



COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REPORT ON THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

(23 - 27 February 1976)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS: SIXTY - FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 4

UNITED NATIONS



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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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I. QUESTIONS THAT REQUIRE ACTION BY, OR ARE BROUGHT TO THE
ATTENTION OF, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A

1. The Committee on Natural Resources recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following recommendation and draft resolutions:

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Economic and Social Council should make arrangements for a second special session of the Committee on Natural Resources, to review the consolidated document on action proposals to be submitted to the United Nations Water Conference, as drafted on the basis of the recommendations of the regional preparatory meetings and the Committee on Water Problems of the Economic Commission for Europe; this document should be circulated no later than 15 November 1976;

In addition, the Committee on Natural Resources decided that:

(a) The secretariat of the United Nations Water Conference in co-operation with the officers of the Committee and in consultation with the specialized agencies, should furnish a general framework for the formulation of action proposals, to guide the regional meetings in formulating such proposals in a regional consolidated document, based on all action proposals from Governments;

(b) The paper on policy options to be prepared by the United Nations system under topic III on the provisional agenda for the United Nations Water Conference (see annex II to the present report) should be circulated for intergovernmental review no later than September 1976;

(c) Governments should take steps to ensure that all thematic papers submitted to the United Nations Water Conference emphasize and highlight the policy aspects and implications of the subject-matter by, inter alia, including in each paper a section dealing with current and future policy implications, needs, applicability to other countries and recommendations. The Conference secretariat, in its request to Governments for submission of thematic papers and abstracts, should urge that the above approach be followed to the extent possible;

(d) The United Nations Water Conference should be structured on the basis of plenary meetings and two main committees which will deal with substantive matters. Provision should also be made for the servicing of working groups to study, inter alia, the subject of action proposals. The final structure of the Conference meetings should be adopted at the second special session of the Committee. The committees should have before them, as working documents, over-all summaries of the thematic papers, prepared by the Conference, secretariat according to the subject-matter focus of each of the committees. Governments are urged to provide assistance to the secretariat, as needed, for the preparation of such over-all summaries of thematic papers.

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Participation in the United Nations Water Conference

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1979 (LIX) of 31 July 1975, concerning the convening of the United Nations Water Conference in Argentina from 7 to 18 March 1977,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 3513 (XXX) of 15 December 1975 in which the Assembly welcomed the decision of the Economic and Social Council to convene the above-mentioned Conference,

Recognizing the importance of a universal participation in the United Nations Water Conference,

1. Requests the Secretary-General to invite:

(a) All States to participate in the United Nations Water Conference;

(b) Representatives of organizations which have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices, in the capacity of observers, in accordance with Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974;

(c) Representatives of the national liberation movements recognized in its area by the Organization of African Unity in the capacity of observers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974;

(d) The specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as interested organs of the United Nations, to be represented at the Conference;

(e) Interested regional intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers;

(f) Concerned non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council;

2. Authorizes the Secretary-General to invite other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations of a genuinely international character which are directly concerned and may express the wish to be represented by observers;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the necessary arrangements shall be made for the effective participation in the United Nations Water Conference of the representatives referred to in paragraph 1, subparagraphs (b) and (c), above, including the requisite financial provisions for travel expenses and per diem allowances.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Preparations for the United Nations Water Conference

The Economic and Social Council,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 3513 (XXX) of 15 December 1975,

Recalling its resolution 1979 (LIX) of 31 July 1975,

Taking into account with appreciation the preparatory activities currently undertaken by the Secretariat,

1. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments, to appoint a highly qualified Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference to be assisted by a Conference secretariat, composed of members of the existing secretariat and qualified personnel from the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned;
2. Takes note with appreciation of the second progress report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the United Nations Water Conference; 1/
3. Requests the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference, when appointed, to make all necessary efforts to finalize as soon as possible the preparations for the Conference, including the drafting of its main documents, its supporting documents and the consolidated document to be drafted on the basis of the recommendations of the regional preparatory meetings;
4. Requests the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to continue their substantive support of the preparations for the United Nations Water Conference;
5. Requests also the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements for the second special session of the Committee on Natural Resources, which will have before it the documentation and the consolidated document mentioned in paragraph 3 above, to be held at Headquarters, New York, from 3 to 7 January 1977;
6. Approves the arrangements for the translation of the pre-session documentation and further requests the Secretary-General to provide also for the translation of the supporting documents into the working language of the Conference;
7. Requests further the Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference to distribute as early as possible, and well in advance of the second special session of the Committee on Natural Resources, the documentation and the consolidated document mentioned above in all the working languages of the Conference;
8. Expresses its appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme for its offer to help defray the travel costs of the representatives of developing countries which may face special difficulties in this respect, so that they may attend the regional preparatory meetings, and urges the Secretary-General to accept the contribution of the Programme for this purpose;

