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President: Mr. Daniel COSÍO VILLEGAS (Mexico)

Present:

The representatives of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Spain, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Observers from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, India, Japan, Norway, Yugoslavia.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 25

**Organization and operation of the Council
(E/3310-3311)**

1. Mr. PÉREZ LÓPEZ (Mexico) said his delegation had proposed in the General Assembly¹ that the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, should study the possibility of convening a meeting of ministers of economic affairs within or under the aegis of the Council. In recent years the effectiveness of the Council's work had decreased, and a remedy should be sought without delay. One step might be to associate in the work of the Council government officials who, by reason of the political status they enjoyed in their own countries and of the authority vested in the posts they occupied, would be able to take decisions which could contribute to the early solution of some of the problems with which the Council had been dealing for years without great success.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Third Committee, 941st meeting.*

2. The Mexican delegation felt that such a meeting would be both useful and desirable. The main problem was how to organize it, and what to expect from it. It could either be confined to the eighteen States members of the Council or be opened to the entire membership of the United Nations; or, as a compromise solution, it could be limited to Members of the United Nations directly interested in the subject-matter to be discussed. The decision on that point would depend primarily on the nature of the meeting itself. The Secretary-General appeared to consider that its purpose should be the formulation of international economic policies. The Mexican delegation agreed, but was not sure whether such policies could best be framed by eighteen States or by the entire membership of the United Nations. Moreover, it felt that the international economic policies to be formulated should not be general, but should relate to specific economic problems, such as that of commodity production and trade. Accordingly, the best course would be to invite to the meeting States directly concerned with the problem or problems to be discussed. Another possibility, although a less desirable one in the Mexican delegation's view, would be to have important items on the Council's regular agenda discussed by ministers of economic affairs. The desirability of a meeting at the ministerial level derived not so much from the fact that ministers had greater authority than the regular representatives on the Council, but that the nature of their authority was different. They were in a better position to deal directly and immediately with major problems, and could agree to compromise solutions which representatives would have to refer back to their Governments for approval. That being so, there would be little point in convening a meeting of ministers merely to discuss an item on the Council's regular agenda. He hoped that further study would be given to the matter, and that a decision would be taken shortly.

3. Mr. SHANAHAN (New Zealand) said that his delegation had studied the Mexican proposal carefully. It was important to increase the prestige and authority of the Economic and Social Council. Unfortunately, efforts to achieve that objective by increasing the Council's membership, thereby providing a more balanced representation of the States Members of the United Nations, had been unsuccessful. Accordingly, a discussion of the kind outlined by the Secretary-General in his note (E/3311) would be valuable. With regard to the timing and organization of the suggested meeting, it should be borne in mind that in 1960 the Council would receive the report of the Committee on Programme Appraisals covering the entire range of United Nations economic and social activities. It might be better to study that report before deciding on the date of the meeting.

4. Mr. ALI (Pakistan) felt that the Mexican proposal was vital for two reasons. First, there was a general feeling among Member States that the Council's work had assumed such importance that it transcended the bounds of the current limited membership. The major part of the world was being confronted more and more acutely with the problem of raising standards of living, a problem of tremendous magnitude and significance for the future of world peace. A meeting at the ministerial level would be better able to deal with that problem, since it could be representative not only of the States members of the Council, but of the entire membership of the United Nations. Secondly, the urgent economic problems which were the Council's responsibility demanded consideration at a higher level, if they were to be given their due emphasis. In view of the fact that the meetings at the policy-making level would be addressed to the major issues of economic policy, with special reference to the promotion of economic development of under-developed countries, it would be well if the proposed meeting were held in an under-developed country.

