

**United Nations
Development Programme**Distr.
GENERALDP/1983/SR.1
16 February 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Organizational meeting for 1983

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 14 February 1983, at 10.30 a.m.Temporary President: Mr. LINDORES (Canada)President: Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the organizational meeting of the Governing Council for 1983. He reminded members that, by adopting decision 81/37, the Council had decided to convene an organizational meeting of one or two days' duration in New York at the end of February each year in order to elect its Bureau and to consider the work programme for the entire year as well as other related organizational matters.
2. The year 1982 had been a difficult one for UNDP, and all the real measures of programme delivery revealed a significant reduction in the level of programme inputs, a situation which could not but concern all those who believed in the need to maintain a healthy, dynamic UNDP. As the Council reviewed the country programmes prepared by many of its developing country members, it would be important to remember the discussions the Intersessional Committee of the Whole had held the previous week on more secure long-term financing for UNDP programmes.
3. An upturn in world economic activity could not prevent 1983 from offering an even greater challenge than 1982 in that respect. UNDP must be strengthened to the point that, whatever the economic climate, it would be able not only to consolidate its threatened position but also to expand its contribution to technical co-operation and development in the months and years ahead.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

4. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT drew attention to rule 11 of the Council's rules of procedure which provided that, in electing the Bureau, due account should be taken of the need to ensure equitable geographical representation. Due regard should also be given to the geographical rotation of the office of President among the different regional groups.
5. Mr. LUSAKA (Zambia) nominated Mr. Slim (Tunisia) for the office of President.
6. Mr. Slim (Tunisia) was elected President by acclamation.
7. Mr. Slim (Tunisia) took the Chair.
8. The PRESIDENT said that he had closely followed the evolution of UNDP since its creation and had served as President of the Council at its third and fourth sessions. Currently, he was more convinced than ever of UNDP's unique and irreplaceable role in multilateral co-operation for development. Moreover, the Programme continued to embody the developing countries' hopes for economic and social development. Through the provision of technical assistance, UNDP continued to promote development and to strengthen the scientific and technological capacities of the majority of the developing countries. It also offered the only channel through which assistance could be provided without political pressure or bilateral favouritism. Clearly, such an institution deserved support and reinforcement, a task which members of the Council must work together to fulfil.

(The President)

9. For the past two years, UNDP's financial situation had been particularly difficult. Of course, that was the result of the economic recession, national budget restrictions and exchange rate fluctuations, but it was also the result of the lack of political will and the growing discontent with multilateral co-operation for development. In his opinion, specific targets for the increase in contributions must be set and met in order to help UNDP to overcome the current crisis. In order to meet the developing countries' urgent need for assistance, UNDP must also have sizeable, predictable and assured resources and, in that connection, he supported the appeal frequently made to all countries to increase their annual contributions to UNDP by 14 per cent.

10. At its previous session, the Council had decided to set up an Intersessional Committee of the Whole to find a negotiated solution to the extremely precarious situation resulting from the decline in short-term resources and study ways of mobilizing additional resources on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis. He expressed the hope that that Committee would make substantial progress towards those goals.

11. Multilateral co-operation was especially necessary in helping to rectify the lack of opportunities, which was the main cause of suffering throughout the world. To that end, all member States, particularly the donor countries, should restore the viability of UNDP and should provide it with the means it needed to carry out its noble mission. Accordingly, he welcomed the recent announcement of additional contributions for 1983 made by a number of States and the appreciable increase in the contributions of several donor and recipient countries. He personally was convinced that, through mutual understanding, good will, co-operation and a commitment to development, the Council would be able to overcome the obstacles it faced and give UNDP fresh momentum that would enable it to fulfil its vital task.

12. In conclusion, he appealed to the rich countries to display a spirit of solidarity towards the developing countries so that any further decline in the current situation could be avoided.

13. Mr. DIECKMANN (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States for February, nominated Mr. Schmid (Austria) for the office of First Vice-President.

14. Mr. Schmid (Austria) was elected First Vice-President by acclamation.

15. Mr. OZA (India), speaking on behalf of the Asian Group, nominated Mr. Verceles (Philippines) for the office of Second Vice-President.

16. Mr. Verceles (Philippines) was elected Second Vice-President by acclamation.

17. Mr. DE ROJAS (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Latin American Group, nominated Mr. Albornoz (Ecuador) for the office of Third Vice-President.