1/ E/C.7/58 and Add. 1-4

9. Urges the United Nations Environment Programme to consider urgently, in consultation with the Secretary-General, the possibility of increasing its financing of the preparatory work for the United Nations Water Conference in order to ensure its success;

10. Appeals to Governments, whenever applicable, to intensify their national preparations for the United Nations Water Conference through, inter alia, the establishment of national Water Conference committees or similar bodies.

B

2. The Committee on Natural Resources brings to the attention of the Economic and Social Council the following decision:

The Committee on Natural Resources requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments, to study possible candidacies for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference, with a view to making a formal appointment of such an officer after approval of the post by the Economic and Social Council, and concurrence therein by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

II. SECOND PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

3. The Committee on Natural Resources considered agenda item 4 at its 90th to 92nd and 94th to 96th meetings. The Committee had before it the second progress report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the United Nations Water Conference (E/C.7/58 and Add.1-4).

4. The Director of the Centre for Natural Resources, Energy and Transport, introducing the Secretary-General's report, drew attention to regional preparatory activities, recent important meetings of non-governmental organizations and their role in publicizing the Conference, the preparation of United Nations documentation for the Conference and the thematic papers to be submitted by the countries. Referring to the latter, he suggested that, in preparing papers, countries might wish to focus on topic III (Policy options) on the provisional agenda for the Conference (see annex II to the present report) and select papers directly related to water policy and management issues.

5. In the course of the discussion a number of representatives mentioned the possibility of appointing a Secretary-General of the Conference. It was proposed that if a Secretary-General were appointed, he should be provided with the smallest possible staff consistent with the effective organization of the Conference, to be constituted preferably of people already working within the United Nations system.

6. With regard to the United Nations Conference on Desertification, to be held at Nairobi from 29 August to 9 September 1977, some representatives stressed the importance of co-ordinating the efforts of the secretariats of the two Conferences.

7. Several representatives stated that their countries had already created national committees for the preparation of the United Nations Water Conference or were about to do so. Concern was expressed at the fact that, so far, only 22 countries had established such committees. The importance of the creation of national committees should be stressed and other countries should be urged to establish them.

8. Many delegations commented on the thematic papers to be submitted by Governments. It was suggested that efforts should be made to ensure the translation of such papers and that voluntary contributions should be sought for that purpose. It was suggested also that countries should be urged to make all efforts to provide translations of their papers in as many languages of the Conference as possible.

9. Referring to the secretariat papers for the Conference, most delegations reiterated the necessity to focus on water policy and management issues, such as water demand management, recycling and pollution abatement, rather than on purely technical matters. Many delegations stressed that water should be considered an essential element in over-all economic and social development, in particular with respect to health, food and industrial production. Emphasis should be put on

increasing the water supply, conserving the soil and financing hydraulic works in developing countries. The problem should not be over-dramatized or presented as a global crisis. The delegations emphasized that topic III on the provisional agenda for the Conference should definitely be the heart of the Conference.

10. In response to questions, the representative of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination outlined the contribution that the United Nations organizations were making to the organization of the Conference. He emphasized that the Conference involved the whole United Nations system.

11. In response to questions concerning the regional preparatory process, representatives of the regional commissions briefed the Committee on the progress of their work.

12. A number of delegations commented on the problem of consolidating the recommendations of the regional meetings, concerning action proposals to be submitted to the Conference. It was suggested that the consolidated document should be reviewed at the intergovernmental level as soon as possible after the completion of the regional meetings. ^{2/} It was proposed that the review be done at the second special session of the Committee on Natural Resources, after the last regional meeting. That solution was also clearly suggested by the Director of the Centre for Natural Resources, Energy and Transport. In accordance with general practice, the second special session of the Committee should be convened just before the beginning of the Conference (to be held from 7 to 18 March 1977).

