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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA  
Eighth Session  
Panama City, Panama

COMMITTEE III  
(General Business)

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at Panama City on Monday, 18 May 1959, at 10.50 a.m.

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Amendment of the Commission's terms of reference and rules  
of procedure (E/CN.12/509 and Add.1)

/PRESENT:

PRESENT:

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| <u>Chairman:</u>   | Mr. FRANCO         | Colombia   |
| <u>Rapporteur:</u> | Mr. GEORGES-PICOT  | France   |
| <u>Members:</u>    | Mr. LERENA         | Argentina  |
|                    | Mr. CABRAL de MELO | Brazil   |
|                    | Mr. VALDIVIESO     | Chile  |
|                    | Mr. DIAZ           | Colombia   |
|                    | Mr. MOREIRA BATRES | Costa Rica   |
|                    | Mr. BRAUN          | Cuba   |
|                    | Mr. ICAZA          | Ecuador  |
|                    | Mr. MAZARIEGOS     | Guatemala  |
|                    | Mr. ORDÓÑEZ        | Honduras   |
|                    | Mr. URQUIDI        | Mexico   |
|                    | Mr. KAUFMANN       | Netherlands  |
|                    | Mr. OZORES         | Panama   |
|                    | Mr. VALIENTE       | Paraguay   |
|                    | Mr. HEEREN         | Peru   |
|                    | Mr. BARNES         | United Kingdom of Great<br>Britain and Northern<br>Ireland |
|                    | Mr. KOTSCHNIG      | United States of America                                   |
|                    | Mr. PONS           | Uruguay  |
|                    | Mr. MOANACK        | Venezuela  |

/ALSO PRESENT:

ALSO PRESENT:Observers from States Members  
of the United Nations not  
members of the Commission:

|                    |  |
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| Mr. HOKES          | Czechoslovakia                         |
| Mr. HOLLAI         | Hungary                                |
| Mr. MATEOS ALVARES | Spain                                  |
| Mr. MIKHAILOV      | Union of Soviet<br>Socialist Republics |

Representative of a  
specialized agency:

|           |   |
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| Mr. PENNA | United Nations,<br>Educational, Scientific<br>and Cultural Organisation |
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Representatives of inter-  
governmental organizations:

|             |                                    |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Mr. MORALES | Organization of<br>American States |
|-------------|------------------------------------|

Secretariat:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Mr. MALINOWSKI | Director, Regional<br>Commissions Section |
| Mr. SANTA CRUZ | Secretary of the<br>Commission            |
| Mr. TRANCART   | Secretary of the<br>Committee             |

AMENDMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE  
(E/CN.12/509 and Add.1)

The CHAIRMAN invited the representative of the Executive Secretary to explain the amendments that had been proposed to the Commission's terms of reference.

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) said that at its twenty-sixth session the Economic and Social Council had had before it two proposals for amendments to the Commission's terms of reference, contained in draft resolution E/L.797 and an amendment to it (E/AC.6/L.207), both of which were attached to document E/CN.12/509 as Appendices I and II. The Council had felt that no final decision should be taken on the matter until the regional economic commissions had been consulted.

The Committee was therefore called upon to consider whether the Commission's terms of reference should be amended as proposed.

The CHAIRMAN called for comments on the first amendment, which would add a new sub-paragraph (f) to paragraph 1 of the Commission's terms of reference.

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) said that the Economic and Social Council has decided to include both economic and social factors in the terms of reference of the recently established Economic Commission for Africa, since it was impossible to separate the two. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East had recently decided to amend its terms of reference to include the social aspects of economic development. In the case of ECLA, the amendment would amount to no more than giving official recognition to a situation that already existed. The Commission had been dealing with the social aspects of economic development

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for a number of years and there seemed to be no reason why the proposed amendment should meet with any opposition.

Mr. KAUFMANN (Netherlands) agreed with the views expressed by the Mexican representative. Social questions were of great importance in the modern world. Moreover there was the question of maintaining uniformity with the other regional economic commissions.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether the adoption of the proposed amendment would have any financial implications.

