

GENERAL
ASSEMBLYA/2107
1 February 1952

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Dual distribution

SIXTH SESSION

Agenda items 11 and 28

CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND
THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIESREPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (CHAPTER VIII,
SECTION I)Report of the Joint Second and Third Committee and the
Fifth Committee, meeting jointlyRapporteur: Mr. Rafik ASHA (Syria)

1. The General Assembly, at its 342nd plenary meeting held on 13 November 1951, decided to refer the following items for consideration at joint meetings of the Joint Second and Third and the Fifth Committees:

Agenda item 11: Report of the Economic and Social Council: chapter VIII, section I (Questions of co-ordination and relations with specialized agencies - Concentration of effort and resources)

Agenda item 28: Co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies:

(a) Administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and development of common services: report of the Secretary-General

(b) Concentration of effort and resources: report of the Economic and Social Council.

2. The joint committees held six meetings to consider the above items (A/C.2 & 3/SR.59 - 64, A/C.5/SR.312 - 315, 321 and 331).

3. They had before them the following basic documents: A/1812 and Add.1; A/1884; 2/1956; A/1971; A/C.2 & 3/97-A/C.5/450, A/C.2 & 3/99-A/C.5/456, A/C.2 & 3/100-A/C.5/457, A/C.2 & 3/102-A/C.5/459, A/C.2 & 3/103-A/C.5/460.

4. Following the suggestion of the President of the General Assembly (A/C.2 & 3/99-A/C.5/456) that the chairmanship of the joint meetings should be arranged

by mutual agreement between the Chairman of the Second, Third and Fifth Committees, it was agreed that the meetings should be presided over by H.R.H. Prince Wan Waitayakon (Thailand), Chairman of the Second Committee.

5. Mr. Asha (Syria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, acted as Rapporteur.

6. The Committees devoted their first three meetings to a general debate. Nineteen delegations took part in the discussion, which was opened by statements by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the representative of the Secretary-General.

7. Several delegations expressed the opinion that, since a large number of resolutions had already been adopted at previous sessions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council relating to the questions of co-ordination and concentration of effort and resources, time should now be allowed for those texts to prove their worth and no attempt should be made in the meantime to modify them substantially. It was felt in particular that the Committees should refrain from proposing the establishment of new co-ordinating machinery.

8. Several delegations noted with satisfaction the progress made in the course of the past year as a result of the work of the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, and expressed appreciation of the report of the Economic and Social Council, of the fifth and seventh reports of 1951 of the Advisory Committee (A/1956 and A/1971) and of the Secretary-General's reports on administrative and budgetary co-ordination and on the co-ordination of conference and general services in Geneva (A/C.2 & 3/100 and 103). The co-operation shown by the specialized agencies was likewise commended.

9. As regards the question of selection of priorities, some delegations expressed satisfaction with the fact that the Economic and Social Council had on its agenda for 1952 an item entitled "Adoption of United Nations priority programmes in the economic and social fields", since they felt that the establishment of such priority programmes would further the concentration of efforts and the elimination of secondary and wasteful projects.

10. The crucial importance of the co-ordination of the actions of governments themselves in the organs of the various specialized agencies was emphasized, and it was suggested that delegations to the annual conferences of specialized agencies should take the initiative in proposing deferment or elimination of less urgent or important projects.

11. Several delegations commented on the question of budgetary ceilings. It was argued by one representative that it might become necessary to place a ceiling on United Nations expenditure on economic and social matters in order to put an end to the constant increase in the scope of activities which threatened to outrun administrative resources and might ultimately result in an increase in the number of States in arrears of contributions. However, the same representative felt that the more indirect methods so far employed by the Secretary-General appeared to have been more satisfactory than had been anticipated.
12. A number of representatives firmly opposed the principle of imposing strict budgetary ceilings on the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and criticized paragraph 21(b) of the fifth report of the Advisory Committee (A/1956), according to which the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to prepare budget estimates not exceeding a given figure and to indicate, when submitting those estimates, which projects would need to be eliminated or deferred in order to keep within the ceiling figure.
13. One representative criticized as inadequate the present method of submitting to the Economic and Social Council statements of the financial implications of given proposals, on the ground that it did not provide the Council with a clear idea of the budgetary repercussions of its work taken as a whole. Under the present system neither the Council nor the Fifth Committee was really in a position to gauge the financial implications of new proposals while taking full account of the expenditure on activities already approved. He suggested certain specific changes which he felt should be made in the presentation of estimates of expenditure and in the procedure followed in examining them (A/C.2 & 3/L.47-A/C.5/L.138).
14. Another representative felt that as far as the question of arrears was concerned, appeals to the Member States in question were not sufficient, and that additional information might be useful on the provisions relating to voting rights of defaulting States. He regretted that nothing had been done to make a common approach to the problem insofar as the experience of the different organizations in the matter of the collection of contributions would permit (A/C.2 & 3/L.100, paragraph 9). He hoped that the Advisory Committee would give its full attention to the matter so that the General Assembly might take the necessary action as soon as possible.

