

2nd meeting

Tuesday, 5 February 1985, at 3.25 p.m.

President: Mr. Tomohiko KOBAYASHI (Japan)

E/1985/SR.2

AGENDA ITEM 2

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (E/1985/L.12)

1. Ms. KAMAL (Assistant Secretary of the Council) pointed out that the proposals contained in document E/1985/L.12 had no financial implications.

2. Mr. NISHIMURA (Japan) said that the Committee for Development Planning could play a very important role within the Organization and that it should therefore be given the means of carrying out its mandate. In that context, his delegation was in favour of the proposals contained in the note by the Secretariat published under the symbol E/1985/L.12.

3. In its report on the work of its twentieth session, the Committee had proposed that it should meet twice a year for two three-day sessions, making a total of six days instead of the 10 days currently allocated to it. As it was responsible for considering the long-time prospects rather than the immediate problems, it would be necessary to determine which formula was better. For its part, his delegation would state its position on the question at the second regular session of the Council, bearing in mind the Committee's views.

4. Mr. GOODMAN (United States of America) said that the meetings of the Committee's working groups should also be cancelled so that the resources thus saved could be used to help the victims of the famine in Africa.

5. Mr. HUERTA FLORES (Mexico), supported by Mr. PAPADATOS (Observer for Greece), said that the Committee for Development Planning played a very important role in guiding the Organization's activities. The Committee had perfected its working methods and was endeavouring to carry out its mandate as best it could. Accordingly, the April session was important. He therefore recommended that the Council should approve the Committee's proposal.

6. Mr. MALIK (India) agreed with the representative of Mexico, although by doing so he was disagreeing with the representative of the United States.

7. Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina) agreed that the work of the Committee for Development Planning was important and that the meeting would be useful.

8. Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia) stressed the importance he attached to the Committee's work.

9. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that the Committee facilitated the work of other economic organs of the United Nations.

10. Mr. KUMLIN (Sweden) said that he was in favour of the Committee resuming its session in April. Concerning the proposal by the representative of the United States, he pointed out that, even if the Committee did not meet, the working groups would

still meet; there would therefore be no resources to be reallocated.

11. Mr. GOODMAN (United States of America) pointed out that his proposal related not only to the meetings of the Committee but also to those of the working groups. It was not a question of determining whether the Committee played an important role but of deciding, in the light of the urgent situation in Africa, how best to utilize the available resources.

12. Mr. SEKULIĆ (Yugoslavia) and Mr. HADID (Algeria), recognizing the importance of development planning, endorsed the proposals contained in document E/1985/L.12.

JOINT MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION

13. Mr. GOODMAN (United States of America) said that the joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination were not very effective because they were organized in a way that made it impossible to give the questions considered the necessary attention. Accordingly, they should be dispensed with and the resources thus released should be made available to the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa.

14. Mr. BRODODININGRAT (Indonesia) pointed out that improvements had been made in the way those joint meetings were prepared and that the Council itself had suggested ways of making further progress. ACC should give that proposal due consideration and CPC should also endeavour to help improve the joint meetings.

15. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands) said that the existing arrangements for the joint meetings were not satisfactory. The number of items on the agenda should be limited and the decision-making process should be streamlined. Recent decisions taken by the Council and CPC should help enhance the effectiveness of those meetings.

16. Mr. FAURE (France) said that he shared the doubts expressed by other speakers regarding the usefulness of the joint meetings as currently organized. However, those meetings could give rise to a dialogue and to reflection which would be helpful in improving the functioning of the Organization. The dialogue between the executive heads of the specialized agencies and of the United Nations should be made more specific and practical by making various improvements—possibly relating to the choice of the issues considered, the preparation of documentation and the scheduling of meetings. A vice-president of the Council could also be put in charge of helping the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Council itself to consider those questions.

MEETINGS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
AFRICA (E/1985/L.13)

17. Ms. KAMAL (Assistant Secretary of the Council) said that the proposals contained in document E/1985/L.13 had no financial implications.

18. Mr. GOODMAN (United States of America) asked whether savings could be effected by holding the twentieth session of the Commission and the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Commission at the Commission's headquarters instead of at Conakry.

