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PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Santiago MEYER PICON (Mexico)

1. At its 1288th, 1290th, 1292nd and 1293rd meetings, held from 16 to 19 December 1968, the Fifth Committee considered agenda item 75, entitled "Pattern of conferences: report of the Committee on Conferences". For this purpose it had before it the report of the Committee on Conferences,^{1/} and also a report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/7400) containing that Committee's observations and recommendations with regard to the report of the Committee on Conferences, as well as the report of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat (A/7359), which included, in section VII thereof, a number of recommendations dealing with conferences and documentation. The Fifth Committee also had before it a note by the Secretary-General on an integrated schedule of meetings of programme-formulating bodies (A/C.5/1175).

2. In paragraph 43 of its report, the Committee on Conferences submitted a draft resolution, which it recommended for adoption by the General Assembly, by which the Assembly would approve the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1969 contained in annex III of the report of the Committee on Conferences^{2/} as well as several other provisions dealing with conferences and

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, agenda item 75, document A/7361.

2/ At the 1293rd meeting of the Fifth Committee, on 19 December 1968, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences informed the Fifth Committee that the calendar contained in annex III of document A/7361 reflected the situation as at 6 December 1968. A number of additional proposals for meetings had arisen in the course of the session since that date and had been examined by the Committee on Conferences. These had been included in the recommended calendar and would be notified in an addendum to the schedule contained in the original report.

documentation. In its report, the Advisory Committee had commented on those recommendations of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat which paralleled those of the Committee on Conferences, as well as certain additional recommendations which the former Committee had made in this general field. In paragraph 26 of its report, the Advisory Committee had recommended that an additional operative paragraph be inserted at the end of the draft resolution recommended by the Committee on Conferences, as follows:

"Considers that, notwithstanding anything contained in this resolution, the recommendations on conferences and documentation made by the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat in section VII of its report should be implemented at a very early date."

3. At the 1290th meeting of the Fifth Committee, on 17 December 1968, the representative of the United States of America introduced the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.978):

"The General Assembly,

"Having examined part VII of the report of the Committee on the reorganization of the Secretariat (A/7359) dealing with conferences and documentation:

A

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

"1. Decides that the total volume of the servicing requirements for conferences and meetings for the years 1970, 1971 and 1972 shall not exceed that of 1967;

"2. Directs the Committee on Conferences (provided it shall be in existence at these times), on the basis of suggestions submitted by the Secretary-General, to present to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions respectively, a final calendar of Conferences and Meetings, within the above limitation, for 1970, 1971 and 1972, including such additional conferences or meetings as may be proposed during the respective sessions of the General Assembly;

"3. Decides that no body of the United Nations shall exceed the number of meetings approved in the calendar and requests all organs of the United Nations apart from the Security Council to hold meetings of the minimum number and length required and, if possible, below the provisions in the approved calendar;

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"4. Instructs the Committee on Conferences, in establishing the proposed calendar, to take into account the need to space out the sessions of various subsidiary organs and interrelated organs in order to permit adequate preparation and study by the Secretariat and by the delegations;

"5. Directs all organs of the United Nations holding more than one session a year to meet only once a year except on occasions when there are overriding considerations;

"6. Requests the Economic and Social Council to decide that all its functional commissions, with the possible exception of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, shall meet once every two years;

"7. Decides that from 1 September to the end of the year, and apart from the Security Council, no meetings shall be scheduled at Headquarters except for the General Assembly, its Main Committees, the General Committee, the Credentials Committee, the resumed session of the Economic and Social Council, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Committee on Contributions and the Committee on Conferences;

B

DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

"1. Decides that no programmes for documentation for a conference or a meeting shall be considered adopted:

(a) In the case of subsidiary bodies, until it has been reviewed by the parent body;

(b) When funds must still be approved, until it has been considered in the normal budgetary review processes by the Secretary-General and by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly;

"2. Decides to limit the provision of summary records to the following bodies:

(a) Main Committee of the General Assembly; the General Committee and its Credentials Committee;

(b) Economic and Social Council (plenary only);

(c) Trusteeship Council (plenary only);

- (d) Trade and Development Board (plenary only);
- (e) Industrial Development Board (plenary only);
- (f) Governing Council of United Nations Development Programme;
- (g) Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund;
- (h) Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations;
- (i) Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (main committee only);
- (j) International Law Commission;
- (k) United Nations Commission on International Trade Law;
- (l) Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (plenary only);
- (m) Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States;
- (n) Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression;

subject to periodic review, it being recognized that the principal organs will always retain summary records;