13. Many delegations commended the United Nations Environment Programme for its offer to help defray the travel costs of the representatives of developing countries taking part in the regional preparatory meetings. The hope was expressed that means would be found to ensure that financial considerations did not prevent any developing country from attending the Conference.

14. In connexion with the organization of work at the Conference, some countries wished to have the number of main committees reduced from three to two; to that effect it was proposed that topic I on the agenda be considered in plenary meetings, topic II in the first committee and plenary meetings, topic III in the second committee and plenary meetings and topic IV in plenary meetings once the drafting group had completed its work. It was decided that discussions on the details of the organization of work at the Conference would be premature and that that should be the task of the Committee at its second special session.

15. The hope was expressed that the Conference would produce substantial results, particularly for developing countries, in line with the basic principles expressed by the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions.

16. In conclusion, the representative of the host country recalled Economic and Social Council resolution 1979 (LIX) and General Assembly resolution 3513 (XXX) and urged every country fully to support their implementation.

^{2/} The planned dates of the meetings are: Economic Commission for Africa, 20-24 September 1976; Economic Commission for Europe (Committee on Water Problems), September 1976; Economic Commission for Latin America, 30 August-3 September 1976; Economic Commission for Western Asia, September 1976; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 20-27 July 1976.

Action taken by the Committee

17. The Committee had before it two recommendations: a draft recommendation (E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1) submitted by the delegations of Finland, 3/ France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America; and a draft resolution (E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1) submitted by the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Finland, 3/ India, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic, Norway, Sweden, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. The programme budget implications of the proposals contained in document E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1 were set forth in documents E/C.7/L.46 and E/C.7/L.49, and the programme budget implications of the proposals contained in document E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1 were set forth in document E/C.7/L.47 (see annex III to the present report). The Committee also had before it a draft decision (E/C.7/L.48) submitted by the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Egypt, Finland, 3/ India, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic, Norway, Sweden, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

18. At the 95th meeting, after a discussion in which the representatives of Argentina, Poland, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic and Canada participated, and after hearing a statement by the Director of the Centre for Natural Resources, Energy and Transport, the Committee decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that a second special session of the Committee be held at Headquarters, New York, from 3 to 7 January 1977 (see chap. I, A, recommendation and draft resolution II).

19. At the 96th meeting, the representative of Norway introduced draft recommendation E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1 on behalf of the sponsors. Paragraph (d) was orally revised to take account of the view expressed by many delegations that the final structure of the meetings of the United Nations Water Conference should be adopted at the second special session of the Committee on Natural Resources, and should not be made rigid at the current stage of the preparatory process. The idea of avoiding rigidity was first expressed by the representative of Argentina, and supported by the representatives of Nigeria, the Libyan Arab Republic, Algeria, the United States of America and Brazil. The representative of Argentina warned against the creation of too many working groups, as that would prevent the effective participation of developing countries with small delegations. He stated, however, that in view of the number of items to be considered at the Conference, it would be necessary to hold more than two sets of simultaneous meetings a day. The Committee adopted the draft recommendation, as orally revised, by consensus (see chap. I, A, recommendation).

20. At the same meeting, the representative of Canada, on behalf of the sponsors, introduced draft resolution E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1; in introducing it, he orally revised operative paragraph 1. The Committee adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised, by consensus (see chap. I, draft resolution II). The representatives of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Iran requested that their delegations' reservations about paragraph 1 be recorded; a few representatives stated that they intended to raise the matter, in due course, at a Council session, as a question of principle for future United Nations conferences. The representative of the United States of America asked that his delegation's reservations about operative paragraph 9 with respect

3/ In accordance with the provisions of rule 72 of the rules of procedure.

to the appropriateness of seeking additional funding from the United Nations Environment Programme be recorded.

21. The representative of Canada also introduced draft decision E/C.7/L.48 on behalf of the sponsors; in introducing it, he orally revised the last part of the text, at the suggestion of the Secretary of the Committee, so that it read:

"... after approval of the post by the Economic and Social Council and concurrence therein by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions."

The Committee adopted the draft decision, as revised, by consensus (for the text, see chap. I, B).