19. Mr. EE (Budget Division) recalled that, at its thirty-eighth session, the General Assembly had allocated \$287,300 so that the nineteenth session of ECA and the ninth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Commission could be held at Conakry. The meetings had not taken place at Conakry and it had been decided that the 1985 meetings should be held there. That amount had therefore been kept in reserve. By holding the meetings at Addis Ababa instead of Arusha or Conakry, the available sum would be saved. However, planning missions had already taken place. The savings would therefore be \$287,300 minus the cost of those missions, the exact amount of which was not yet known.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA
AND IN NAMIBIA

20. Mr. OSAKWE (Nigeria), supported by Miss SHANIN (Observer for Egypt), recalled that the Council had decided to hold public hearings on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa and in Namibia and had entrusted the preparations to an *ad hoc* committee. If the Council considered the report of the Commission on Transnational Corporations at its second session, as planned, there would not be enough time. Accordingly, the Council should decide to consider at its first session that portion of the Commission's report which dealt with the public hearings.

21. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) supported the Nigerian proposal as the hearings were, in principle, scheduled for September.

22. Mr. HADID (Algeria) pointed out that the decision to hold public hearings on the activities of transnational corporations in South Africa and in Namibia had been taken in 1982 and that the issue was an urgent one. For practical reasons, it would not be desirable to leave the consideration of the question until the second regular session of the Council. He therefore supported the proposal.

23. Mr. TANASA (Romania) supported the proposal of the representative of Nigeria.

24. Mr. ZUCCONI (Observer for Italy) pointed out that the *Ad Hoc* Committee on public hearings had not completed its work. Moreover, the question raised by the representative of Nigeria would be considered by the Commission on Transnational Corporations. The Council did not have to adopt an agenda at its organizational session. Any decision on the matter should be postponed to the first regular session.

25. Ms. KAMAL (Assistant Secretary of the Council) pointed out that the *Ad Hoc* Committee would meet on 14 and 15 February to adopt its report.

26. Mr. OSAKWE (Nigeria) pointed out that the *Ad Hoc* Committee had already adopted the essential parts of its report. He was therefore formally opposed to the proposal of the representative of Italy.

27. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) pointed out that the *Ad Hoc* Committee met solely to adopt its report and that it was merely a question of including that item in the provisional agenda of the Council's first regular session, which could be done at the organizational session.

28. Mr. PLECHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) endorsed the proposal of the representative of Nigeria.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Basic programme of work of the Council for 1985 and 1986 (*continued*) (E/1985/1 and Add.1)

29. Mr. SARRÉ (Senegal) noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 39/217, had decided to place before the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session, the question of countries stricken by desertification and drought. In its resolution 39/208, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to take all necessary steps to ensure the implementation of the different activities mentioned in that resolution, to report to it at its fortieth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the evolution of the situation in those countries and to formulate proposals for specific, co-ordinated action. The entire international community had demonstrated its solidarity with those severely stricken countries. He therefore proposed that the item should be included in the agenda of the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council so that it would be taken into account in the informal consultations.

30. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh), Mr. HADID (Algeria), Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) and Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka) supported the proposal of the representative of Senegal.

31. Mr. GAJENTAAN (Netherlands) said that the question was subsumed by item 4, entitled "Critical economic situation in Africa", of the draft basic programme of work of the second regular session of the Council (see E/1985/1, sect. II B), under which specific mention was made of the Secretary-General's report on countries stricken by desertification and drought.

32. Mr. SARRÉ (Senegal) said that item 4 was concerned basically with the critical economic situation in Africa, which had been dealt with separately in the Second Committee and in plenary meetings of the General Assembly. The question of countries stricken by desertification and drought was a global one which transcended the African continent and was specific in nature. He was therefore opposed to the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands.

33. Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina) said that the proposal of the representative of Senegal was consistent with the spirit in which the subject matter of agenda item 141 of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly had been adopted for consideration. The latter had been considered as a separate item by the Second Committee, and the Economic and Social Council should follow the same proce-

ture. That would respond to the wishes of the affected countries themselves.