15. Progress was acknowledged by some representatives in the matter of the use of soft currencies by the United Nations. It was argued, however, by one member that the executive heads of the specialized agencies might use such currencies to make a greater proportion of their purchases in the countries outside the hard currency area. The salaries and allowances of staff members stationed in those countries could also be paid in soft currency.
16. One representative noted that a number of specialized agencies, and, in particular, the World Health Organization, had failed to comply with the General Assembly's recommendations concerning salary differentials, and also drew attention to the excessive appropriation for travel expenses in the budgets of certain specialized agencies.
17. As regards the recruitment of staff, complaint was made that some countries were not fairly represented in the secretariats of certain specialized agencies.
18. One representative believed that the recruitment of experts under the expanded programme of technical assistance could be conducted by a single agency instead of several in each area.
19. One representative, speaking on a point of order at the end of the Committees' discussions, expressed serious doubt whether the holding of joint meetings of the Joint Second and Third Committee and the Fifth Committee was really necessary or useful. He suggested that the General Committee should consider, at the beginning of the next regular session of the General Assembly, the question whether such joint meetings should be held in future. Even if they were to be held, he considered that their agenda should be limited strictly to the discussion of specific proposals submitted in advance and relating to the reports of the organs dealing permanently with co-ordination i.e. the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.
20. Another representative felt that the joint meetings had provided an opportunity for those interested both in the substantive and in the budgetary aspects of the problems to consider them together.
21. At the conclusion of the general discussion the Committees had before them several specific proposals and amendments thereto.

Concentration of effort and resources

22. On this subject, the Committees had before them two draft resolutions presented:

(1) By the Philippines (A/C.2&3/L.42-A/C.5/L.133) expressing the hope that further development by the Economic and Social Council of procedures

~~adopted in the current year~~

might lead to the most effective intensification of the economic and social activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and inviting the attention of specialized agencies to the report of the Council dealing with concentration of effort and resources and the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions dealing with the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies.

(2) By Australia (A/C.2&3/L.44-A/C.5/L.135). This draft resolution requested the Secretary-General, having regard to normal financial procedure, to make suggestions to the Economic and Social Council and its Commissions concerning priorities and coordination of programmes, and requested the Council and its Commissions, in considering the implementation of General Assembly resolution 413 (V) of 1 December 1950 to focus attention upon results achieved in relation to expenditure for economic and social activities and to ensure that no short-term activity became a continuing or permanent activity without a thorough examination of the size, efficiency and other relevant factors of the service concerned. It commended to the consideration of specialized agencies the adoption of similar procedures.

23. In the course of the discussion of these draft resolutions, the representative of the United States of America stressed the necessity for the specialized agencies and Commissions of the Council to assign priorities to projects at the time of their adoption. She stated that progress in this connexion had been achieved by certain Commissions, such as the Social Commission, whereas the Commission on the Status of Women and some other functional Commissions had achieved no comparable results. In the case of the regional commissions, while she considered that the Economic Commission for Latin America had made progress in preparing an order of priority, she felt that the action so far taken in the matter by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East and the Economic Commission for Europe had been inadequate in some respects. Among the specialized agencies, only the Food and Agriculture Organization, in her opinion, had complied with the General Assembly's wishes in drawing up its programme for 1952.

24. Some other representatives also felt that the Philippine draft resolution went too far at this stage in expressing satisfaction with the action taken by the Council, its regional and functional commissions, and the specialized agencies, to implement resolution 413 (V).

25. The representative of the Secretary-General described briefly the part played by the Secretariat in the matter of priorities, with particular reference to the recent action taken by the Economic Commission for Latin America.