18. Mr. Albornoz (Ecuador) was elected Third Vice-President by acclamation.

19. Mr. CHEKAY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, nominated Mr. Szeremeta (Poland) for the office of Fourth Vice-President.
20. Mr. Szeremeta (Poland) was elected Fourth Vice-President by acclamation.
21. The PRESIDENT recalled that, in accordance with Council decision 81/37, the Council had requested the Bureau, in co-operation with the Administrator, to hold consultations, as required, with member States both before and during its sessions, for the purpose of organizing and facilitating the completion of its work. He intended to comply fully with that provision between the Council's two sessions as well as during them.
22. As to the specific tasks assigned to the Vice-Presidents, he suggested that, in keeping with past practice, the First Vice-President should also serve as Chairman of the Budgetary and Financial Committee and that the three other Vice-Presidents should share in co-ordinating the activities of the Working Group and assist the President in the conduct of Council meetings.
23. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (DP/1983/L.1)

24. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the provisional agenda (DP/1983/L.1) and said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt that agenda.
25. It was so decided.
26. Mr. MORSE (Administrator) paid a tribute to the new President's skill and experience, which were particularly important in view of the complex and difficult situation currently facing UNDP. In addition to the special efforts the Intersessional Committee of the Whole had made to find approaches to UNDP's resource difficulties and other urgent requirements, the special meeting of the Council, which was to begin on the afternoon of the current day, would offer members an opportunity to examine the enormous effort, intensive planning and great hope that had gone into each of the 25 country programmes being submitted for approval and to appreciate the technical co-operation needs which could not be fully met in each of those countries because of UNDP's resource shortfall. The special meeting also reflected the Council's great interest, dedication and flexibility in organizing its oversight of the Programme and in meeting the added challenges confronting operational activities for development at a time of severe world-wide economic difficulty.
27. The current organizational meeting was one successful outcome of Council decision 81/37 in that it enabled the Council, as in 1982, to elect its Bureau and organize both its main session and its work programme at the same time.

(Mr. Morse)

28. Since the Deputy Administrator would introduce the new country programmes in detail, he merely wished to point out that agency programming missions had been undertaken for 21 of the 25 country programmes submitted, an indication of the continuing importance with which UNDP's agency partners viewed the country programming process, even in times of great resource constraints. He also drew attention to the seven programmes that featured a higher level of cost-sharing contributions - six with recipient Government contributions and one with third-party cost-sharing. Those programmes were a further indication of UNDP's operational value both to its developing country partners and to donor sources seeking to augment IPF resources.

29. As to organizational matters, he informed the Council that the current Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America would be retiring shortly and would be replaced by the former Director of UNDP's Division for Policy Co-ordination and Procedures. He paid a tribute to both officials and to the former Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, who had been named Executive Director of UNITAR. In conclusion, he praised the outstanding qualities of the President of the Council for 1982.

PROGRESS REPORT ON FURTHER RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

30. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) recalled that, in accordance with decision 81/37, paragraph 1 (d), the Council had held its first organizational meeting in preparation for the regular summer session in February 1982. The experience gained then had proved the usefulness of the arrangement and he was sure that the election of the Bureau at the beginning of the current year would enable it to play an increasingly active role before the main session. At the same time, the organizational meeting had enabled the members of the Council, especially those newly elected, to familiarize themselves in advance with the questions to be considered at the regular session and in general provided greater opportunity for members and the secretariat to plan and organize the work of the Council and the relevant documentation.

31. In view of the concern expressed that during recent years the Council had concentrated on programme implementation and planning at the expense of policy-making issues, the Council, by the same decision (paras. 1 (a) and 3 (b)) had decided to hold a short part of its session at a high, senior policy-making level and had selected as the first issue for review the item entitled "New and specific ways and means of mobilizing increased resources on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis", revising that item to include also "The future role of UNDP and its structure". Accordingly, during the first week of its twenty-ninth session, the Council had met at a high level, with the participation of senior policy-makers from several member countries, including ministers and one Prime Minister. It had thus demonstrated its capacity to exercise a leadership role in responding promptly and effectively to requests from the General Assembly. It had concentrated on the deleterious effect of the shortfall in resources on the developing countries and on technical co-operation activities financed by the Programme and had proposed a number of remedial measures. As an outcome of the 1982 policy review, the Intersessional Committee of the Whole had been established.

(Mr. Kirdar)

32. At its summer 1982 session, the Council had decided (decision 82/41) to study at its thirtieth session, the policy review item "Measures to mobilize increased resources for UNDP on an increasingly predictable, continuous and assured basis" with reference to the report of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole (DP/1982/35) and other background documentation prepared by the Administrator.