SELECTION OF PRIORITY ISSUES

34. Mr. KEYES (United States of America) recalled that, in 1984, the United States delegation had proposed "Planning, public administration and strategies for development" as a priority issue and that it had been decided to consider the matter in 1985. The issue was important because it related to underlying problems of development and the impact which governmental action could have on those problems. It was unfortunate that, despite the agreement of the previous year, some wished to avoid discussion of the topic.

35. Nevertheless, the importance of that issue had been eclipsed by the crucial problem of famine in Africa. United Nations agencies had begun to address the problem, and the Secretary-General was making efforts to set up co-ordination machinery, in which he had the support of the United States. It was to be feared, however, that despite speeches and professions of good will the task would be too great for the system and that the priorities, ambitions and passions of the past would at times continue to guide it. Faced with a crisis on a scale not seen since the 1930s, the Organization could not return to business as usual. The United Nations and the specialized agencies must devote themselves, particularly in their economic and social activities, to serving the welfare of people, and the priorities in the area must be determined by actual needs. The crisis which had led the Council to give the highest priority to Africa's plight the previous year continued unabated, and the international community had only just begun to undertake the massive efforts which would be needed.

36. The comfort of conference rooms should not make the Council forget that 14 million Africans were suffering from starvation. One million children would die from hunger and diseases related to malnutrition in Africa in 1985. The world community was engaged in priority assistance to Africa—the Government of the United States, for its part, had already committed \$250 million in 1985 in emergency food assistance to Africa, and that figure was expected to reach close to \$1 billion by the end of the year. However, despite the extraordinary response of world public opinion, the situation in Africa would continue to deteriorate.

37. At the same time, the world was witnessing a return to massive refugee flows in Africa. From Ethiopia to the Sudan, from Angola to Zaire, from Chad to the Central African Republic, Africans were fleeing famine and drought. An estimated 2 million refugees in Africa received assistance in May 1984, and their number had already increased by 25 per cent in January. The problems of starvation and massive dislocations of population would not be solved by another meeting of CPC or ACC.

38. Theoretically, it would make sense to determine a priority item one year, then another the following year. But famine was no respecter of schedules and, while the Council was debating the virtues of abstract topics, children were starving to death.

39. The United Nations intended to co-ordinate the world's response to the continuing crisis, and it was important to strengthen international co-operation. However, the time had come when no amount of talk

could achieve that goal. Now, institutions would be judged not on how well they could hold meetings but on how well they could act to meet the real needs of the masses, not merely by undertaking action but by seeing it through. The United Nations would be judged on the effectiveness of its actions and its capacity to pursue them until final victory; in Africa, however, the fight had just begun.

40. It appeared that, without the scrutiny of the relevant organs, particularly the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations was in grave danger of not meeting the challenge. The task that awaited it was a long-term one, and the United Nations had just begun its attempt to prove its worth in that regard. Priority should not be given to any other effort in that field until the task had been completed.

41. Under those conditions, the Economic and Social Council should again give priority in 1985, at its second regular session, to the critical situation in Africa; not to galvanize international will but to scrutinize and assess what had been done and to suggest means to strengthen the international response, particularly with regard to the leadership and co-ordinating role of the United Nations.

42. Mr. NISHIMURA (Japan) said that he wished to propose as a priority issue, besides the one already suggested by the United States, the "development of human resources". Many developing countries had emphasized the importance of that issue at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Specific proposals had also been made in other forums, such as the proposal of the UNDP Administrator for a world conference on human resources development, the resolution adopted by the Fourth General Conference of UNIDO, and the round-table proposed by the Government of Jamaica, which was currently being held at Kingston, Jamaica. Japan, which participated actively in such activities, felt that it was time for an in-depth discussion of the question at the second regular session of the Council.

43. The Japanese Government attached the greatest importance to the development of human resources in the context of the overall economic and social development of the developing countries. It should not be limited to technical training in specific fields, but should also enhance effective administrative and planning capabilities for development. The development of human resources was already a common theme for operational activities in the United Nations system, and it was therefore appropriate to discuss the issue from an overall perspective, to identify objectives and means to achieve them, so as to guide the activities of the United Nations system in the proper direction.

