



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Eighth Session
Panama City, Panama

COMMITTEE II
(Economic Sectors)

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Panama City on Thursday, 21 May 1959, at 9.55 a.m.

CONTENTS:

Energy and water resources (E/CN.12/501 and Add.1, 503,
512, 526; Conference Room Papers Nos.12, 13 and 19)

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. de CASTRO	(Netherlands)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. SIMPSON	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. LIVINGSTON	Argentina
	Mr. GARCIA ROSSI	Brazil
	Mr. MORIZON	Chile
	Mr. HANNABERGH	Colombia
	Mr. VILASECA	Cuba
	Mr. MURRIQUI	Ecuador
	Mr. de PAVILLON	France
	Mr. PALACIOS	Guatemala
	Mr. ORDÓÑEZ	Honduras
	Mr. ALANIS PATIÑO	Mexico
	Mr. FERRIER	Netherlands
	Mr. LOMBARDO	
	Mr. AROSEMENA	Panama
	Mr. POWERS	United States of America
	Mr. PONS	Uruguay
	Mr. VALMORE ACEVEDO	Venezuela

ALSO PRESENT:

Observers from States
not members of the
Commission:

Mr. HOLLAI	Hungary
Mr. BARBOSI	Italy

/Mr. MIKHAILOV

Mr. MIKHAILOV

Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics

Representative of a
specialized agency:

Mr. SCHROEDER

World Meteorological
Organization

Representative of the
International Atomic
Energy Agency:

Mr. GALAGAN

Secretariat:

Mr. LARA

Acting Director,
Mexico ECLA office

Mr. TRANCART

Secretary of the Committee

ENERGY AND WATER RESOURCES (E/CN.12/501 and Add.1, 503, 512, 526; Conference Room Papers N°s 12, 13 and 19)

Mr. LARA (Secretariat) said that for some years past ECLA had been actively interested in the development of Latin America's energy resources, attributing special importance to the possibility of using nuclear energy to solve fuel problems in the region, and had co-operated with the International Atomic Energy Agency for that purpose. He asked Mr. Galagan, who was representing the Director General of that Agency at the eighth session of the Commission, for his comments on the matter.

Mr. GALAGAN (International Atomic Energy Agency) submitted the report of the mission sent by his Agency to Latin America (E/CN.12/526). The mission's main function had been to explore the possibility of setting up in Latin America one or more atomic energy training centres. They might consist of two kinds. The first, to be called an "integrated centre" would teach the principal subjects, such as the biological and physical sciences and relevant branches of engineering, while the second, or "specialized centre" would have a more limited field. Although the former would undoubtedly be preferable in the long run, they would need a number of economic resources and a large staff, whereas expenses would be far less in the latter. The specialized centres could devote themselves to radiobotany, for example, which would help to develop agriculture throughout the region. Stress should be laid on laboratory work in which the Latin American universities might play a valuable part. Existing resources should be used so far as possible, and checks made to ensure that training activities were in line with regional requirements.

Although it was very difficult to foresee predict the number of engineers and trained scientists that the region would require in future, one of its needs was already clearly evident: any country with a thriving electric energy industry should have at least two or three engineers with a good knowledge of the advances made in other countries in nuclear energy so that the relative costs of nuclear and electric energy centres could be weighed against the requirements of their own countries.

In submitting the report which had been brought to the attention of the Committee, the International Atomic Energy Agency concluded the

/preliminary work

preliminary work requested of it by its member States.

Mr. SIMPSON (United Kingdom) said that he was deeply interested in the subject under discussion, since his country had been the first to introduce a national plan for the development of nuclear energy. A fully-equipped nuclear energy centre had been functioning in the United Kingdom for two years and nine more were being planned or under construction. The United Kingdom was also the world's largest exporter of radioactive isotopes and was energetically proceeding with its research into that and other matters related to atomic energy.

His country was ready to co-operate as much as it could, through the IAEA, in the training of specialized personnel. Many foreigners had already taken courses there.

The United Kingdom had supported and would continue to support any attempt on the part of the IAEA to help the Latin American countries to appraise and satisfy their atomic energy requirements.

Mr. ALANIS PATIÑO (Mexico) was in favour of the idea of setting up a radiobotanical centre to improve agricultural production. Conditions in Mexico were satisfactory for such a centre since increasing interest was being displayed in the matter and a National Atomic Energy Board had recently been established.