III. ARRANGEMENTS IN THE HOST COUNTRY

22. The Committee considered agenda item 5 at its 89th meeting.

23. The representative of Argentina made a statement; he began by stressing the importance of water, and then noted that the water situation in the world was now becoming critical owing to population growth and unplanned economic development. Water had become a commodity of crucial importance, and universally accepted rules should be established to prevent shortages and ensure that all might benefit from its rational and economic utilization.

24. He emphasized the importance of the United Nations Water Conference, which would conduct a thorough review of water resources and their uses for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes. He suggested that the Conference should identify policy options at the national, regional and international levels.

25. He informed the Committee that the Government of Argentina attached great importance to the Conference, and that adequate and detailed preparations were being made for the event. A National Commission had been established to prepare Argentina's substantive contribution to the Conference and a Co-ordinating Committee had been entrusted with organizational matters.

26. The Conference would be held at Mar del Plata, Argentina's most important tourist resort. That was an indication of the availability and diversity of hotels, transportation and other facilities for the accommodation of participating delegations.

27. In the preparation of local organizational activities the National Co-ordinating Committee was acting through the Mar del Plata Commission, consisting of representatives of the local business community, the municipal administration, the hoteliers' association and other institutions.

28. The exploitation of water resources, from the finding of the source to the purification of the water to render it fit for human consumption, its use in irrigation and in industry and as a source of energy, and its desalinization involved the use of intermediate and advanced technology. Such technology should be brought to the attention of the public, and to that end, the National Co-ordinating Committee was organizing an international exhibition to take place concurrently with the Conference.

29. In addition to the costs it had incurred as host to the Conference, the Government of Argentina had gone beyond its obligation in financing activities related to the Conference because it was aware that available resources were very meagre. They might even be insufficient, which could jeopardize the success of the Conference.

30. The representative of Argentina said in conclusion that his Government would do everything in its power to make the Conference a success.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

31. The Committee considered agenda item 6 at its 92nd, 93rd and 96th meetings. The Committee had before it document E/C.7/L.37 to which was annexed the provisional agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1979 (LIX).

32. In the discussion of the item, the broad outline of the provisional agenda for the Conference found widespread support. Some representatives said that the agenda should not be exclusive and that Governments should be able to include additional items if they wished. Among the suggestions put forward were: consideration of water pollution problems arising in one country as a result of air- and water-borne pollution from another country; international co-operation to solve the problem of shared water resources; greater emphasis on criteria for the application of labour-intensive techniques and use of local materials; and questions relating to the use of water in developing countries.

33. The view was expressed that the agenda should not be unduly expanded to cover related issues such as the environmental effects of inland waters on the oceans. The opinion was also expressed that the problem should be put within the broader framework of land-use planning and the environment, and emphasis placed on a long-term, resource-oriented approach which would not overlook the interrelationship between fresh waters and the oceans. In that connexion attention was drawn to recommendation 55 ^{4/} of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm in June 1972, and the great importance of co-operation with respect to international water courses was stressed. Other representatives mentioned that promotion of co-operation among States was the main objective of the Conference.

34. It was suggested by a number of representatives that purely technical papers should not be included in a conference of that type, and that, in order to enhance its over-all impact and usefulness, the Conference should focus on policy issues without sacrificing the special interests of the participating nations. In that connexion, countries were urged to ensure that their thematic papers would be specifically tailored to the policy orientation of the Conference, going beyond descriptions of water resource technologies, methodologies and national water plans. Critical analyses of problems and of successful approaches should be included. It was suggested that the Secretariat might consult with Governments during the pre-conference period on the content and level of presentation of the papers.

35. Regarding water management policies, it was suggested by some representatives that separate technical meetings should be avoided within the framework of the Conference. Agreement was expressed with the Secretary-General's report that a general framework should be provided to help orient and structure both the deliberations and the output of the regional meetings.

^{4/} See A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1 and Corr.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14), chap. II, sect. B.

36. Several representatives concurred that the results of the regional meetings should be consolidated in a single document which would be subject to intergovernmental review and would be reviewed and discussed at the second special session of the Committee. The Secretariat was urged by several representatives to take steps to ensure that country thematic papers would be reviewed and utilized as additional sources of action proposals.