44. Mr. SAAD (Observer for Egypt) speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said he appreciated the interest in international co-operation shown by the United States. He recalled that the proposed priority issue had already been brought to the attention of the Council by the Group of 77, which was of the opinion that the Council should continue to give it priority. However, it should not be forgotten that, the importance of that issue notwithstanding, the world economy was beset by other serious and urgent problems and an interesting proposal had been put forward in that regard by the Japanese delegation. While the Council must continue to deal with the critical situation in Africa, that should not prevent it

from considering other priority issues which it could decide upon in informal consultations.

45. Mr. KABANDA (Rwanda) said that the issue of planning and public administration raised by the United States was certainly of importance but that since the significance of the issue was not generally perceived, it should not be given priority consideration. It could be deferred until a later session. Moreover, if the United States delegation considered planning so important, he did not understand how it could consider that the Committee for Development Planning should not meet.

46. The human resources issue, raised by Japan, was very important and deserved priority consideration, together with several other issues relating to development. Interesting suggestions had also been made by the observer for Egypt. There was a hierarchy among the various priority issues and informal discussions should be held on the matter.

47. Mr. HUERTA FLORES (Mexico) fully supported the proposals made by the Group of 77. He had, moreover, been touched by the concern shown by the United States representative at the situation in Africa, a concern which everyone shared. It was necessary to seek to make better use of the resources which were truly being wasted on military expenditure. By allocating even a small part of those resources for other purposes, the very serious problems of Africa and other pressing problems which affected millions of people in Asia and in Latin America could easily be solved. The purpose of meetings and committees was dialogue and the search for solutions to those problems, but the same could not be said of the enormous quantities of resources devoted to destruction.

48. Mr. LEE (Canada) said that, while the Council was right to decide at the current stage what questions should receive priority, so that it would have the relevant documentation in time, it should also be ready to consider priorities which arose suddenly as a result of unforeseen circumstances. It should, however, take care to avoid carrying over priorities almost automatically from one year to the next, especially since it was trying to rationalize its work. It could, for example, be decided in 1985 to give priority to the economic situation in Africa. The issue proposed by Japan regarding the item on the development of human resources was also interesting but could be considered a little later. He thought that the second regular session of the Council should be limited to one, or at most two, issues to which priority consideration could be given.

49. Mr. ZUCCONI (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community (EEC), said that he was very impressed by the statement made by the United States representative. The question would be considered by the Council, in the light of the relevant deliberations of the Second Committee of the General Assembly, the declaration adopted by the Assembly on the situation in Africa, and bilateral and multilateral activities on behalf of Africa. The Council should take care not to increase the number of priority issues.

50. Mr. WANG BAOLIU (China) said he agreed with the proposal of the Chairman of the Group of 77 to give priority consideration to the situation in Africa and was pleased that the United States, the EEC and Canada had also supported that proposal.

He shared the view of the Chairman of the Group of 77 that the issue proposed by Japan could be considered in informal consultations.

51. The other priority issue proposed by the United States—planning and public administration—was important and should be studied by each State in the light of its own situation. According to a Chinese proverb, spring was the most important season of the year. Priority issues should therefore be decided upon during the first regular session, if possible to the satisfaction of the majority of countries.

52. Mr. KUMLIN (Sweden) supported the United States proposal to give priority to the issue of planning and public administration. His delegation was pleased, moreover, that the situation in Africa had been proposed as a priority issue, since that would afford the Council a rare opportunity to be somewhat more action-oriented than usual.

53. Mr. MALIK (India) said that, while he fully agreed that the economic situation in Africa should be given priority consideration, he did not see why it should be a priority thematic item, since the General Assembly had already adopted a declaration on the subject. The Council should instead concentrate on the implementation of decisions that had been taken.

54. Mr. FAREED (Observer for Pakistan) said that premature consideration of the question could be dangerous and that it would be better to allow time for the activities undertaken to bear fruit. The question could, for instance, be considered by the General Assembly at its fortieth session, which would be attended by high-level delegations. That might make for more satisfactory results. The question could be discussed in informal consultations during which the issues of public administration and the development of human resources, which might perhaps be linked, would also be considered.

55. Mr. ELHASSAN (Observer for the Sudan) pointed out that the text of the General Assembly declaration on the critical economic situation prevailing in Africa was some seven months old and that a year had gone by since the last rains had fallen in Africa. July therefore seemed an entirely appropriate date to consider the implementation of United Nations activities on behalf of Africa.