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) replied that, as it was simply a question of giving official recognition to a situation that already existed, the amendment would not necessarily have any financial implications.

Mr. DIAZ (Colombia) thought that the words "as appropriate" in the proposed amendment were unnecessary, since any kind of economic development automatically had social implications.

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) stressed that the Commission was primarily concerned with economic matters and would not therefore be called upon to consider the social aspects of all the problems with which it dealt.

Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) said that the ultimate aim of economic development was to raise levels of living; that was in itself a social objective.

The words "as appropriate" in the proposed amendment were more necessary than they might seem at first sight. There were many social questions with which the Commission would not and should not deal,

/firstly

firstly because it was not directly responsible for them and secondly because if it did so it would be duplicating the work of other bodies that were active in the social field throughout Latin America. The Commission should confine itself to the social aspects of economic development and it was in that context that his delegation was prepared to support the proposed amendment.

Mr. ICAZA (Ecuador) said that he was in favour of the inclusion of the words "as appropriate", for they would make for flexibility and prevent duplication of work with other organizations.

Mr. HEEREN (Peru), Mr. PONS (Uruguay) and Mr. ORDOÑEZ (Honduras) said that, in view of the statements the Committee had just heard, they were prepared to give their support to the proposed amendment. Not only would it bring the Commission's work more closely into line with that of the other regional economic commissions but it would also allow of greater flexibility.

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) agreed with the representative of the United States regarding the need to avoid duplicating the work of other bodies working in the social field in Latin America.

Mr. NORALLIS (Organization of American States) said that it might help to prevent duplication of work in the future if he gave some indication of the type of social work carried on by the Inter-American Economic and Social Council. His organization carried out concrete projects in co-operation with Governments and groups of Governments and co-operated with other bodies in certain specific fields such as housing, town planning, co-operatives, social security, labour relations, social  
/welfare

welfare and migratory movements. It also organized seminars on particular social subjects. The Organization of American States had always co-operated closely with ECLIA and other United Nations bodies and he hoped that the two organizations would continue their fruitful co-operation in the future.

Mr. BRAUN (Cuba) thought that the words "social aspects" were far too vague. Economic development necessarily brought with it changes in social structure and some phrase such as "social and institutional aspects" would give a far more accurate idea of what was required.

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) said that the point raised by the Cuban representative was well taken, but that in the instance under discussion it would be a mistake to be too precise. The wording used in the amendment, being broader and less specific, could carry the sense attached to it by the Cuban representative. He therefore suggested that the wording of the amendment should not be changed but that specific reference should be made to the Cuban representative's point in the Committee's report.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that in the absence of any further comments, it should be taken that the Committee approved of the addition of the new sub-paragraph (f) to paragraph 1 of the Commission's terms of reference.

It was so decided.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN called for comments on the second amendment (E/CN.12/509, appendix II), which would add the following provision to paragraph 8 of the Commission's terms of reference.

"The Commission shall establish appropriate liaison and co-operation with other regional economic commissions in accordance with the resolutions and directives of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly".

A similar provision had been approved by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) in its resolution 30(XV).

Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) recalled that when the Council had decided, at its 1032nd meeting, to refer the above text to the regional commissions for their consideration, his delegation had abstained from voting. It had felt that such liaison and co-operation had always been maintained and that there was thus no need to provide for them in the terms of reference. Indeed, to do so might imply that relations between the regional commissions were to be different from what they had been in the past, which was not the case. He would not, however, oppose approval of the text by the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should approve the proposed addition to paragraph 8 of the Commission's terms of reference.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to two proposals that had been made by the Economic and Social Council regarding the Commission's rules of procedure, which would bring them into line with those of the Council and its functional commissions. Under the first, the present procedure by which the Executive Secretary submitted a statement of the financial implications of any project before it was approved by the Commission would be formalized

/(E/CN.12/509, part I).

(E/CN.12/509, part I). Under the second, documentation would be circulated to members six weeks before the opening of each session, instead of thirty days before, as at present. (E/CN.12/509, part II).