33. As document DP/1983/L.3 indicated, the first four days of the thirtieth session, 6-9 June, were proposed as the high-level segment of the session. He drew attention to paragraph 4 of that document, which stated that the list of speakers for the three-day general debate would be opened on Monday, 9 May 1983 and closed at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 7 June 1983.

34. He noted that the special meeting devoted to the consideration of country and intercountry programmes and projects to be held immediately after the organizational meeting was only the second of its kind to be organized in accordance with the provisions of decision 81/37. The Administrator hoped that the use made of that special meeting would reflect the Council's important role in that area.

35. He recalled that the same decision had called for close adherence to schedule and full use of serviced meeting time. The secretariat would do everything possible to maintain and improve on the good performance of the two most recent regular sessions.

36. In accordance with Council decisions 81/37 and 82/42, arrangements were being made for the servicing, with interpretation, of one working group of the Council during the thirtieth session; the Group would meet during the period 13-22 June 1983 and would be responsible for elaborating and finalizing draft decisions on items considered in plenary meetings for ultimate adoption by the Council, except in the case of agenda items being considered directly by the Budgetary and Finance Committee and where the Council decided otherwise. He drew attention to paragraph 7 of document DP/1983/L.3, which gave a number of guidelines for the deliberations of the Working Group.

37. The Group had proved its usefulness at the twenty-ninth session, in that it had enabled members to elaborate and finalize more than 30 decisions in good time for adoption by the Council. Although there might still be room for improvement in the functioning of the Working Group, earlier criticisms that decisions had been negotiated haphazardly, without proper working facilities, and with several groups meeting simultaneously, thus preventing small delegations from participating fully in the decision-making, had been partially met.

38. In accordance with decision 81/37, paragraph 4, the Budgetary and Finance Committee had met one week prior to the Council's session and had adopted its own agenda and organization of work.

(Mr. Kirdar)

39. The Council's resolve, reflected in decision 81/37, paragraph 3 (m), to follow the practice of the Economic and Social Council and no longer to adopt its report formally during the session had been successfully implemented for the first time at the twenty-ninth session, and considerable time had thus been freed for substantive discussion, while the report of the Council, in all official languages, including, for the first time, Arabic, had been issued in good time for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

40. With respect to the control and limitation of documentation, the Administration had taken several steps to implement the provisions of decision 81/37, paragraph 5. All the documents of the Council for the twenty-ninth session had been issued in all official languages in reasonably good time. The adoption of an indicative quota for documentation had brought about further rationalization; while the number of country and intercountry programmes under consideration was incomparably higher, the bulk of the documentation was only a fraction of that issued in previous years, representing a saving of \$1.5 million as compared to 1973 and \$700,000 as compared to 1979. In the current year the Administration would continue diligently to apply the relevant provisions, which were important not only in financial terms but also in terms of the endeavour to bring a more rational approach to the work of the Council. Every effort was being made to improve the content and quality of the documentation. Furthermore, in accordance with the new instructions from the Secretary-General, the upper limit on the number of pages in each document had been reduced from 32 to 24.

41. Mr. LINDORES (Canada) referred to document DP/1983/L.3; although that document was formally classified under item 5, his comments on it related more closely to the statement just made by the Secretary of the Council.

42. Paragraphs 6 and 7 of that document described the establishment of the Working Group for the purpose of elaborating and finalizing draft decisions. While his delegation agreed that there were a number of very positive advantages inherent in that arrangement, it hoped that the Bureau would keep the operation of the Working Group under review in 1983. Although the experiment of the previous year had been largely positive, there had been a tendency towards repetitive debate, duplicating the proceedings of plenary meetings. Also, certain routine matters were probably better handled through informal negotiations than in a more formal setting, which tended to slow the process down. The Council should be careful not to become too formal and to lose the advantages of consultations among interested delegations.

43. He assumed that paragraph 7 (a) of document DP/1983/L.3 did not preclude the preparation of draft decisions by the secretariat as had been the practice in the past; those drafts had been helpful in that they had indicated the specific nature of the guidance required by the Administrator on specific issues.

44. He welcomed the improvements which had been made in documentation and the dramatic savings achieved. Such a process of rationalization placed an additional burden on delegations as well as on the secretariat; they should ensure that their requests for additional documentation were kept to a minimum and the Administrator

(Mr. Lindores, Canada)

must ensure that his policy requirements were reflected with the appropriate balance and emphasis. It was important to achieve a more effective documentation process within those limits.

