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SECOND COMMITTEE
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at 11.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 53rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(f) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SECOND COMMITTEE FOR 1990-1991

COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

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78

The meeting was called to order at noon

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)

(f) ENVIRONMENT (continued) (A/44/332, A/44/339 and Add.1 to 11, A/44/349, A/44/479, A/44/480, E/1989/103, E/1989/119 and Add.1 to 11, E/1989/102, A/C.2/44/L.2)

1. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should take note of documents A/44/332, E/1989/103, A/44/339 and Add.1 to 11, E/1989/119 and Add.1 to 11, A/44/349, E/1989/102, A/44/479, A/44/480 and A/C.2/44/L.2.

2. It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SECOND COMMITTEE FOR 1990-1991 (A/C.2/44/L.82)

3. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) read out the amendments to the draft biennial programme of work for 1990-1991 stemming from decisions taken by the Committee subsequent to the issuing of document A/C.2/44/L.82.

4. Mr. LICHTINGER (Mexico), referring to item 2 (a) of the draft biennial programme of work, said that it would be preferable to eliminate the word "preparation" since the new international development strategy was to be adopted in 1990.

5. The CHAIRMAN proposed to the Committee that the title of agenda item 2 (a) of the programme of work should be simplified to read "International development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade (1991-2000)".

6. It was so decided.

7. Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco), recalling the need to observe the deadlines for the submission of the reports containing draft resolutions, asked for assurances that the General Assembly would indeed have before it all the resolutions pertaining to agenda item 12 - some of which called for action starting early in 1990 - on 22 December, as planned.

8. The draft biennial programme of work for 1990-1991 contained in document A/C.2/44/L.82, as orally amended, was adopted.

Organization of work

9. Mr. DJOGLAF (Algeria) pointed out that informal consultations often overlapped and were held at the same time as formal meetings. Small delegations were not able to send representatives to all those very important negotiations and were therefore at a disadvantage. His delegation reserved the right to submit a document on the issue during the forty-fifth session.

10. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) endorsed the comment made by the representative of Algeria and expressed the hope that the Second Committee would refer to those difficulties in its report. The biennial character of the programme of work, which corresponded to the organization of the programme budget, was generally speaking not being respected. It would be a good idea, at the forty-fifth session, to consider either adhering more strictly to that principle or abandoning it.
11. Mr. OTOBO (Nigeria) and Mr. GATHUNGA (Kenya) said that they fully supported the Algerian proposal; the representative of Nigeria also endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Tunisia.
12. Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Bahrain) asked the Secretariat why the draft resolution on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory (A/C.2/44/L.24/Rev.2) was not on the Committee's programme of work for 1990.
13. Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco) said that even delegations which were not so small, such as his own at the current session, found it very difficult to attend all the formal and informal meetings. That inadequate representation detracted from the quality of the work and of the decisions adopted. He hoped that the representative of Algeria would submit a proposal in writing and asked the representative of Tunisia to make relevant suggestions.
14. Mr. PILBEAM (Australia) said that he understood the difficulties encountered by the smaller delegations regarding the schedule of meetings but pointed out that each year the Committee wasted a great deal of time during the first weeks of the session. Increased efficiency would be achieved by moving the debates on items currently scheduled for the end of the session to the beginning; that would leave more time for subsequent informal consultations.
15. Mr. DJOUGHLAF (Algeria) proposed that, at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the attention of the Committee's Bureau should be drawn to the concerns expressed by members regarding the organization of work, as reflected in the summary record of the current meeting.
16. Mr. FARRUGIA (Malta), pointing out that his was undoubtedly one of the smallest delegations, said that he agreed with the previous speakers with respect to the schedule of meetings, but stressed that the Committee should be very cautious in choosing a solution. It should follow the established guidelines regarding biennialization and should not modify those procedures.
17. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) endorsed the Algerian proposal, but pointed out that the problem could not be solved simply by limiting the number of meetings and consultations. The situation was due in large measure to the work-load generated by the particularly full agenda. Perhaps, in 1990, the Bureau could carry out a comprehensive review of the situation and recommend ways of dealing with it.
18. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia), joined by Mr. GOPINATHAN (India), supported the Algerian proposal that the Bureau be asked to consider the issue at the forty-fifth

(Mr. Elghouayel, Tunisia)

session. Referring to the remarks made by the representative of Malta, he said that it was the first time meetings and consultations had overlapped so consistently. It was just a matter of organizing the work sensibly. The Algerian proposal concerning the overlapping of meetings applied as well to biennialization, and the Bureau should also consider that issue at the next session.

19. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee), responding to the question raised by the representative of Bahrain, said that the Secretary-General's report on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory was to be submitted by the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at the forty-sixth session in 1991. With respect to the schedule of work, he did not recall the Committee ever holding three meetings concurrently; there had never been more than two. The Committee would endeavour, as far as possible, to ensure that meetings and consultations did not overlap. As the representative of Greece had observed, the problem was broader and was mainly due to the increased work-load, itself caused by an extremely full programme of work.

20. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, with regard to its methods of work and schedule of meetings, the Committee functioned, in principle, on the basis of consensus.

21. Mr. PAYTON (New Zealand) said that, while he was grateful to the representative of Algeria for drawing attention to the deficiencies in the organization of work, delegations must be more organized and disciplined and must submit their texts as early as possible. They alone could give effect to the Algerian proposal.

22. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) said that the submission of the Committee's reports to the General Assembly posed a relatively serious technical problem. Normally, the Committee completed its work before the Fifth Committee and the documentation services were thus able to finish working on the Second Committee reports before dealing with those of the Fifth Committee. However, at the current session, the Committee was completing its work extremely late and the competent services were not in a position to provide the Committee's reports in full, to the plenary, before the end of the General Assembly. He therefore proposed that as many completed reports as possible be submitted; in cases where that was not possible, he proposed that on an exceptional basis, only the text of the draft resolutions and draft decisions recommended by the Committee be submitted to the Assembly, with an indication that the relevant complete report would be issued subsequently.

23. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) expressed astonishment at the very unusual procedure which the Secretariat was proposing. The General Assembly had never considered resolutions without the corresponding reports. What particular circumstances made it impossible to submit the reports at the appropriate time and who was to present the resolutions and decisions to the General Assembly? Would it be the Rapporteur?

24. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) acknowledged that the situation was unusual. While there had been no change in the manner in which the reports were

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(Mr. Stoby)

drafted and submitted, the reports were much fuller than in previous years; some had as many as 200 pages. The procedure he was proposing would not apply to all the reports; most of them would be available on time, but it was clear that those concerning agenda items 82 (f) and 86 would not. Others, in particular, those concerning agenda items 12 (ii), 82 (b) (iii), 82 (xii) and 84, might be submitted only in an incomplete form. In accordance with established practice, the Rapporteur would present all the reports, including those which were incomplete. If the delegations did not agree to his proposal, it would then be necessary to have a resumed session so that the General Assembly could consider those Committee reports that it had not taken up before the end of the session.

25. Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Bahrain) requested that the draft resolutions and draft decisions be considered in order based on the date on which they had been adopted, rather than in any arbitrary manner.

26. Mr. LICHTINGER (Mexico) said that he accepted the procedure proposed by the Secretary since he realized that the problem was due, in part, to the Committee's work-load. He hoped that the reports relating to draft resolutions that had been adopted early on would be ready and could be submitted in full.

27. Mrs. BEZEREDI (Canada) said that, in view of the unusual circumstances of the current session, she could accept the proposed arrangement, on the understanding that the exact text of the resolutions that the General Assembly must consider would be available.

28. Mr. GOPINATHAN (India) endorsed the Secretary's proposal to submit partial reports to the plenary.

29. Mr. LEMERLE (France) confirmed that the 12 member States of the European Economic Community were ready to endorse, as an exceptional measure, the necessary expedient proposed by the Secretary.

30. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) supported the Secretary's proposal as an exceptional measure and asked which draft resolutions would not be contained in the reports submitted to the plenary.

31. The CHAIRMAN said that only a few reports would not be ready in their complete form.

32. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) asked which reports they were.

33. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) said that at that stage he could not give a definite answer about some documents but guaranteed that all the draft resolutions and draft decisions would be submitted to the General Assembly before the end of the session, in the context of either a complete or a partial report. The reports would be submitted in the order in which they had been adopted.

34. Mr. PILBEAM (Australia), joined by the representative of Turkey, said that he endorsed the procedure proposed by the Secretary.

35. Mr. FARRUGIA (Malta) said that while he would not object to the Committee's decision, he deplored the system that was being proposed. He was perfectly aware that the Committee had a heavy work-load but that did not entirely explain why it was so late in completing its work. It was his understanding that there would be reports on the one hand and draft resolutions and decisions on the other. The normal procedure was to take up items in the order in which they appeared on the agenda. The proposed procedure was liable to create confusion. Perhaps there was some way of making the reports available.

36. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) replied that for each item of the agenda there would be either a complete report or a cover page.

37. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should adopt the procedure suggested by the Secretary, in view of the remarks made by the delegations.

38. It was so decided.

COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

39. The CHAIRMAN said that for more than two and a half months, the Committee, aware of the importance and complexity of its task, had worked with remarkable intensity and seriousness of purpose. Owing to the profound structural changes that were occurring in the world and the new challenges that the international community must face, its task had proved to be particularly difficult. Nevertheless, differences in approach were becoming less pronounced, international relationships were becoming less polarized and interdependence was growing.

40. In the light of those developments and of the urgent need to ensure the development of all countries, while at the same time restoring the natural integrity of the planet, the great disparity between the underdevelopment of some countries and the over-abundance of others could not be tolerated. That was the message the Committee proposed to communicate - a message of dialogue, co-operation and hope - re-establishing multilateralism and reaffirming the irreplaceable role of the United Nations in international economic relations.

41. There was good cause to congratulate the Committee on the results of its work during the current session. Particularly noteworthy was the remarkable decision represented by the resolution on the convening in 1992 of the United Nations conference on environment and development, which would consider all aspects of human activity and all their implications.

42. The draft decision relating to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation was also an important measure, since it had been endorsed by all Member States, thereby demonstrating the existence of a common approach to dealing with the changes in the modern world and the extremely serious difficulties with which developing countries were faced. Several other

(The Chairman)

very important draft resolutions had been adopted, in particular, those concerning the international development strategy and the external debt of the developing countries. The longest draft resolution ever adopted by the Committee was undoubtedly that concerning operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which should contribute to the strengthening of technical co-operation activities and should give developing countries a greater responsibility in the execution of projects.

43. The years to come would witness the elaboration of a contract of peace and progress, arising from the special session, the international development strategy and the 1992 conference.

44. After thanking the officers, members of the Committee and the Secretariat services for their co-operation, the CHAIRMAN declared that the Committee had completed its work for the forty-fourth session.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.