26. Amendments to the Philippine resolution were presented (1) by the Netherlands, to delete the words "with satisfaction" after the word "Notes" in paragraph 3 and to insert the words "with satisfaction" after the words "Takes note" in paragraph 5; (2) by Australia, to add the words "at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions" after the words "Economic and Social Council" in the first line of paragraph 3; and (3) by India (a) to insert the words "Secretary-General, of the Economic and Social Council and of the" after the words "attention of the" in the first line of paragraph 6; (b) to delete the words "these reports as well as" after the words "specialized agencies" in the first line of paragraph 6, and to add the words "on the basis of these reports" at the end of this paragraph. The representative of the Philippines accepted amendments (1) and (2) and also revised paragraph 4 of his resolution to read as follows:

"Expresses the hope that further development by the Council of procedures adopted in the current year may increase the efficiency of the economic and social activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, through measures of economy and concentration of effort".

27. A separate vote was taken on the reinsertion of the words "these reports as well as" in paragraph 6, in place of the amendment suggested by India. The Committees approved the reinsertion of these words by 21 votes to 2, with 20 abstentions, and adopted the Philippine draft resolution, as amended, by 37 votes to none, with 8 abstentions. (See resolution IA annexed to the present report.)

28. The United States of America presented an amendment (A/C.2&3/L.50-A/C.5/L.141) to the Australian draft resolution. The Australian representative agreed to incorporate the ideas contained therein in a joint Australian/United States draft resolution (A/C.2&3/L.53-A/C.5/L.153) and withdrew his original text.

29. Some representatives feared that adoption of the joint draft resolution would give the Secretary-General excessively wide powers in matters which, in their opinion, should remain within the competence of governments; they did not feel that the Council should delegate its statutory responsibility for assigning priorities for future programmes. The representative of Australia considered that initiatives for proposing the deferment, elimination or modification of projects could properly come from the Secretary-General.

30. A separate vote was taken on each of the first three paragraphs of the joint draft resolution, with the following results:

Operative paragraph 1 was adopted by 17 votes to 9, with 14 abstentions;

Operative paragraph 2 was adopted by 20 votes to 3, with 15 abstentions;

Operative paragraph 3 was adopted by 20 votes to 3, with 16 abstentions;

31. The joint draft resolution as a whole was then adopted by 18 votes to 6, with 15 abstentions (See resolution IB annexed to the present report).

Co-ordination of conference programmes

32. Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France and the United States of America presented a joint draft resolution (A/C.2&3/L.43/Rev.1-A/C.5/L.134/Rev.1) requesting the Secretary-General, after consultation with the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the principal organs of the United Nations concerned to prepare a basic annual pattern of United Nations conference activities in Geneva for submission to the seventh regular session of the General Assembly.

33. The sponsors of the resolution accepted an amendment by the United Kingdom (A/C.2&3/L.52-A/C.5/L.152) to add the words "at Geneva and Headquarters" after the words "available facilities" in paragraph 3, and an oral amendment by India to add Article 58 to the Articles of the Charter mentioned in paragraph 1.

34. The joint draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 37 votes to none, with one abstention. (See resolution II annexed to the present report).

Administrative control of operational programmes financed by voluntary contributions

35. Brazil introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2&3/L.45-A/C.5/L.136) on this subject. The United States of America submitted amendments to operative paragraphs 1 and 2 thereof (A/C.2&3/L.51-A/C.5/L.142).

36. Several representatives felt that the Brazilian proposal involved difficulties of a constitutional nature and suggested postponing action thereon.

37. Subsequently, the representative of Brazil presented a revised text of his original proposal (A/C.2&3/L.45/Rev.1-A/C.5/L.136/Rev.1). In introducing it, he recalled that the Fifth Committee had adopted for submission to the General Assembly a resolution on the operative programmes under the responsibility of the United Nations (A/2022/Add.1). The Brazilian draft resolution before the Committees referred to co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies in respect of the administrative part of the operational programmes financed by voluntary contributions, and executed by the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

38. After a discussion of the Brazilian proposal, it was agreed to include the substance of its operative paragraphs in the Committees' report. These paragraphs provided that the administrative parts of operational programmes financed out of voluntary funds should be subject to co-ordination, and requested the Economic and Social Council to propose to the next session of the General Assembly appropriate measures for effecting such co-ordination, on a continuing basis, so that the General Assembly, when discussing administrative and budgetary co-ordination, might receive information and recommendations concerning the administration of such voluntary programmes.

