Council's wish that the Commission on Human Rights should meet from 24 February to 27 March 1970 rather than from 17 February to 23 March as proposed in document E/4745.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.