5. Mr. DUDLEY (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom Government was grateful for the Secretary-General's initiative on that subject, which had begun in the context of the development of his ideas on the political functions of the United Nations. Those ideas had gradually developed and taken a more definite shape: they had been expressed in statements by the Secretary-General within and outside United Nations bodies, of which the latest and most precise was to be found in the note by the Secretary-General on the organization and operation of the Council (E/3311). With reference to what the Mexican representative had said, he did not feel that the quality of the Council's work had fallen off. However, the larger problems on which the Council had to concentrate could usefully be discussed with the participation of ministers or persons of equivalent rank in the States members of the Council. The United Kingdom attached great value to the Council's work, and had therefore made it its practice to send a minister to that organ's summer sessions; it would be very helpful if other countries did likewise. The process of drawing persons of ministerial rank into the Council's work could not be accomplished rapidly, and would have to be effected gradually and on a tentative and experimental basis. Accordingly, the first meeting of the kind proposed should not be organized outside the ordinary framework of the Council's own sessions. Interested Member States which were not members of the Council could be represented by observers, as was the usual practice.

6. The Council need not wait for the report of its Committee on Programme Appraisal before it took a decision on the date of the meeting. As for the more detailed arrangements, it would be preferable to follow the Secretary-General's suggestion and leave them until the Council's next session.

7. Mr. PHILLIPS (United States of America) said that the Secretary-General's proposal offered the possibility of a useful contribution to the Council's work. The New Zealand representative's observation had been

pertinent; but he did not consider that the report of the Committee on Programme Appraisals would be a subject of discussion by the ministers. The subject of economic development of under-developed countries should have top priority, as suggested in the Secretary-General's note (E/3311, para. 8). The proposed meeting should be an integral part of the Council's regular work, and might well be limited tentatively to the States members of the Council, other interested States being represented by observers.

8. Mr. DE LEQUERICA (Spain) supported the proposal for a meeting at the ministerial level. The details could be worked out at the Council's next spring session; however, it could perhaps be agreed as a first step to limit the meeting to States members of the Council. Its agenda also should be restricted, as the Secretary-General had suggested.

9. Mr. ROSLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation supported the Mexican proposal in principle. It favoured a meeting of ministers of all interested Member States, not only of those already represented in the Council. The chief problems to be discussed at the meeting should be those connected with the development of international trade, including commodity trade, the relationship between the prices of raw materials and those of manufactured goods, the supply of equipment to under-developed countries, and other problems.

10. Mr. SHANAHAN (New Zealand) said he had not intended to suggest that a meeting of the Council at the ministerial level should consider the report of the Committee on Programme Appraisals, but merely that after the Council had studied that report it would be in a better position to decide what topics should be considered at such a meeting, since it would then be better able to view its own work within the context of United Nations activities as a whole.

11. Mr. VIAUD (France) said he regarded the extract from the introduction to the Secretary-General's annual report² reproduced in the note by the Secretary-General (E/3311) as an invitation to the States members of the Council to ensure that their delegations to the Council should be led for a prescribed period by persons of ministerial rank. It did not, however, appear to him to require any specific action by the Council.

12. His delegation was in full agreement with the Secretary-General's suggestion, and intended to follow it. It considered that the proposed meetings should be organized as regular meetings of the Council itself; it did, however, feel that they should be planned with particular care. The subjects to be discussed should be limited in scope; it would be well if the Council were to discuss the agenda for the first meeting of the kind proposed at its spring session, when it would have before it the Secretary-General's suggestions.

13. Mr. SCHWEITZER (Chile) said he was in favour of convening a meeting at the ministerial level either within or under the aegis of the Council. He himself attached the greatest importance to the attendance of

² *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 1A.

ministers at the Council's meetings; but where a minister was unable to attend in person there seemed no reason why he should not delegate his powers to another representative. Special meetings could be held at a later stage to study subjects such as commodity problems.

14. Mr. SCHURMANN (Netherlands) said his Government had always considered the Council's work to be of vital importance. It might well have been because the value of that work was not sufficiently appreciated even within the United Nations that the Secretary-General had made his suggestion. He felt that the attendance of ministers at the Council's regular meetings would serve to emphasize the value which Governments attached to its day-to-day work, whereas the convening of a large conference at the ministerial level under the Council's aegis would suggest that the Council's own sessions were not of sufficient importance to warrant attendance by ministers. He did not think that the minister appointed to lead a country's delegation should necessarily be the minister of economic affairs; the Netherlands always sent its Minister of Foreign Affairs. The subject to be discussed should be one of general interest to the whole world.