Mr. ORDÓÑEZ (Honduras) seconded the proposal to use nuclear energy to increase agricultural production. He was also in favour of any efforts to train technical personnel in Latin America.

Mr. POWERS (United States) said that his country's activities in relation to the peaceful uses of atomic energy were known to the whole world. The members of the Committee would be interested to know that the statutes of the Inter-American Atomic Energy Board had recently been drawn up, and that the Board would meet in 1959. Later, the Board would probably assist in the training of Latin American specialists and in studying the possibilities of producing atomic energy in the region.

Mr. du PAVILLON (France) announced that his country, like the United Kingdom, was ready to receive students and engineers at the experimental atomic energy centres that had been established. France would do all it could to co-operate with the Latin American countries in the development
/of their

of their atomic energy resources.

Mr. GARCIA ROSSI (Brazil) considered that the IAEA mission to Brazil had done very useful work there, and added that his Government would wholeheartedly support a similar initiative in the future.

Mr. AROSEMENA (Panama) submitted a draft resolution (Conference room paper N° 13), and said that Panama was deeply interested in the development of atomic energy and its application to agriculture, industry and medicine.

Mr. PONS (Uruguay) suggested that at the beginning of paragraph 3 in the operative part of the resolution, the words "that have not yet established them" should be replaced by the words "whenever they considered it necessary". The text as it stood gave the impression that all Governments were under the obligation to undertake such programme, and it was doubtful whether his own Government could do so.

Mr. AROSEMENA (Panama) explained that the phrase "suitable to their capacity" was intended to give some freedom of action to Governments, including his own, which would probably not be able to organize such programmes.

Mr. PONS (Uruguay) said that he would withdraw his amendment if it was noted in the summary records that he was not satisfied with the terminology used.

Mr. ALANIS PATIÑO (Mexico) suggested that the end of the second paragraph of the preamble should be modified so as to read "application of atomic energy for peaceful uses" and that the word "lack" in the third considerandum should be replaced by "shortage". Paragraph 1 of the operative part was too categorical. Some Governments might not be in a position to make an immediate start on the study of atomic energy problems. A reference should also be made to the nature of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. He therefore proposed that paragraph 1 of the operative part should be amended to read as follows: "To recommend to the Latin American Governments that they should organize the study of matters connected with the application of atomic energy for peaceful uses".

Mr. PONS (Uruguay) seconded the proposal since the amendment was similar to the change he had wished to make in paragraph 3.

/Mr. PALACIOS

Mr. PALACIOS (Guatemala) said that although he supported in principle the amendment suggested by the representative of Mexico, it should be clearly stated that it was not necessarily Governments that would organize the study of matters connected with atomic energy. Universities and similar institutions would undoubtedly play an important part, and he therefore suggested that the words "organize the study" should be replaced by "promote the study".

Mr. POWERS (United States) pointed out the need for making some correlation between the work of the IAEA and the activities of the Inter-American Atomic Energy Commission. He therefore proposed that the words "in co-ordination with the activities of the Inter-American Atomic Energy Commission" should be added to paragraph 2 of the operative part.

Mr. ALANIS PATIÑO (Mexico) accepted the Guatemalan amendment to his own modification of paragraph 1 of the operative part. The fifth paragraph of the preamble would therefore be superfluous and could be eliminated.

The draft resolution, with the proposed amendment, was adopted.

Mr. TRANCART (Secretary of the Committee) drew the attention of the Committee to a secretariat note in the document entitled "Los recursos hidráulicos y su aprovechamiento en América Latina" (E/CN.12/501) in which the document was wrongly described as a summary of the findings of the Working Group; in actual fact it was merely an introduction to the subject. The note contained a brief review of the activities undertaken up to that date in relation to the preliminary study on water resources initiated pursuant to resolution 99 (VI). The secretariat wished to stress three aspects of those activities on which it hoped the Commission would give the necessary instructions.

In the first place, the problem had been approached mainly from the standpoint of the contribution of water resources to Latin America's economic development. Technical and scientific research on such resources had therefore been aimed at obtaining the maximum yield with the minimum waste. Secondly, the method adopted had been to set up a Working Group in co-operation with the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations and with the participation of the World Meteorological Organization. The requisite co-ordination had also been maintained with other United Nations bodies.