39. The representative of Australia suggested that those specialized agencies which had not already done so in compliance with General Assembly resolution 411 (V) of 1 December 1950 should be requested to set up machinery for controlling the administrative parts of the portions of the expanded programme of technical assistance which were under their control,

40. The representative of Canada drew attention to the fact that the General Assembly had already adopted certain resolutions (see A/L.31) relating to technical assistance which requested the specialized agencies to devote special attention to controlling and scrutinizing their programmes, bearing in mind the distinction between operational and administrative funds.

Report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination

41. Brazil introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2&3/L.46/Rev.1-A/C.5/L.137/Rev.1) which requested the Secretary-General to transmit to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, with a view to its making a report thereon to the General Assembly in fulfilment of the latter's duties as defined in Article 17 of the Charter, those parts of the regular reports of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination dealing with administrative and financial questions, without prejudice to the normal procedure of transmitting the reports of that Committee to the Economic and Social Council.

42. The representative of Brazil later stated that he would be satisfied if the substance of his proposal as above were included in the Committees' report. The Committees agreed to this course.

43. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee called the attention of the Committees to paragraphs 22, 23 and 24 of the Advisory Committee's report on concentration of effort and resources (A/1956) which dealt with the question of an extension of the role of the Advisory Committee as regards co-ordination in the administrative field.

44. As regards the reference to Article 17 of the Charter in the Brazilian proposal, some delegations felt that the functions envisaged for the Advisory Committee under the proposal could be assumed only with the authority of the General Assembly.

Consolidated budget for the United Nations and the specialized agencies

45. Norway introduced a proposal (A/C.2&3/L.48-A/C.5/L.131) for consideration of the constitutional and practical problems in connexion with the adoption of a consolidated budget for the United Nations and the specialized agencies. After a discussion in which some members expressed interest in this proposal and others drew attention to the difficulties entailed in its implementation, the Committees agreed that, while study of the subject might be in some ways desirable, the time was not yet ripe for action in the matter. They considered that, while continuing their current efforts toward improved budgetary co-ordination, the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee should, at an appropriate time, give attention to the question and place it before a future session of the General Assembly. The representative of Norway withdrew his proposal.

Review by the Economic and Social Council of its procedures for examining the relative priority and financial implications of new projects

46. The representative of the United Kingdom introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2&3/L.49-A/C.5/L.140) on this subject. In this connexion, he also circulated document A/C.2&3/L.47-A/C.5/L.139 to serve as a background paper. He expressed the opinion that the Council's economic and social programmes, and their financial implications should be viewed as a whole and dealt with by the General Assembly as a single item.

47. Some representatives thought that the adoption of the United Kingdom draft resolution would only increase the number of resolutions relating to co-ordination and even might delay action on economic and social projects under way.

48. The representative of the United Kingdom accepted minor oral amendments to his draft.

49. A separate vote was taken on operative paragraph 4 of the United Kingdom draft resolution, as modified; the paragraph was adopted by 18 votes to 4, with 10 abstentions.

50. The draft resolution as a whole, as amended, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 19 to 4, with 9 abstentions. (See resolution IC annexed to the present report).

Report of the Economic and Social Council

51. Following the practice of previous sessions, the Committees decided (by 25 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions) to recommend to the General Assembly that it should "take note" of chapter VIII, section I, of the report of the Economic and Social Council^{1/}, on the understanding that this action would, in due course, be incorporated with similar action by other Committees to which parts of the report had been referred, in order to form a single resolution taking note of the report as a whole.

52. As a result of the discussions, the Joint Second and Third Committee and the Fifth Committee recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

1/ A/1984. Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Supplement No.3.

