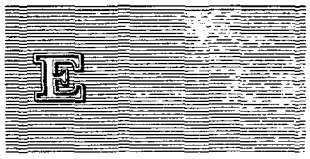
UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CEPAL/G.1291
E/CEPAL/SES.20/G.16
9 February 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

E C L A

Economic Commission for Latin America

ADMISSION OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS AND UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS AS ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

Note prepared by the United Nations Secretariat at the request of the Executive Secretary of ECLA

84-2-181

CONTENTS

/Introduction

Introduction

By letter dated 3 October 1983 the Government of the United States informed the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America of the application by the Government of the United States Virgin Islands for admission as an associate member of the Commission and of the intention of the United States Government to submit this matter to the twentieth session of the Commission.

By letter dated 9 December the Government of the United Kingdom informed the Executive Secretary of ECLA of the application by the Government of the British Virgin Islands for admission as an associate member of the Commission and of the intention of the United Kingdom to submit this matter to the twentieth session of the Commission.

As a result of these communications the question of the associate membership in ECLA of the British Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands has been included in the draft provisional agenda of the twentieth session of the Commission for consideration by member Governments in accordance with article 3, paragraph (a) of the Terms of Reference of ECLA.

The present note by the Secretariat provides background information regarding associate membership in ECLA.

1. Associate membership in ECLA

The Economic Commission for Latin America was established by Economic and Social Council resolution 106 (VI) of 25 February and 5 March 1948. The questions of membership, associate membership and the geographical scope of the Commission's work are dealt with in articles 3 to 5 of its Terms of Reference, which now read as follows:

"3. (a) Membership of the Commission shall be open to members of the United Nations in North, Central and South America, and in the Caribbean area, and to France, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. Any territory, or part or group thereof, within the geographical scope of the Commission's work may, on presentation of its application to the Commission by the Member responsible for the international relations of such territory, part or group of territories, be eligible for admission by the Commission as an associate member of the Commission. If it has become responsible for its own international relations, such territory, part or group of territories may be admitted as an associate member of the Commission on itself presenting its application to the Commission.

" (b) Representatives of associate members shall be entitled to participate without vote in all meetings of the Commission, whether sitting as Commission or as Committee of the Whole.

/" (c) Representatives

" (c) Representatives of associate members shall be eligible to be appointed as members of any committee or other subordinate body which may be set up by the Commission, and shall be eligible to hold office in such body.

"4. The geographical scope of the Commission's work is the twenty Latin American States Members of the United Nations, participating territories in Central and South America which have frontiers adjoining any of these States, and participating territories in the Caribbean area.

"5. The Commission is empowered to make recommendations on any matters within its competence directly to the Governments of members or associate members concerned, Governments admitted in a consultative capacity, and the specialized agencies concerned...".1/

The Commission admitted its first two associate members in March 1960.2/ These were the ten territories comprising the West Indies Federation (Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia. St. Vincent, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) as one associate member and British Guiana (now Guyana) as the other. The following year British Honduras (now Belize) was admitted.3/ Following the disintegration of the West Indies Federation and the subsequent independence of several of the members concerned, a new constitutional arrangement was established, consisting of West Indies States in association with the United Kingdom. In 1968, the West Indies Associated States of Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla and St. Lucia, and the territories of St. Vincent and Montserrat, were admitted as a single associate member.4/ In 1981, the Netherlands Antilles was admitted as an associate member.5 By 1983, most of the countries which enjoyed associate membership had become independent, joined the United Nations and consequently became full members of ECLA. The current associate members are Montserrat and the Netherlands Antilles.

2. Consideration of the subject by the General Assembly and the Special Committee of 24

The question of the participation of non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies was first considered by the General Assembly at its sixth session, as part of the Secretary-General's "Memorandum of points for consideration in the development of a twenty-year programme for achieving peace through the United Nations".6/ Point 9 of the Memorandum advocated the use of the United Nations to promote by peaceful means the progress of dependent colonial or semi-colonial peoples to a position of equality with Member States of the United Nations. In the fourth preambular paragraph of its resolution 566 (VI), adopted on 18 January 1952, the General Assembly stated that the direct association of the non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies is an effective means of promoting the progress of the peoples of those territories towards a position of equality with Member States of the United Nations. The Assembly recommended the use of special provisions in the constitutions of some specialized agencies and of the regional commissions which permitted the admission of those territories as associate members on the proposal of the administering Powers concerned.