15. Mr. MICHALOWSKI (Poland) said he favoured convening a meeting at the ministerial level in the summer of 1960. Since the purpose of the meeting would be to undertake a thorough examination of key issues, to restrict it to the eighteen members of the Council would be wrong. Under Article 69 of the Charter of the United Nations and rule 75 of the Council's rules of procedure, moreover, any Member of the United Nations could participate in the Council's deliberations if the matter under discussion was of particular concern to it. Since the topic selected for study would unquestionably be one of world-wide interest, it was obvious that a great many States would wish to attend. It was strange that the United States delegation, which had always charged the Council with being unrepresentative, should wish the meeting at the ministerial level to be confined to the Council's eighteen members. Everything possible should be done to ensure that the proposed meeting should be fully representative. He therefore suggested that the Secretary-General should be asked to ascertain from all States Members of the United Nations whether they wished to attend the Council's 1960 summer session. Unless the Council knew at its spring session how many States proposed to attend, it would be difficult to organize the meeting.

16. So far as the scope of the meeting was concerned, he felt that the suggestion made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 6 of his note (E/3311) should be elaborated, and that specific reference should be made to the question of international trade and commodity problems. The document could then be sent by the Secretary-General to the Governments of Member States, together with a résumé of the discussions which had taken place in the Council, when he addressed a note to them on the question of their attendance at the Council's thirtieth session.

17. Mr. CHENG Paonan (China) felt that the topic selected for discussion at the ministerial level should be

limited in scope but of crucial importance. The meeting should be a short one. Since it would be concerned with economic questions, it would probably be best if it was attended by ministers of economic affairs; but there was no reason why at subsequent meetings social questions should not be discussed at the ministerial level, in which case a different minister would naturally attend.

18. Mr. TABIBI (Afghanistan) said it had been suggested that the ministerial meeting should last not more than four days; but the note by the Secretary-General referred to the possibility of at least two major topics being discussed. He could not see how that could be done in so short a time. If the purpose of the meeting was to increase the usefulness of the Council's work and attract public attention throughout the world, it would be preferable to concentrate on a single item; assistance to the under-developed countries might be the most suitable topic. If the meeting was to be successful, thorough preparation by the Secretariat would be necessary; and he entirely agreed with the Polish representative that the Governments of Member States should be given adequate advance notice.

19. Mr. DE LEQUERICA (Spain) thought that frequent meetings at the ministerial level would be inadvisable. He was against any departure from the normal procedure; that would be tantamount to changing the nature of the Council.

20. Mr. PHILLIPS (United States of America) said he did not admit to the Polish representative's charge of inconsistency. The vast majority of Members of the United Nations agreed with him that the current membership of the Council did not reflect accurately the enlarged membership of the Organization. That deficiency could be remedied quite simply by an amendment of the United Nations Charter; there was no need for the adoption of measures such as those suggested by the Polish representative in connexion with the ministerial meeting. Nor could he agree that there was any need to circulate a special document to the Governments of Member States in order to enable them to participate in the Council's meeting under Article 69 of the Charter.

21. He agreed with those representatives who had suggested that the question of the economic development of the under-developed countries, in view of its outstanding importance, was the most appropriate topic for discussion at the ministerial level. Countries which were unable to send ministers would still be able to participate in the discussion, since the meeting should form part of the Council's regular session.

22. Mr. PÉREZ LÓPEZ (Mexico) said he had not intended in his opening statement to suggest that the quality of the Council's work had deteriorated; he had been thinking in terms of the practical effectiveness of the Council's decisions.

23. The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to paragraph 9 of the note by the Secretary-General (E/3311). That was the only point on which the Council had to take a decision, unless any representative wished to submit other proposals. If the suggestion contained in paragraph 9 was approved, the final decision on the date of the meeting and its agenda would be deferred until

the twenty-ninth session, when all the members of the Council would have an opportunity to make any proposals they thought appropriate.