37. It was also stated that the Conference should be viewed as one of a series of United Nations conferences and the agenda so structured as to take that into account.

38. The hope was expressed that the Conference would have an impact on the conscience of people everywhere and that all efforts would be made to strengthen the public information programme. Several representatives recommended the appointment of a Secretary-General, as a catalyst to focus world-wide attention on water problems.

39. A representative stated that topic II on the provisional agenda, on the potential and limitations of technology, could have included some type of audio-visual programme; he wondered whether some countries and specialized agencies could still prepare audio-visual projects for presentation at the Conference.

40. One representative drew attention to four principal issues which he thought could be considered at the Conference:

(a) Management of shared water resources;

(b) Exchange of ideas on policy options;

(c) Transfer of technology;

(d) Establishment of an international programme for co-ordination and strengthening of those activities by the United Nations system.

41. One representative recalled that, while the main objective of the Conference was to avoid a future water crisis, some developing nations were already in the midst of such crises; he added that topics I and II on the agenda should therefore not only be considered as providing background documentation for topic III but as main items on which action proposals should be formulated by the Conference.

42. One representative stressed the desirability of focusing at the Conference on the lack of water resources data, the absence of statistics and the weakness of institutions. That situation would be reflected in the country and regional reports.

43. One delegation pointed out that the agenda for the Conference should include the application of systems analysis to large-scale water problems, the development of new technological processes using little or no water in order to reduce water consumption per unit of production, the protection of water installations from pollution by agricultural pesticides and fertilizers, and the construction of underground reservoirs and their supply by artificial means.

44. While the importance of technological advance to achieve efficiency in water use and reuse was recognized, concern was expressed about the need to strengthen,

in particular, institutions and technological capability in developing countries for efficient water planning, conservation and water resources development.

45. It was concluded by several representatives that the agenda for the Conference should not be finalized until the second special session of the Committee in order to allow for a better appreciation of the country thematic papers and to have available the results of the regional preparatory meetings.

46. One delegation expressed the view that the decisions of the Conference should not infringe on tasks already given by the General Assembly to other bodies of the United Nations, such as the International Law Commission.

Action taken by the Committee

47. At the 96th meeting, the representative of Norway introduced a draft decision (E/C.7/L.42/Rev.1) on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, 5/ Finland, 5/ Norway and Sweden. The Committee adopted the following text by consensus:

The Committee on Natural Resources decides that, under topic III on the provisional agenda for the United Nations Water Conference (E/C.7/L.37), 6/

(a) The following wording should be added at the beginning of the second sentence, which will read as follows:

"Bearing in mind that one objective of the Conference is to promote the levels of preparedness necessary to avoid a serious lack of water of satisfactory quality for all uses, to correct it, to the extent possible, where such a lack has already occurred, and generally to promote better management of existing resources, the Conference should review constraints and options";

(b) The following should be added to the list given in the second part of that sentence:

"(g) how to deal with water pollution arising in one country owing to the discharge of pollutants in another".

5/ In accordance with the provisions of rule 72 of the rules of procedure.

6/ For the text of the provisional agenda for the Conference, as thus revised, see annex II to the present report.

V. PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

48. The Committee considered agenda item 7 at its 93rd and 97th meetings.

49. The Committee generally agreed that participation in the United Nations Water Conference should be based on the practice established for Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in General Assembly resolution 3438 (XXX).

Action taken by the Committee

50. At the 97th meeting, the Committee considered a draft resolution (E/C.7/L.43) submitted by the delegations of Algeria, Egypt, India, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic, Mali, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yugoslavia. The Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote (see chap. I, A, draft resolution I).

The following delegations expressed their disagreements or reservations concerning the draft resolution:

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom representative said that the Secretary-General should, in applying paragraph 1 (a) of the draft resolution, follow the established practice and seek the opinion of the General Assembly when necessary.

United States of America

The United States representative wished to place on record that, while his delegation had accepted the consensus procedure for the draft resolution, it had reservations about the advisability of inviting national liberation movements to participate in international conferences. In that connexion, it wished to make clear that its concurrence in the decision should not be interpreted as signifying any change in its policy with respect to such groups or movements. The United States representative further stated that travel and subsistence payments should adhere as closely as possible to the general principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII).

France

The representative of France stated that, in the event of a vote, his delegation would have had to abstain.