45. Mr. BACKMAN (Sweden) endorsed the very useful and constructive comments made by the representative of Canada. At the previous summer session there had occasionally been problems in the relative functioning of the Budgetary and Finance Committee and the Working Group. Smooth working might be assured if the President and Bureau acted as a co-ordinating mechanism, ensuring that issues were dealt with in good time. It might also be useful, as the representative of Canada had suggested, to continue to use informal consultations, with the participation of the Chairman of the Working Group, who could then report to the Working Group or to a plenary meeting when matters were ready for formal treatment, thus avoiding excessive duplication in the negotiation process. Such an arrangement would greatly improve the functioning of meetings of the Council.

46. Mr. RUSO (Finland) expressed sympathy with the views of the representatives of Sweden and Canada. He wondered whether the three days allocated for the policy review at the beginning of the regular session were sufficient. In any event, the Working Group should concentrate on the most vital policy issues, leaving other more routine matters to be dealt with elsewhere.

47. Mr. SCHMID (Austria) said that at the previous regular session there had been a considerable degree of overlapping between the Working Group and the Budgetary and Finance Committee and the Working Group and the plenary meetings of the Council. He was sure that the Bureau would endeavour to avoid such repetition at the forthcoming session.

48. As a general rule, he felt that the bulk of the work of the Budgetary and Finance Committee should be scheduled for the early part of the session, while the Working Group would do better to meet as far as possible in the latter part of the session, following the general debate, when delegations had been able to establish informal contacts. Such an arrangement would be particularly helpful to small delegations, which often found it difficult to be represented at several meetings taking place simultaneously and possibly also coinciding with important informal consultations. The Council should endeavour to ensure that three simultaneous meetings became the exception rather than the rule.

49. Mr. GLAZER (United States of America) welcomed the constructive points made by the representative of Canada. The 1982 summer session had been a period of trial and some error, and the Working Group had tended to get bogged down in minutiae and repetition. The issues involved were far too important for any such unnecessary wastage of time to be allowed.

50. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the information provided by the Secretary of the Council and that the Bureau should hold consultations, taking account of the views expressed by members, and devise a programme of work satisfactory to all concerned.

51. It was so decided.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN 1983 (DP/1983/L.2, DP/1983/L.3 and Corr.1)

52. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) drew attention to document DP/1983/L.2, which contained the tentative schedule of work for the Council's special meeting and indicated what services would be made available. The document was largely self-explanatory.

53. The Chairman of the Intersessional Committee of the Whole had requested time in which to hold consultations on short-term financing measures and for the closure of the work of the Committee. The Bureau would hold consultations on the possibility of allocating some time for that purpose in the afternoon of Tuesday, 15 February.

54. He noted that on Thursday, 17 February the Council would end its work at 5 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. At 5.30 p.m. on that day the second Paul Hoffman Lecture would take place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and all members were invited to attend.

55. The PRESIDENT said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt the provisional agenda for the special meeting of the Council, as contained in annex I to document DP/1983/L.2, and the tentative schedule of work for that meeting, as contained in annex II, on the understanding that that work schedule was provisional and indicative in character and that, for instance, the Council might wish to decide that if it completed its consideration of an item before the indicated date it would move on immediately to the next item on its work schedule.

56. It was so decided.

57. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider document DP/1983/L.3, relating to the provisional agenda of the thirtieth session and other organizational matters.

58. Mr. HOHWU-CHRISTENSEN (Sweden) said that it might be preferable for item 8 (a) of the agenda of the thirtieth session to be considered in the Budgetary and Finance Committee, at least on a preliminary basis.

59. The PRESIDENT said that when the Council considered the allocation of items to the Budgetary and Finance Committee and other bodies it could discuss that question in more detail.

60. Mr. RINGNALDA (Netherlands) said that paragraph 7 of document DP/1983/L.3 set forth guidelines on the way in which decisions should be presented; a number of documents prepared by the secretariat had an action content and it should be translated into recommendations and, if possible, a draft decision at the end of the document, so as to give delegations more time to study the recommendations.

61. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that the documentation to be provided to the Council would include suggestions of the Administrator for action

(Mr. Kirdar)

to be taken. In 1980 the secretariat had provided draft decisions, and at the organizational session of 1982, some delegations had indicated that they would prefer not to be supplied with "precooked" decisions. Thus the secretariat had produced a working paper on items to be considered and decisions which needed to be taken to serve as a preliminary paper for the Working Group. The secretariat intended to follow the same procedure in 1983. One criticism that had been made three years previously was that draft decisions were being considered in several different informal groups and several delegations had indicated that they did not have sufficient manpower or a sufficient range of languages to participate in those groups. For that reason the Council had decided to have one Working Group with interpretation facilities. The Working Group would meet towards the end of the forthcoming session; the principles set forth in paragraph 7 had been considered by the Bureau in 1982 with a view to improving the Council's working methods and it had been decided to submit them to the organizational session to see whether they were acceptable.

62. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that, in connection with item 6 (g) of the provisional agenda for the thirtieth session, the General Assembly, in resolution 37/244, had decided that there should be a special session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development in March 1983. The Council should wait for the outcome of that meeting so as to ascertain the status of the United Nations Financing System for Science and Technology for Development.

63. Mr. WITTRIN (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Fund for Population Activities) recalled that under resolution 3019 (XXVII), the General Assembly had decided to place UNFPA under the authority of the General Assembly and had decided that the Governing Council of UNDP should be the governing body of UNFPA. In 1979, the General Assembly, in resolution 34/104, had invited the Governing Council to consider devoting a specific period of time during its sessions to adequate and separate consideration of items relating to UNFPA. It could be seen from annex II to document DP/1983/L.3 that matters relating to UNFPA were tentatively scheduled to be introduced on 17 June and considered on 20 and 21 June. UNFPA would submit for consideration a number of reports it submitted on a regular basis as well as documents or reports on particular issues as requested by the Council. In accordance with past practice, some reports would be submitted to the plenary meetings and others to the Budgetary and Finance Committee, tentatively on 15 and 16 June. In the past, UNFPA had organized informal briefings during the initial days of the Council's session and it hoped to follow the same procedure at the forthcoming session.

64. The PRESIDENT said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt the provisional agenda and the tentative schedule of work for the thirtieth session as contained in annexes I and II to document DP/1983/L.3, taking into account all the observations made, and on the understanding that if it completed consideration of an item before an indicated date, the Council would move immediately to the next item on its work schedule.

65. It was so decided.

66. The PRESIDENT said that, with regard to the allocation of items of the provisional agenda of the thirtieth session to the Council's Budgetary and Finance Committee, he would take it that the Council agreed to the other suggestions made in paragraph 5 of document DP/1983/L.3 and allocated items 7 (a)-(g) to the Budgetary and Finance Committee and, in addition, the financial and administrative questions related to items 6 (b), 6 (c) and 6 (i) (i). Moreover, the Budgetary and Finance Committee would, as in past years, review the financial implications of draft decisions before the Council could take action thereon.

67. As to the Working Group of the Council, he took it that the Council wished to confirm the understanding that the Group would elaborate and finalize the draft decisions on all items considered in the plenary meetings with a view to the ultimate adoption of such draft decisions by the Council, except in the case of those agenda items directly allocated for consideration by the Budgetary and Finance Committee and where the Council decided otherwise. All draft decisions formulated by the Working Group having financial implications would have to be referred to the Budgetary and Finance Committee before the Council took action. The Council might also assign to the Working Group other specific tasks as required.

68. Taking into account the experience of the previous year, the Council might also wish to endorse the principles which should guide the deliberations of the Working Group, as set forth in paragraph 7 of document DP/1983/L.3.

69. Mr. LINDORES (Canada) said he had already suggested that it might not be necessary for the Council to decide that all draft decisions should be referred to the Working Group. It might be better to leave that procedure to the discretion of the Bureau, since it would expedite the work of the Working Group if certain routine decisions did not have to pass through it.

70. The PRESIDENT said he had been about to observe that there would be consultations in the Bureau and with delegations on reaching a consensus before matters were finalized. He believed that the Council had decided to take into account all the observations made in connection with paragraphs 6 and 7 of document DP/1983/L.3.

71. If there was no objection he would take it that the Council approved the principles listed in paragraph 7, taking into account the observations made.

72. It was so decided.

73. The PRESIDENT said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to authorize its Bureau, in consultation with the Administrator, to review and, if required, adjust the organizational arrangements for the thirtieth session provisionally agreed to by the Council at its organizational meeting, taking into account any new developments which might have a bearing on the session, in particular the experience gained during the Council's special meeting on country and intercountry programmes.

74. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

75. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that at its thirtieth session, under agenda item 8 (b), the Council would discuss action taken by other organs of the United Nations system in 1982. Three resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at the previous session merited special attention on the part of the Council. They were General Assembly resolution 37/227, on the critical situation of financial resources of the United Nations Development Programme, resolution 37/226, on operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and resolution 37/128, on administrative and budgetary co-ordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which referred to the question of delays in payments of contributions: that matter was also being considered in the Intersessional Committee of the Whole.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.