RESOLUTION I

CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES. CONCENTRATION OF EFFORT AND RESOURCES

A

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the need for unremitting efforts by the United Nations and the specialized agencies to ensure that the international resources devoted to economic and social work should be concentrated on tasks of primary importance,

Cognizant of the scope and urgency of the task of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in promoting higher standards of living and conditions of economic and social progress and development,

1. Notes the action taken by the Economic and Social Council at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions, by its regional and functional commissions and by the specialized agencies, to implement General Assembly resolution 413 (V) of 1 December 1950, in particular by reviewing their 1952 programmes, using the criteria recommended by the Economic and Social Council;

2. Expresses the hope that further development by the Council of procedures adopted in the current year may increase the efficiency of the economic and social activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, through measures of economy and concentration of effort;

3. Takes note with satisfaction of the relevant sections of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 1951^{1/} dealing with "concentration of effort and resources" and the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions^{2/} dealing with the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies;

1/ A/1884, Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Supplement No.3.

2/ A/1956 and A/1971

4. Invites the attention of the Secretary-General, of the Economic and Social Council and of the specialized agencies to these reports as well as to the views expressed by Members during the sixth session of the General Assembly.

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 413 (V) of 1 December 1950 in which it requested the Economic and Social Council to indicate, when new projects are adopted, which current projects may be deferred, modified or eliminated to ensure that the economic and social work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies will be carried on most effectively,

Recalling that the Economic and Social Council in resolution 402 B (XIII) of 17 September 1951 decided to place on the agenda of its fifteenth session an item entitled "Adoption of United Nations priority programmes in the economic and social fields",

1. Requests the Secretary-General, with due regard to normal financial procedures, to continue to assist the Economic and Social Council to discharge its obligations under General Assembly resolution 413 (V) and Council resolution 402 B (XIII) by making to the Council and to its functional and regional commissions suitable suggestions as regards priorities and the co-ordination of programmes;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, when presenting estimates of the financial implications of a project in accordance with rule 33 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, to give an estimate of the time required to complete the project;

3. Requests the Economic and Social Council and its functional and regional commissions, in considering the implementation of General Assembly resolution 413 (V), to focus attention upon the results achieved in relation to expenditure for economic and social activities and to indicate the duration of its authorization of each project so as to ensure that no short-term activity becomes a continuing or permanent activity without a thorough examination of the size, efficiency and other relevant factors of the service concerned;

4. Commends to the consideration of the specialized agencies, so far as their constitutional processes will permit, the adoption of similar procedures.

C

The General Assembly,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 402 (XIII) of 17 September 1951 concerning the concentration of effort and resources of the United Nations in the economic and social fields,

Recognizing that the formulation of policy and the financial and budgetary processes must be closely co-ordinated if effective concentration of effort and resources is to be achieved,

1. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare as an annex to his annual budget estimates an analysis, by fields of activity and by budget sections, of the estimated cost during that year of the economic and social activities of the United Nations; and to circulate this analysis to the Economic and Social Council at the beginning of its annual session immediately preceding the regular session of the General Assembly;
2. Invites the Economic and Social Council, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to review its procedures for examining the relative priorities and financial implications of new projects under consideration, in such a way that the Council may consider such projects not only in their substance but also in their relationship to existing activities in the field concerned, thereby promoting establishment of a balanced and realistic work programme for the future and facilitating subsequent consideration by the General Assembly of the related budgetary appropriations;
3. Requests the Secretary-General, as soon as possible after the regular annual session of the Economic and Social Council immediately preceding the regular session of the General Assembly, to submit to that session of the General Assembly such supplementary information relating to the decisions of the Council and to the priorities which it may have established as will facilitate consideration by the General Assembly of the related budgetary appropriations;
4. Recommends that the General Assembly defer consideration of the sections of the budget estimates relating to economic and social activities until the supplementary information concerning the decisions of the Economic and Social Council has been submitted to it and reported upon by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

RESOLUTION II

CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES: PROGRAMME OF CONFERENCES AT HEADQUARTERS AND GENEVA

The General Assembly,

Mindful of its co-ordinating responsibilities set forth in Articles 58, 60 and 63 of the Charter,

Having received with appreciation, the report of the Secretary-General on co-ordination of services in Geneva (A/C.2&3/103-A/C.5/460),

Having noted in particular the importance of fixing a basic pattern of United Nations conference activity in Geneva which would lead to the most effective utilization of the available facilities at Geneva and Headquarters and, possibly, to savings on the total expenditure of the United Nations and the specialized agencies,

Requests the Secretary-General, after consultation with the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the principal organs of the United Nations concerned, to prepare such an annual conference pattern for submission to the next session of the General Assembly.