"3. Decides that only in truly exceptional cases shall summary records be authorized for other bodies, and then only on a case-by-case basis for a limited period of time when such provision has been:

(a) Concurred in by the Committee on Conferences, after consultation with the Secretary-General; and

(b) Approved by the General Assembly;

"4. Decides that summary records for special conferences shall be approved only when the General Assembly has specifically considered each case on its own merits and then authorized them;

"5. Decides

(a) That written verbatim records as official records shall be limited to the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and meetings of the First Committee and the Security Council;

(b) That translation shall be dispensed with in the process of establishing the first Official Records of the above bodies; for this purpose the interpretations included in the provisional records will be used after

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having been altered as necessary to reflect corrections received from delegations, and checked for factual accuracy;

(c) That no United Nations organ shall be provided with both summary and verbatim records unless the General Assembly so decides;

"6. Approves the recommendation regarding supplements and annexes contained in paragraph 144 of the report of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat (A/7359)."

Subsequently, at the 1292nd meeting of the Fifth Committee, the representative of the United States indicated that his delegation would not insist on a vote on its draft resolution on the understanding that it would appear in the records of the Fifth Committee.

4. The report of the Committee on Conferences became available to the Committee a few days before the conclusion of its work. Most of the speakers on this item focused their attention on the report of the Committee on Conferences and the draft resolution contained in that report. A number of delegations pointed out that the Fifth Committee did not consider and debate in detail the recommendations on conferences and documentation of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat in chapter VII of its report (A/7359), nor the related recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. The consideration by the Fifth Committee of this item is reflected in its summary records of the meetings mentioned in paragraph 1. In the course of those meetings, oral proposals were made by several representatives, but subsequently withdrawn.

5. At the 1293rd meeting, on 19 December 1968, the representative of Pakistan, after due consultation with other interested delegations, introduced amendments (A/C.5/L.983) to the draft resolution proposed by the Committee on Conferences. These amendments were as follows:

(a) Operative paragraph 3

Insert the words "sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (g) of" between "conferences and meetings contained in" and "paragraph 24 of the report".

(b) Operative paragraph 3

Replace the words "and simultaneously to the Committee on Conferences as early as possible in 1969, and preferably not later than 31 August 1969" by the following words: "so as to enable them to make their decisions available to the Committee on Conferences in time for the latter to present its relevant conclusions to the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly".

(c) Operative paragraph 4

Delete the words "in the sense of a meeting which cannot be deferred without serious detriment to the United Nations".

(d) Operative paragraph 5

Delete the words "and, moreover, that such proposals made outside the regular session of the Assembly are subject to the concurrence of the Committee on Conferences".

(e) Operative paragraph 6

Delete this paragraph.

(f) Operative paragraph 9

Delete this paragraph.

(g) Operative paragraph 12

Replace the words "other than those listed in paragraph 35 of the report of the Committee on Conferences" by the words "to consider" and add at the end of the paragraph "and to report to their parent organs, as appropriate, so as to enable them to make their decisions available to the Committee on Conferences in time for the latter to present its relevant conclusion to the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly".

6. After consultations, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences announced agreed revisions of the Committee's draft resolution (for the revised version, see paragraphs 1 to 12 of the final draft recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of the present report).

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7. Several delegations mentioned, both before and after the vote on the draft resolution, that the draft paragraph proposed for inclusion by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions could not properly be considered for action until the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee had had an adequate opportunity to discuss the relevant chapter of the report of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat. Some delegations also raised the point that the Advisory Committee's report made mention of a report on documentation prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit which the Fifth Committee had not had an opportunity to study.

8. The Committee first voted on the amendment to the draft resolution recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/7400, para. 26).

The Committee, by 44 votes to 8, with 14 abstentions, approved the additional operative paragraph as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

The Committee then adopted, by 63 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions, the revised draft resolution (see paragraph 9 below).

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

9. The Fifth Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Pattern of conferences

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 1202 (XII) of 13 December 1957, 1851 (XVII) of 19 December 1962, 1987 (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, 2116 (XX) of 21 December 1965, 2239 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 and 2361 (XXII) of 19 December 1967,

1. Takes note of the report of the Committee on Conferences;^{3/}
2. Approves the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1969 contained in annex III of the report of the Committee on Conferences;

^{3/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session,
agenda item 75, document A/7361.