24. Mr. DUDLEY (United Kingdom) concurred with the President's suggestion.

25. Mr. ARKADEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) strongly supported the idea of a meeting at the ministerial level; and such a meeting could usefully be held at the beginning of the Council's summer session. However, he was convinced that the meeting could not be entirely successful if it was held merely as part of the Council's regular session. He did not propose that all Member States should be represented, but that, as the Polish representative had suggested, their attention should be drawn to the meeting, so that all States which were interested could make their contribution; under Article 69 of the Charter, any Member State could participate in the work of the Council. It would be most undesirable to limit attendance to the members of the Council. That did not mean that his position regarding the enlargement of the Council's membership had changed; his delegation's reasons for opposing a revision of the Charter for that purpose were well known.

26. Another important question was the agenda of the proposed conference. It has been clear from the debates which had taken place in the Second Committee during the fourteenth session of the General Assembly that all countries were deeply concerned with the problems of international trade and the economic development of the under-developed countries. The meeting might well discuss means of improving the terms of trade between the under-developed and the developed countries, the relationship between the prices of raw materials and those of manufactured goods and the supply of equipment to the under-developed countries. It would facilitate the Secretariat's work in organizing the meeting and be helpful to the Council when it discussed detailed arrangements in it at its twenty-ninth session, if the attitude of the different Governments to the proposed conference was ascertained in advance in the manner suggested by the Polish representative.

27. Mr. SHANAHAN (New Zealand) said that all delegations were in favour of a meeting at the ministerial level; but such a meeting, the first of its kind, would necessarily be experimental, and further decisions should be taken only in the light of experience. Although the subjects to be discussed might interest a larger audience, the Council's main object in seeking to secure representation at the ministerial level was to improve its methods of work. Any matter discussed by the Council was likely to be of interest to all Member States, but it seemed unnecessary to take special steps to draw their attention to the meeting; on that point he entirely supported the United States representative.

28. Mr. ALI (Pakistan) agreed that the main purpose of the proposed meeting would be to make the Council's work more effective. As the debates in the Second Committee had shown, however, there was wide support for the idea of a conference, to be organized under the

aegis of the Council, to discuss the development of the under-developed countries and the integration of the world economy. Once the Council decided on such a conference, the conference should be organized in such a way as to produce maximum results and attract the greatest attention. It should therefore be organized at the ministerial level; but in addition its agenda should be most carefully considered. He therefore introduced a draft resolution³ recommending that the Secretary-General should invite the views of the Governments of Member States on the organization of a conference to discuss the promotion of economic development in the under-developed countries and the integration of the world economy.

29. Mr. PHILLIPS (United States of America) felt that the Council should not commit itself to the extent proposed by the Pakistan representative. He therefore proposed that the Council should endorse paragraph 9 of the note by the Secretary-General (E/3311) as a guide to the Secretary-General in reporting further to the Council concerning the arrangements for convening a meeting of the Council at which members would be represented at the ministerial level.

30. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should adjourn its debate on the item currently under consideration until the next meeting, so that the text of any draft resolutions could be circulated.

31. Mr. ARKADEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that all draft resolutions should be submitted in time for the Secretariat to circulate them in advance of the meeting.

It was so decided.

32. The PRESIDENT suggested that as the Council's decision on item 22 of its agenda would be affected by its decision on the item currently under discussion, consideration of item 22 should also be postponed to the next meeting.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 20

Confirmation of members of functional commissions of the Council (E/3309/Add.2) (concluded)

SOCIAL COMMISSION (concluded)

33. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the confirmation of Mrs. Z. V. Mironova as USSR representative on the Social Commission (E/3309/Add.2).

34. Mr. CHENG Paonan (China) protested against the confirmation of Mrs. Mironova's nomination.

35. The PRESIDENT said that the Chinese representative's protest would be duly recorded. He suggested that, in the absence of any other objections, Mrs. Mironova's nomination should be confirmed.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

³ Subsequently circulated as document E/L.850.