

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/CN.12/AC.16/SR.1
11 February 1952

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Committee of the Whole

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE INAUGURAL SESSION
Held in Santiago, Chile, Monday, 11 February
1952, at 12 p.m.

SUMMARY:

1. Speech by His Excellency, Mr. Eduardo Yrarrázaval Concha, Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs.
2. Speech by His Excellency, Mr. Ramiro Hernández Portela, Cuban Ambassador to Chile, on behalf of the Delegates.
3. Speech by Mr. Henry S. Bloch, Director of the Fiscal Division representing the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs and the Director General of Technical Assistance Administration
4. Election of Chairman.

PRESENT:

Chairman	Mr. BALTRA CORTES	Chile
Members	Mr. LERENA	Argentina
	Mr. VALDES HERTZOG	Bolivia
	Mr. ARANHA PEREIRA	Brazil
	Mr. HERNANDEZ PORTELA	Cuba
	Mr. PEREZ HENRIQUEZ	Dominican Republic
	Mr. CHARVET	France
	Mr. ORDONEZ PANIAGUA	Guatemala
	Mr. MALEERANCHE	Haiti
	Mr. ARMENDARIZ DEL CASTILLO	Mexico
	Mr. KASTEEL	Netherlands
	Mr. ROMERO MARTINEZ	Nicaragua
	Mr. STIRLING	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. BOWERS	United States of America
	Dr. DE FENA	Uruguay
	Mr. GONZALEZ VALE	Venezuela
Organization of American States	Dr. TAYLOR	Executive Secretary
Representatives of Specialized Agencies	Mr. KOULISCHER	International Labour Office
	Mr. AKKAR	
	Mr. POBLETE TRONCOSO	
	Mr. BAHR	Food and Agricultural Organization
	Mr. BUZETA	International Civil Aviation Organization
	Mr. ESTABLIER	UNESCO
	Mr. BUDNIK	World Health Organizatio
Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations		
<u>Category A:</u>	Mr. VIDAL	International Chamber of Commerce
	Mr. ELIZALDE	
	Mr. BARROS JARPA	
	Mr. VARGAS PUEBLA	World Federation of Trade Unions
<u>Category B:</u>	Mr. BARROS JARPA	Inter-American Council of Commerce and Production
	Mr. RODRIGUEZ	

Mr. LEVREBO

South American Petroleum
Institute

Dr. PREBISCH

Executive Secretary

Mr. BLOCH

Representative of Mr. Owen
Assistant Secretary in
charge of Economic
Affairs and of the
Director General of TAA

Mr. SWENSON

Assistant Director

Mr. SANTA CRUZ

Secretary of the
Committee

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY announced that this meeting of the Committee of the Whole would be opened by His Excellency the Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile.

Mr. YRARRAZAVAL CONCHA, Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared the meeting open, and began by saying that on 12 July 1947, the Chilean Delegate to the United Nations proposed that an Economic Commission for Latin America be created. This motion was approved with the support of the other American Republics during the Sixth Session of the Economic and Social Council, when the functions and activities of the new organization were determined and it was decided that its headquarters should be in Santiago, Chile.

The Minister then added that he felt greatly honoured in being called upon to open this meeting of the Committee of the Whole, at which an account of the work accomplished and of future plans were to be presented. He went on to mention that the Fifth Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America had been postponed until February 1953, in order not to interrupt the Commission's work. His Excellency extended a cordial welcome to the delegates on behalf of the Chilean Government, and mentioned that on 19 January of this year, a draft bill had been set before the Chilean Congress, appropriating the necessary funds for providing the Commission with its own building.

He stated that the studies entrusted to the Economic Commission for Latin America were being carefully prepared, under the able leadership of Dr. Raúl Prebisch, Executive Secretary of the Commission.

/He reminded

He reminded his hearers that the contribution which Latin America made to the community of nations was essential at a time when civilization itself was at stake. It was necessary to carry out scientific research regarding each of the Latin American economies, since the development of the material resources of this part of the Continent, together with an improved utilization of human resources, would, by establishing a greater degree of balance as between the northern and southern sectors of this hemisphere, act as a moderating factor in times of cyclical crises and as a stabilizing factor for the whole world. He believed that, if capital were invested in kindred and peace loving countries, provided adequate studies had been made beforehand, it would be found that very small sums, in comparison with the amounts spent for war purposes, would redoubled the Continent's strength and act as a most effective antidote to war. He stated that the attaining of this goal was the objective of the studies carried out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and its ultimate success depended largely on the support given by the countries directly interested and on the comprehensive foresight and policies of countries possessing capital resources.

He concluded by congratulating the Economic Commission for Latin America on the success of its activities and through the Commission sent a cordial message of greeting to the General Secretary of United Nations, adding that in his view the creation of the Economic Commission for Latin America constituted one of United Nations' finest achievements.