/It had

It had taken some time to initiate the Group's activities, but they were finally progressing satisfactorily. Thirdly, the activities consisted of two kinds of studies, namely, general introductory surveys, such as document E/CN.12/501, which provided background information on the region as a whole and could be used as a basis of comparison with other parts of the world, and specific studies, such as those on Chile, Ecuador and North Patagonia, which were integrated economic and technical analyses and composed the main element of the programme.

The Group could continue its work without new credits. In time, its activities might be supplemented by those of the Special Fund.

Mr. SCHROEDER (World Meteorological Organization) explained that the WMO experts who took part in the preliminary study of water resources and their utilization would have to investigate the effect of rainfall on the climate, agriculture and water resources themselves. They should therefore study the meteorological conditions which determine climate and rainfall distribution. They should also analyse precipitation with respect to its volume and time distribution, which varied considerably from one area to another of the continent.

In order to carry out the work, use should be made of the observations compiled by national institutions which were far more abundant in the more developed countries. It was essential for such data to be accurate and full. Large-scale water development projects should be based on series that covered 20 to 30 years. As a result, it was necessary to remedy any deficiencies in the national networks of meteorological stations to enable the study to be brought to a happy conclusion..

The CHAIRMAN submitted the draft resolution presented by Chile, Cuba, Ecuador and Venezuela (Conference room paper N° 19) for the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. ALANIS PATIÑO (Mexico) said that his country, which had a Ministry of Water Resources and spent the equivalent of 80 million dollars a year in that field, knew from experience the value of the studies in question. He endorsed the draft resolution.

Mr. PALACIOS (Guatemala), Mr. LIVINGSTON (Argentina) and Mr. LOMBARDO (Panama) also supported the draft resolution.

/The draft

The draft resolution was approved.

Mr. MURRIQUI (Ecuador) expressed his country's appreciation of the study on water resources.

Mr. AROSEMENA (Panama), in presenting a draft resolution on behalf of the Panamanian delegation, outlined the situation of his country with respect to electric energy, the latter's future development, the hydroelectric resources available and the impediments to their utilization. There was a great shortage of electric energy in Panama. According to recent studies, installed capacity should increase 55 per cent and consumption 45 per cent in the next two decades. Studies also showed that the different regions of the country combined a hydroelectric potential of 500,000 kW. The principal problem was the establishment of priorities in relation to other development programmes. It was necessary to ensure the integrated development of the hydrographic basins in order not to prejudice the future use of water resources in the production of cheaper energy. Hydroelectric projects required heavy investment. Hence, it was essential to prevent the resources from being used inefficiently and experienced technical personnel was required to evaluate such resources and set up an order of priority. The lack of personnel of that type was one of the main obstacles to progress in the field.

The above were some of the considerations which the Panamanian delegation had borne in mind in preparing the draft resolution.

Mr. PONS (Uruguay) seconded the draft resolution. Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay were studying their water resources, which they could not have done without the help of foreign experts.

Mr. ALANIS PATIÑO (Mexico) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution, but that the first paragraph of the operative part should make it clearer that development programming ought to include other sectors as well in order to achieve integrated development.

He proposed that the meeting be suspended in order to allow the delegations concerned to amend the draft resolution.

It was so agreed.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and was continued at 12.10 p.m.

/Mr. LARA

Mr. LARA (Secretariat) read out the revised text of the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Panama (Conference room paper N° 12/Rev.1).

The draft resolution was unanimously approved.

The CHAIRMAN, in his capacity as representative of the Netherlands, described the multiple-effect procedure used in the Netherlands Antilles to distil sea water, which had shown itself to be very efficacious.

Mr. LARA (Secretariat) informed the meeting that ECLA's activities in the field of electric energy included consultations with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development regarding a study undertaken by the Bank in co-operation with Harvard University on Latin American electricity legislation, with particular reference to its effect on private investment. ECLA also planned to hold a seminar in the second half of 1960 to examine the practical aspects of electric energy development in Latin America. It was important that all the Latin American countries should be represented at that meeting by technical experts.

Mr. MURRIAQUI (Ecuador) felt that special attention should be paid to mine prospecting in preparing the inventory of natural resources, and that the possibilities of encouraging the production of natural fibres should also be studied. If the Committee's work programme had permitted it, he would have submitted draft resolutions on both matters.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Committee had concluded its activities for the present session of the Commission and that it only remained for it to adopt its report.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.