VI. DRAFT PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

51. The Committee considered agenda item 8 at its 93rd and 94th meetings. It had before it document E/C.7/L.38.

52. At the 94th meeting, the Committee decided that the Conference secretariat should draw up new draft rules of procedure, taking into account the suggestions made at the meetings and the recently revised rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, and that, after consultation with Governments, a revised draft should be submitted to the Committee at its second special session.

VII. CONTINUATION OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

53. The Committee considered agenda item 9 at its 94th and 95th meetings.

54. During the discussion of the item, one representative urged the secretariats of the regional commissions to make full use of the data accumulated during the International Hydrological Decade in the preparation of introductory sections to the regional reports, describing hydrological conditions in the region concerned, and to that end to seek the co-operation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Action taken by the Committee

(For the action taken by the Committee regarding continuation of the preparatory process, see chap. I, recommendation and draft resolution II, and chap. II, paras. 16-19.)

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

55. The report of the Committee was adopted by consensus. The reservations expressed by delegations during the discussions appear in the relevant chapters under the heading "Action taken by the Committee".

IX. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

Opening and duration of the session

56. The Committee on Natural Resources, acting as the preparatory committee for the United Nations Water Conference, in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1979 (LIX) of 21 July 1975, held its first special session at Headquarters, New York, from 23 to 27 February 1976. The summary records of the meetings of the Committee are contained in documents E/C.7/SR.89-97.

57. The session was opened by the Acting Chairman, Mr. Gabriel Van Laethem, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; his statement is recorded in the summary record of the 89th meeting.

Membership and attendance

58. By Economic and Social Council resolution 1621 A (LI), the membership of the Committee was increased to 54 as from 1 January 1972. One seat remains to be filled.

59. The following States members of the Committee were represented: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Egypt, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Republic, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Rwanda, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

60. The following States Members of the United Nations participated in the session as observers: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Honduras, Israel, Jordan, Laos, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Niger, Oman, Paraguay, Portugal, Senegal, Spain and Tunisia.

61. The following non-member State participated in the session as an observer: Switzerland.

62. The following regional commissions were represented: the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Western Asia. Two other United Nations bodies, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, were also represented.

63. The following specialized agencies sent representatives: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the World Meteorological Organization. The International Atomic Energy Agency also sent a representative. One intergovernmental organization, the European Economic Community, was also represented.

64. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Chamber of Commerce, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Bahá'i International Community and International Institute for Environment and Development.

Election of officers

65. At its 89th and 90th meetings, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation: Chairman: Mr. L. O. Harriman (Nigeria); Vice-Chairmen: Mr. V. Kryzhanovsky (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. M. Al-Badri (Iraq) and Mr. J. P. Bruce (Canada); Rapporteur: Mr. P. Camacho (Venezuela).

Agenda and documentation

66. The agenda for the session (E/C.7/57), adopted by the Committee at its 89th meeting, is reproduced in annex I to the present report.

67. The documents before the Committee at its first special session are listed in annex IV.

Method of work

68. At its 89th meeting, the Committee agreed, following the practice at previous sessions, to take decisions by consensus. In the event that consensus was not possible but a majority readily discernible, the Committee would decide the matter accordingly. Opposing views would be recorded in the report, together with the reasons for disagreement.

69. At the same meeting, the Committee also agreed, taking into account the relevant constitutional requirements, to make very full and flexible use of rule 72 of its rules of procedure and under that rule it invited any State that so wished to participate in the deliberations of the Committee regarding the preparations for the United Nations Water Conference.

Summary records

70. At its 1984th meeting, on 15 January 1976, the Economic and Social Council adopted decision 137 (ORG-76), pursuant to which the Committee on Natural Resources should dispense with summary records for organizational, procedural and valedictory discussions and for the adoption of its reports, and should dispense with them for substantive discussions of lesser importance also.