3. Approves further the recommendations regarding the pattern of recurrent conferences and meetings contained in paragraph 24 of the report of the Committee on Conferences and in this connexion requests the United Nations bodies, committees and commissions concerned to review their meetings programmes and to report to their parent organs so as to enable them to make their decisions available to the Committee on Conferences in time for the latter to present its relevant conclusions to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session;

4. Decides that no meetings not covered by the calendar for 1969 shall be convened, except for an emergency meeting;

5. Decides further that, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2239 (XXI), all proposals for new conferences and meetings made during the regular session of the General Assembly will be subject to the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences and to final approval by the General Assembly and that proposals made outside the regular session for changes on the approval calendar will also be subject to the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences;

6. Reaffirms, for application in 1969, the general principle that in drawing up the schedule of conferences and meetings for future years, United Nations bodies shall plan to meet at their respective established headquarters, with the following exceptions:

(a) The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme may, in accordance with its rules of procedure, hold one of its sessions at the United Nations Office at Geneva;

(b) The sessions of the International Law Commission shall be held at Geneva;

(c) The sessions of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law may be held, subject to the provision of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 2205 (XXI) of 17 December 1966, alternately at Headquarters in New York and at Geneva;

(d) The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, as well as the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, may meet at Geneva if the exigencies of their work so require;

(e) The regular summer session of the Economic and Social Council may be held at Geneva provided that the closing date falls at least six weeks before the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly;

(f) One Headquarters-based functional commission of the Economic and Social Council, to be determined by the Council, may meet at Geneva during the period from January to April;

(g) Sessions of not more than three other Headquarters-based functional commissions or committees of the Economic and Social Council may, by decision of the Council taken after consultation with the Secretary-General, be held at Geneva during the period from September to December without overlap;

(h) In addition, a session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs may, in exceptional circumstances and by decision of the Economic and Social Council taken after consultation with the Secretary-General, be held at Headquarters, New York; in that event, one other functional commission or committee may meet at Geneva in its place;

(i) The regular sessions of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Economic Commission for Africa, as well as meetings of their subsidiary bodies, may be held away from their headquarters when the commission concerned so decides, subject, in the case of regular sessions of the commissions, to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly;

7. Confirms that bodies not mentioned in paragraph 6 above may hold sessions away from their established headquarters when a Government issuing an invitation for a session to be held within its territory has agreed to defray, after consultation with the Secretary-General as to their nature and possible extent, the actual additional costs directly or indirectly involved;

8. Decides that, as a general rule, not more than one major special conference shall be scheduled in any one year;

9. Urges all organs and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations to plan their future conferences and meetings in accordance with the following recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies:

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- "(i) Priorities should be established for fixing the areas and programmes of meetings and conferences on a long-term basis;
- "(ii) The availability of human and physical resources necessary for servicing conferences should be determined and taken into account;
- "(iii) The financial ability of the organizations and of member States to meet the requirements necessary to hold conferences should be determined and taken into account;
- "(iv) An adequate interval of time should be allowed between conferences of the same body or of a similar nature;" ^{4/}

10. Endorses Economic and Social Council resolution 1379 (XLV) of 2 August 1968 and, in particular, paragraph 2 of that resolution, whereby the Council requested those of its subsidiary organs which have not yet done so, to consider at their next sessions dispensing with such records for their meetings and for those of their own subsidiary bodies in the future; and in this connexion called to their attention the decision taken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to replace summary records by shorter minutes, while reserving the right to ask for a summary record in respect of any discussion which required exceptional treatment;

11. Requests all organs other than those listed in paragraph 35 of the report of the Committee on Conferences^{5/} to consider, in response to General Assembly resolution 2292 (XXII) of 8 December 1967, dispensing with summary records for their meetings and to report to their parent organs as appropriate, so as to enable them to make their decisions available to the Committee on Conferences in time for the latter to present its relevant conclusion to the Assembly at its twenty-fourth session;

12. Requests the Committee on Conferences to submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session, bearing in mind particularly the results of the reviews envisaged in paragraph 3 above, recommendations relating to the pattern of conferences for the years 1970, 1971 and 1972;

^{4/} Ibid., Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 80, document A/6343, para. 104.

^{5/} Ibid., Twenty-third Session, agenda item 75, document A/7361.

13. Considers that, notwithstanding anything contained in the present resolution, the recommendations on conferences and documentation made by the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat in section VII of its report should be implemented at a very early date.^{6/}

^{6/} A/7359.