56. Mr. PLECHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the debate on the selection of priorities showed that that was an important matter which had to be carefully considered. He proposed that the discussion should be continued in informal consultations, in which his group was prepared to participate actively in order to arrive at a solution which was to everyone's satisfaction. It was thanks to the Group of African States and the Group of 77 that the critical situation in Africa had been given priority consideration. The Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/29 of 3 December 1984, showed that the international community was aware of the urgency of the problem. The Secretary-General himself paid continuous attention to it, with the approval of the majority of delegations, and had entrusted an *ad hoc* group of senior United Nations officials with the task of keeping the situation under review.

57. Mr. DE LA TORRE (Argentina) said he appreciated the concern shown by the developed countries with regard to the developing countries but recalled that, as indicated by the Group of 77, the position of

the developing countries themselves had not yet been determined and that the priorities of those countries would have to be discussed in informal consultations.

IDENTIFICATION OF A SUBJECT RELATING TO INTERREGIONAL CO-OPERATION OF INTEREST TO ALL REGIONS

58. The PRESIDENT recalled the joint recommendation of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions to select the question "Interregional co-operation to promote and support activities related to economic co-operation among developing countries and technical co-operation among developing countries, giving due regard to the Caracas Programme of Action".

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN PURSUANCE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 39/217

59. The PRESIDENT, referring to General Assembly resolution 39/217 concerning the biennial programme of work of the Second Committee of the Assembly, which was aimed at avoiding duplication in the work of the Council and of The Assembly, noted that in 1985 the Assembly would consider directly the reports of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Commission on Human Settlements and the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for

Development and that the Council therefore could transmit those reports directly to the Assembly without debate. On the other hand, the Assembly would not consider directly the reports of the Industrial Development Board, the World Food Council and the United Nations University.

60. Mr. LEE (Canada) stressed the need to rationalize the work of the Council's first regular session so that more time could be spent on an in-depth discussion of issues which were of particular interest to the Council. At that session, the Council dealt with elections, approval of reports of subsidiary bodies, review of ongoing discussions and debates, and consideration of special subjects which had not been dealt with in detail elsewhere. Item 3 of the proposed agenda for the first regular session was of great interest to the Council because it related to the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The preceding year, the Director of the Centre for Human Rights had proposed that the Council should give priority attention to the relationship between human rights and development. The other issue which required attention was women and development. Perhaps the issue of rationalizing the programme of work could be considered by the Bureau, in informal consultations, or by a sessional working group.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

3rd meeting

Wednesday, 6 February 1985, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Tomohiko KOBAYASHI (Japan)

E/1985/SR.3

AGENDA ITEM 2

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

1. The PRESIDENT informed the Council that, after having consulted with the other members of the Bureau, he had decided that, in 1985, the Vice-Presidents of the Council would exercise the following functions: Mr. Rabah HADID (Algeria) would preside over the First (Economic) Committee; Mr. Ivan GARVALOV (Bulgaria) would preside over the Second (Social) Committee; Mr. Henri A. M. GUDA (Suriname) would preside over the Third (Programme and Co-ordination) Committee; and Mr. Krister KUMLIN (Sweden) would carry out other functions, as needed, and co-ordinate the informal consultations.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Basic programme of work of the Council for 1985 and 1986 (*continued*) (E/1985/1 and Add.1)

2. Mr. ZUCCONI (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community, pointed out that the World

Food Programme (WFP) had entrusted consideration of the question of the present relationship between it and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to a working group which was to submit a report on the subject to the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes at its May meeting; the Council could therefore consider the report at its second regular session.

3. Referring to the programme of work proposed for the first regular session of 1985, in which it was noted (E/1985/1, sect. II. A) that the item concerning activities for the advancement of women was to be assigned to the Second Committee; the States members of EEC believed that, since the report of the Secretary-General on the role of women in development and related questions was to be considered that year, the item should also be considered in plenary. The item concerning implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which had been assigned to the Sessional Working Group, should also be considered in plenary since the Council, according to its resolution 1982/33, was to review the composition, organization and administrative arrangements of that Working Group that year.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.