Speech delivered by His Excellency the Cuban Ambassador

Mr. HERNANDEZ PORTELA (Cuban Ambassador) said that he had been given the unexpected honour of replying, on behalf of the foreign delegates, to the noble sentiments made by His Excellency the Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs. He recalled the work done by Chile in connexion with the creation of the Economic Commission for Latin America, and also her efforts towards strengthening and consolidating its position. He then referred to the significance of the services rendered to the Commission by Cuba, more particularly when his country had come to its defence when it was in imminent danger. He mentioned as an important fact, that the Commission had as its Director Dr. Raúl Prebisch, who, he said, was one of the most outstanding economists of this Continent, and called upon the delegates to express their cordial gratitude in the form of

/applause for

applause for him. His Excellency then referred to the disequilibrium which in his opinion exists between the Latin American economies and that of the United States of America, and expressed the hope that by their integration equilibrium might be found. He stated that a great part of the efforts of the Latin American countries were directed towards their common defence in the economic sphere, and pointed out the way in which the United States, under the auspices of the United Nations, was co-operating in the task of the integral economic development of the Continent.

Speech delivered by the Director of the Fiscal Division

Mr. BLOCH stated that both the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs and the Director General of Technical Assistance Administration had requested him to express to the delegates their best wishes for the success of this meeting. He added that the speech made by the Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs testified to the interest with which both the Government and the people of Chile regard the work of the United Nations, culminating in their generous gesture of placing before their Congress a draft bill for the provision of permanent offices for the Commission, in order that it might carry out its work satisfactorily. He then recalled that since the ECLA Session held in Mexico in 1951, the Economic and Social Council resolved that, it together with the other regional commissions, should continue for an indefinite period, thus emphasizing the growing importance of these regional organizations as centres for concerted inter-governmental action in the solution of Latin America's economic problems. The regional commissions had also had the support of the various governments during the last session of the General Assembly. Mr. Bloch referred subsequently to the significance, for United Nations, of the results obtained by the Economic Commission for Latin America, observing that the Commission had examined the individual problems of each country with a view to clarifying the common problems faced by all the Latin American countries. The progress of this task had led to an extension of the scope of the Commission's activities, so that both long- and short-term problems of development were being studied, and special emphasis was being laid on concrete problems which might lead to the adoption of practical measures. He recalled that the Commission had been in close contact with the specialized agencies and other international organizations interested in the economic

/problems of

problems of Latin America, and stated that the extension of the Commission's work in the economic field will acquire special importance in view of the development of its relations with Technical Assistance Administration, since their co-operation was now on a firm basis, in accordance with the recently revised statutes of the Commission.

Election of Chairman

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY observed that this was not a meeting of the Commission but a meeting of the Committee of the Whole; however the Chairman, Dr. Adolfo Martínez Baéz, was unable to be present and it was therefore necessary to elect a Chairman for the Committee.

Mr. PEREZ ENRIQUEZ (Dominican Republic) proposed the name of the Chairman of the Chilean Delegation, Mr. Alberto Baltra Cortés, stressing both his outstanding personal merits and his qualifications as an economist, as well as the warm welcome given by Chile to the delegations attending this meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America.

Messrs. DE PENA (Uruguay), CHARVET (France), HERNANDEZ PORTELA (Cuba), and LERENA (Argentina) gave their warm support to the motion proposed by the representative of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. VALDES (Bolivia) supported this motion, likewise, and proposed that Mr. Baltra's election should be by acclamation. Both Dr. DE PENA (Uruguay) and Mr. ARANHA PEREIRA (Brazil) also supported this motion.

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY then invited Mr. Baltra Cortés to take the Chair.

Mr. BALTRA (Chairman) declared that it was his understanding that the honour of presiding over the work of the Committee of the Whole, conferred on him by the delegations, was due to his being head of the Chilean Delegation and that it was in this sense that he had accepted it.

He stated that the Committee of the Whole would be called upon to give its views on the Executive Secretary's Progress Report for the Economic Commission for Latin America, but that there would be no discussion of any of the studies undertaken nor of any substantive documents, since this would take place during the course of the Fifth Session, to be held in Rio de Janeiro. It would, however, be the duty of the Committee to change or correct the trend of the work of the Commission, and indicate the methods to be followed. He stressed

/the results

the results of the Commission's work in little more than three years, adding that it had become one of the most efficient instruments in Latin America for examining the economic problems of the region and that it had made remarkable progress in helping to establish conceptions unknown until recently as regards the economic realities of these countries, and likewise in thinking and speaking in terms of Latin America as a whole, disregarding all political frontiers. He felt that a unity of effort, initiative and traditional pride had been achieved.

He then congratulated the Executive Secretary, Professor Raúl Prebisch, particularly for the impetus which he has given, through the Economic Commission for Latin America, to the formation of a body of economic thought which would soon be able to interpret these realities in terms of their own theory.

He observed that during its last meeting in Mexico, the Economic Commission for Latin America had completed one stage of its existence and begun another, that of undertaking the study of the problems and theories of economic development, during the course of which it would have to give special attention to technological problems, since technical training was of as much importance as capital itself.

He concluded by saying that the Committee of the Whole must decide whether or not the work that the Economic Commission for Latin America was undertaking was on the right lines, and reminded the delegates that success depended on the guidance given to the Executive Secretary by the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. YRARRAZAVAL CONCHA (Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs) then declared the inaugural meeting closed, and summoned the delegates for the first working session at 4 p.m. on the same day.