71. At its 89th meeting, the Committee decided to retain summary records for all the substantive items on its agenda.

Annex I

AGENDA FOR THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Opening of the session
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Second progress report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the United Nations Water Conference
5. Arrangements in the host country
6. Provisional agenda for the United Nations Water Conference
7. Participation in the United Nations Water Conference
8. Draft provisional rules of procedure for the United Nations Water Conference
9. Continuation of the preparatory process
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee

Annex II

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

as approved by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1979 (LIX) and revised by the Committee at its 96th meeting a/

I. Resources and needs: assessment of the world water situation

Under this topic the Conference would receive a comprehensive review of water resource availability designed to provide an objective appraisal of the current and prospective water situations throughout the world, and of the requirements to meet identified goals in the availability and use of water. The report would take into account geographical characteristics and differences in levels of development, and indicate major regional and subregional trends in the supply of and demand for water for all purposes, starting with requirements for domestic purposes and for food production, and would provide the factual setting for the main theme of the Conference.

II. The promise of technology: potential and limitations

This topic would be concerned with the types of technological advances required to achieve the greatest possible increase in usefully available supply and in efficiency in the use and reuse of water, especially in the developing countries. Quality control requirements stemming from pollution hazards would also be reviewed.

The main emphasis would be on: (a) the limits to trade-offs between capital-intensive and labour-intensive techniques, prospects for more efficient use of local materials, and greater flexibility in the consideration of the scale and size of projects; (b) techniques for achieving greater efficiency in use through increased total supply, and reductions in waste and losses; (c) eliminating or reducing harmful effects, primarily with respect to control and management of various types of waste water but also in connexion with flood plain management; (d) prospects for increased total supply from the application of new technologies (desalination, weather modification etc.).

III. Policy options

The Conference would provide indications on how water policies and institutions can best be adapted to the physical and cultural conditions and the kinds of technologies best suited to individual countries. Bearing in mind that one objective of the Conference is to promote the levels of preparedness necessary to avoid a serious lack of water of satisfactory quality for all uses, to correct it, to the extent possible, where such a lack has already occurred, and generally to promote better management of existing resources, the Conference should review

a/ See para. 47 of the present report.

constraints and options: (a) the types of constraint hindering efficient water resources development; (b) the requirements for and limitations of capital in future years and the development options available; (c) manpower needs and training requirements; (d) the characteristics of institutions and laws needed to achieve efficiency in the development and use of water resources; (e) planning and co-ordination requirements and allocation criteria; (f) criteria for plan and project implementation; (g) how to deal with water pollution arising in one country owing to the discharge of pollutants in another.

Questions relating to the more efficient joint use of international water resources and in this context the follow-up recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in particular, recommendations 51-55, b/ will also be taken up under this topic.

IV. What to do: action proposals

Taking into account water resource development needs, and the institutional obstacles and requirements discussed and defined in the preparatory regional meetings, action proposals would be drawn up for discussion at the Conference. Such proposals would have national and international components. The first would relate to the actions which countries themselves should undertake in the institutional and technical areas to promote efficient development and use of their national water resources. The international component would include clarification of the future contribution expected from the international community in providing expanded technical assistance and advisory services in this context.

b/ See A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1 and Corr.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14), chap. II, sect. B.

Annex III

PROGRAMME BUDGET IMPLICATIONS OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

Recommendation E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1 (see chap. I, A, recommendation)

1. Pursuant to the decision adopted by the Committee at its 95th meeting, on the basis of document E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1 as orally revised (see para. 19 of the present report), the second special session proposed by the Committee will be held at Headquarters, New York, from 3 to 7 January 1977. Consequently, the related financial implications will amount to a total of approximately \$38,000, consisting of \$11,000 for the travel and subsistence allowance of one representative from each of the regional commissions and \$27,000 for the contractual editing, translation and reproduction of about 200 pages of pre-session and 10 pages of post-session documentation. These estimated figures are based on the following assumptions:

- That, inasmuch as the members of the Committee will be representatives of Governments acting as members of the preparatory committee for the Conference, the travel expenses related to their attendance at the special session of the Committee will be defrayed by the Governments concerned;
- That the second special session of the Committee will be held at Headquarters, New York, from 3 to 7 January 1977;
- That there will be no more than two meetings a day during the session;
- That summary records will be provided in English, French and Spanish;
- That interpretation and translation services will be provided in four languages, namely, English, French, Russian and Spanish;
- That the documentation requirements of the session will be 200 pages pre-session, 50 pages in-session and 10 pages post-session;
- That the estimates provided above for contractual reproduction of documents are subject to variation depending on the complexity of the subject-matter.