/Further resolutions

Further resolutions on the above question were adopted by the General Assembly at its seventh and eighth sessions. In its resolutions 647 (VII) of 10 December 1952 and 744 (VIII) of 27 November 1953, the Assembly expressly invited those Member States administering non-self-governing territories to progressively increase participation of indigenous representatives of those territories in the work of the technical organs of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

At its fourteenth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1466 (XIV) of 12 December 1959, the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"1. Invites the Administering Members to submit to the specialized agencies the candidature of the territories referred to in Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to their admission as members associate members or observers, according to the constitution of the agency concerned;

"2. Specially requests all Member States administering non-self-governing territories in Africa to propose the participation of these territories in the work of the Economic Commission for Africa;

"3. Re-emphasizes the great advantage of the Administering Members including in their delegations representatives of the non-self-governing territories to participate in the work of the Committee on Information from non-self-governing territories and in the discussion of such matters in the Fourth Committee;

"4. Invites the Administering Members to furnish the Secretary-General with a report on the practical measures taken to implement the present resolution;

"5. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session on the progress made".

In his report dated 6 September 1960,7/ submitted in accordance with the above resolution, the Secretary-General concluded that most of the specialized agencies made provision in their constitutions for associating the non-self-governing territories in their work in ways which varied from ordinary membership through associate membership to ad hoc participation in major conferences. The constitutions of certain agencies, on the other hand, made no provision for any form of membership or participation by non-self-governing territories.

With the exception of the Economic Commission for Europe, the resolutions establishing each of the three regional economic commissions provided for associate membership of territories situated within the geographical scope of the work of the Commission concerned. The terms of reference of the Economic

/Commission for

Commission for Asia and the Far East (later renamed Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) and of the Economic Commission for Africa enumerated the non-self-governing territories eligible for associate membership, and those territories were admitted at the earliest stage in the activities of the Commissions in question. It was noted that the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Latin America did not enumerate the territories eligible for associate membership, and that the first two associate members were admitted in 1960. It was also noted, at the time, that there were still non-self-governing territories which were not associate members of those regional commissions.

On 15 December 1960, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1539 (XV) in which, inter alia, it invited the administering powers to arrange for the participation of representatives of non-self-governing territories in the work of appropriate organs of the United Nations; it further invited such administering Powers as had not already done so to propose to the specialized agencies and the regional economic commissions the participation of those territoties in their work according to their constitutions. It also decided to include the question as a separate item on the provisional agenda of its sixteenth session and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report, at that session, on the implementation of the present resolution.

The second report of the Secretary-General on this question was submitted to the General Assembly on 23 August 1961.8/ This report updated the information contained in the earlier report and noted that no changes had taken place in the constitutions or terms of reference of the international bodies concerned during the period under review. It noted further that, while the number of territories associated with those international bodies had increased, there still remained territories which were not members of the specialized agencies or the regional commissions concerned.

The Fourth Committee considered agenda item 43, entitled "Participation of non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies" between 12 October and 30 November 1961. The Committee took note of the report prepared by the Secretary-General, but did not recommend any specific action to the General Assembly.9/

In May 1976, a United Nations visiting mission composed of Sierra Leone (Chairman), Fiji and the Syrian Arab Republic visited the British Virgin Islands. In its report, the mission considered the question of the participation of non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations and, in that connection, supported the view of the members of the territorial Government that both government and political leaders would benefit by inclusion in the delegation of the United Kingdom to the United Nations on specific occasions and by visits to territories and countries with similar geographical and social conditions. The missions recommended that the United Kingdom make every effort in that regard and further recommended it to facilitate the participation of the British Virgin Islands as an associate member in various organizations of the United Nations as part of the overall strategy of aiding, assisting and

/accelerating the

accelerating the decolonization process. On 17 September 1976, the Special Committee on the situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonist Countries and Peoples adopted a resolution in which, among other things, it approved the report of the visiting mission and its conclusions and recommendations.10/

On 1 December 1976 the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee, adopted resolution 31/54 on the British Virgin Islands, in which it noted, inter alia, the conclusions and recommendations of the visiting mission.

On 18 May 1983 the Special Committee decided, inter alia, to refer the question of Bermuda and four Caribbean territories, including the British Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, to its Sub-Committee on Small Territories for consideration.