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) pointed out that in order to be able to submit its annual report to the summer session of the Council the Commission was obliged to hold its own session not later than the month of May. If the six-week time-limit were adopted, the Commission's annual economic survey would have to be distributed to members by the middle of March. That would be very difficult for the secretariat, which already had to make a great effort to comply with the thirty-day time-limit owing to the problems encountered in collecting statistical data for the Latin-American countries.

Mr. KAUFMANN (Netherlands) proposed that the Committee should approve, as an addendum to the Commission's rules of procedure, the text of the rule adopted by ECAFE concerning estimates of financial implications (E/CN.12/509/Add.1).

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) supported that proposal. He pointed out, however, that it was not the custom of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, according to the new budget practices, to approve the allocation of funds for specific small-scale projects; if ECLA wanted to undertake a new project, the secretariat was not expected automatically to request further funds; it could also reorganize its programme of work so as to allow for the project within its existing budget. Accordingly, besides submitting an estimate of the cost of any new project, as provided in the ECAFE text, the Executive Secretary should also inform the Commission how far the project could be absorbed in the existing programme.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should adopt the Netherlands proposal and that the Mexican representative's observations should be noted in the Commission's report.

It was so decided.

Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) said that he was in favour of extending the time-limit for the distribution of documents to six weeks. Complaints about the late distribution of documents were very frequent in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. If Governments did not receive the documents in time, they would not study them with enough care to be able to take a stand on them. Admittedly, an earlier date for distribution would impose an extra burden on the secretariat, but it would be no greater than that already assumed by the secretariats of the other regional commissions. Should it prove too heavy it would be necessary to seek the Fifth Committee's approval for an increase in staff.

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) agreed with the views put forward by the United States representative. The six-week limit should be adopted as the general rule, allowing for exceptions where they were justified. The delays caused by the difficulty of collecting statistics for the annual economic survey would be overcome by improving the statistical services. Work could be further speeded up by reducing the volume of documentation, without, of course, impairing its quality.

He proposed that, rather than approve the text adopted by ECAFE the Committee should recommend that the words "thirty days" in the Commission's present rule 3 should be replaced by the words "six weeks" and the word "two" /by the word "three".

by the word "three".

Mr. HERRERA (Peru) agreed with the representatives of the United States and Mexico. The Commission's rules of procedure should be amended to bring them into line with those of the Council and its functional commissions. The amendments, however, could only be put into effect if the secretariat was increased as required.

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) pointed out that the last paragraph of rule 3 provided that documentation was to be submitted to member Governments in the language which they indicated. It was practically impossible for the secretariat to comply with that requirement with a six-weeks time-limit with its available staff. The United Nations Secretariat had asked the General Assembly to authorize it to increase the staff of its editorial and translation sections but the request had been refused.

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) said that, although the Assembly had refused that request, the Secretariat had stated that it would be able to strengthen the ECLA secretariat by redistributing its available staff.

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) said that the ECLA secretariat had not received any additional staff, the reason given being lack of funds.

Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) suggested that in that case a note should be included in the Commission's report indicating its concern over the lack of sufficient staff.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Mexican representative's proposals regarding amendments to rule 3 and the inclusion of a note in the report should be approved.

/It was so decided.

It was so decided.

Mr. MORALES (Organization of American States), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that his organization's participation as an observer in the meeting was proof of its interest in ECLA's activities. Co-ordination of the activities of the two bodies was necessary to ensure that the available resources, which were inadequate for the vast problems of Latin-American development, were used as efficiently as possible and that there was no duplication of the work of the many organizations engaged in the field. There must be co-ordination at the governmental level, to see that delegations of the same State to different bodies did not make proposals which duplicated each other, and at the secretariat level. His organization always took great care to notify interested bodies of its activities and of the possibilities of overlapping. It had always co-operated very closely with the ECLA secretariat and would continue to do so to the best of its ability.

Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Secretary of the Commission) thanked the representative of the Organization of American States for his statement and said that the secretariat would continue to offer that organization its fullest collaboration.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.