2. Under paragraph (d) of document E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1, the United Nations Water Conference shall be structured on the basis of plenary meetings and two main committees which will deal with substantive matters. Provision shall also be made for the servicing of working groups to study, *inter alia*, the subject of action proposals. No indication is given in the document as to the number of simultaneous meetings requiring interpretation in the five languages throughout the Conference. The assumption is that there will be two simultaneous meetings in the morning and two in the afternoon, as approved by the General Assembly in the budget for the Conference.

3. Should the Committee decide, however, to recommend more than two sets of simultaneous meetings a day throughout the Conference, with interpretation in the five languages, then a third team of 16 interpreters would be needed for each additional set of simultaneous meetings, at a cost of \$48,200 for each additional set of meetings; this amount covers the net salary, travel and subsistence allowance of a team of 16 interpreters.

Draft resolution E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1 (see chap. I, A, draft resolution II)

4. In paragraph 1 of draft resolution E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1, the Secretary-General is requested to appoint a Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference to be assisted by a Conference secretariat, composed of members of the existing secretariat and qualified personnel from the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned.

5. The Secretary-General is to begin immediately to identify suitable candidates for the post, but the actual selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the Conference will not be made until the draft resolution has been adopted by the Council at its sixtieth session and the related financial implications concurred in by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3540 (XXX) on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1976-1977.

6. It seems, therefore, that the earliest possible date of such an appointment would be 1 May 1976. On that assumption, the Secretary-General intends to make the appointment at the level of Assistant Secretary-General for a period of one year ending 30 April 1977. The net salary for the post, including common staff costs, would be approximately \$63,000.

7. It should be noted that one of the functions of the Secretary-General of the Conference would be to attend the regional preparatory meetings. It is expected that in order to increase the effectiveness of his work and of the preparations for the Conference, he will make stopovers of a few days' duration en route to the regional meetings to consult with the government officials concerned in key countries. An amount of \$10,000 should therefore be provided for the travel requirements on official business of the Secretary-General of the Conference.

8. As regards paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, relating to translation and reproduction of documentation for the Conference, it is assumed that such documentation comes within the limits set out in document E/C.7/58 and would therefore have no additional financial implications.

9. Should the draft resolution be adopted by the Council and concurred in by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, an additional amount of approximately \$73,000 would have to be appropriated.

Annex IV

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE AT ITS FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

<u>Document No.</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
E/C.7/57	3	Annotated provisional agenda
E/C.7/58 and Add.1-4	4	Second progress report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the United Nations Water Conference
E/C.7/INF.7		List of documents before the Committee
E/C.7/INF.8		List of representatives to the first special session
E/C.7/L.37	6	Provisional agenda for the United Nations Water Conference: note by the Secretariat
E/C.7/L.38	8	Draft provisional rules of procedure for the United Nations Water Conference
E/C.7/L.39	3	Organization of work: note by the Secretariat
E/C.7/L.40	4	United Nations Water Conference secretariat: time-table: note by the Secretariat
E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1	4	Finland, <u>a/</u> France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: revised draft recommendation
E/C.7/L.42/Rev.1	6	Denmark, <u>a/</u> Finland, <u>a/</u> Norway and Sweden: revised draft decision
E/C.7/L.43	7	Algeria, Egypt, India, Iraq, Libyan Arab Republic, Mali, Pakistan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yugoslavia: draft resolution
E/C.7/L.44 and Add.1-4	10	Draft report of the Committee

a/ In accordance with the provisions of rule 72 of the rules of procedure.

<u>Document No.</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title</u>
E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1	4	Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Finland, <u>a</u> / India, Iraq, Libyan Arab Republic, Norway, Sweden, Venezuela and Yugoslavia: revised draft resolution
E/C.7/L.46	4	Programme budget implications of the proposals contained in document E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1: statement submitted by the Secretary-General
E/C.7/L.47	4	Programme budget implications of draft resolution E/C.7/L.45/Rev.1: statement submitted by the Secretary-General
E/C.7/L.48	4	Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Egypt, Finland, <u>a</u> / India, Iraq, Libyan Arab Republic, Norway, Sweden, Venezuela and Yugoslavia: draft decision
E/C.7/L.49	4	Programme budget implications of the proposals contained in document E/C.7/L.41/Rev.1: statement submitted by the Secretary-General

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