As regards the question of the participation of non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations, it was noted in the working papers prepared by the Secretariat that the Governor of the British Virgin Islands had informed the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America that his Government would seek, through the administering Power, associate membership in the Commission at its next session (A/AC.109/732, para. 16). In the working paper on the United States Virgin Islands it was reported that representatives of the United States Virgin Islands had participated, as part of the United States delegation, in the work of the Special Committee during its consideration of the Territory in 1982, and in the sixteenth session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America. It was noted that the Territory was also represented at the Fifth Annual Conference of the Caribbean Group for Co-operation in Economic Development (CGCED) of the World Bank (A/AC.109/740, para. 82).

During the Sub-Committee's consideration of the Territory, the representative of the United States reported that the Virgin Islands Status Commission had recommended that the Territory should seek associate membership in the Economic Commission for Latin America and its subsidiary bodies, including the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC).

At meetings held on 12 August and 14 September, the Special Committee considered the question of the British Virgin Islands 11/ and the United States Virgin Islands,12/ respectively. At the same meetings, the Special Committee adopted the reports of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations on the two territories (A/AC.109/L.1469 and L.1489). Concerning the British Virgin Islands, the Special Committee recalled the recommendations of the 1976 visiting mission regarding associate membership in United Nations bodies and noted with satisfaction the request of the British Virgin Islands for associate membership in ECLA. It reiterated its recommendation that the administering Power should facilitate the participatio of the Territory as an associate member in ECLA, as well as in various organizations of the United Nations system.

/As regards

As regards the United States Virgin Islands, the Special Committee noted, inter alia, the recommendation of the Virgin Islands Status Commission on associate membership and called on the administering Power to facilitate the application of the Territory for associate membership in ECLA and its subsidiary bodies, including CDCC.

On 11 November 1983, the representative of the United States informed the Fourth Committee, inter alia, that his Government, at the request of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands, had applied for associate membership for that territory in the Economic Commission for Latin America. He also said that the United States would seek similar membership for it in the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC), a subsidiary body of the Commission (see document A/C.4/38/PV.15).

At its thirty-eighth session, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee, adopted without objection, resolutions on the British Virgin Islands 13/ and the United States Virgin Islands 14/ in which it approved, inter alia, the reports of the Special Committee on those Territories and reiterated the request to the administering Powers concerned to facilitate the participation of the Territories as associate members in the Economic Commission for Latin America and in various organizations of the United Nations.

3. Summary

A number of resolutions concerning the participation of non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies were adopted by the General Assembly from its sixth through its thirty-eighth session. These resolutions called on the administering Powers concerned to facilitate the participation of the Territories in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

The Secretary-General submitted reports to the General Assembly at its fifteenth and sixteenth sessions on the question of the participation of non-self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations. In these reports, the Secretary-General noted that, except in the case of the Economic Commission for Europe, the resolutions establishing the regional commissions provided for associate membership by Territories situated in their geographical scope of operations. He also noted that some regional commissions enumerated those Territories eligible for associate membership and included them in their work at an early stage of their existence.

Regarding the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Territories eligible for associate membership were not enumerated in its terms of reference, and the first associate members (the ten countries of the West Indies Federation as one member and Guyana as another) were admitted in March 1960. Belize was admitted in 1961, and the West Indies Associated States and the Territories of St. Vincent and Montserrat were admitted as a single associate member in 1968. The Netherlands Antilles was admitted in 1981. With the exception of Anguilla, Montserrat and the Netherlands Antilles, the above former associate members later gained their independence, joined the United Nations and are now full members of the Commission.

/Notes

Notes

1/ E/CN.12/850/Rev.1.

2/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 30th Session, Supplement No. 4, (E/3333-E/CN.12/AC.45/Rev.1), pp. 20-21.

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second session, Supplement No. 4 (E/3486-E/CN.12/573/Rev.1), p. 42.

4/ Ibid., Forty-fifth session (E/4499-E/CN.12/AC.61/14/Rev.1), p. 68.

5/ Ibid., Supplement No. 16 (E/1981/56-E/CEPAL/G.1176), 27 April 1979-15 May 1981, p. 286.

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Session, Annexes, Agenda item 60 (A/1304).

7/ Ibid., Fifteenth Session, Annexes, Agenda item 40 (A/4472 and Add.1).

8/ Ibid., Sixteenth Session, Annexes, Agenda item 43 (A/4852).

9/ Ibid., A/4997, para. 26.

10/ Ibid., Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/31/23/Rev.1), vol. IV, chapter XXVIII, B, and Annex.

11/ A/38/23 (Part VI), chapter XX.

12/ Ibid., chapter XXIV.

13/ G.A. Res. 38/44.

14/ G.A. Res. 38/48.