



**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

REPORT ON THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION

(22-23 August 1976)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS: SIXTY-FIRST SESSION

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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I. ISSUES THAT REQUIRE ACTION BY, OR ARE BROUGHT TO THE
ATTENTION OF, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Draft resolution requiring action by the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Council,

1. Takes note of the report of the Economic Commission for Western Asia on its second special session and of the resolutions and decisions adopted by it at that session;
2. Endorses the Commission's resolution 35 (S-II) contained in chapter III of the report.

II. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION

A. Attendance and organization of work

1. The second special session of the Economic Commission for Western Asia was held at Doha, Qatar, from 22 to 23 August 1976.
2. The opening meeting was presided over by His Excellency Mr. Abdel-rahman Hamad Al-Attiah, head of the delegation of Qatar. He welcomed the participants and drew attention to resolution 22 (III) adopted by the Commission at its third session, held at Doha, from 10 to 15 May 1976, wherein it decided to postpone the final decision on the selection of the site of the permanent headquarters of the Commission to a special session to be held at Doha on 21 August 1976. Following the necessary consultations, it was decided that 22 August should be the date set for the convening of that session.
3. The head of the delegation of Qatar made a statement expressing Qatar's welcome to the participants and its resolve to expend every effort to ensure the success of the session. He stressed his country's desire to avail itself of the services of the Commission and to support the measures taken by it to further the economic and social development of the peoples of the region, who were linked by strong ties and possessed vast human and material resources.
4. The session was attended by representatives of the following member States: Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic attended on the second day. The Palestine Liberation Organization (Permanent Observer to the Commission) did not attend.
5. In accordance with paragraph 4 of the Commission's terms of reference, the following States Members of the United Nations participated in a consultative capacity in the Commission's work: France, Germany (Federal Republic of) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

6. Representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Arab Institute for Economic and Social Planning, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development were also present.

B. Election of officers

7. The Commission unanimously agreed that the officers should be appointed from the same delegations as at the third session, i.e., that the chairmanship of the current session should remain with the delegation of Qatar, that the heads of the delegations of Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic should be Vice-Chairmen and that a member of the delegation of Iraq, Mr. Amer Khayat, should be Rapporteur for the session.

8. In accordance with rule 11 of the provisional rules of procedure, the officers of the Commission examined the credentials of delegations and found them in order.

C. Agenda

9. The Commission approved the addition of a sixth item to the provisional agenda before it, namely, an item entitled "Other business", and adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Consideration of applications of States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in the second special session of the Commission
5. Site of the permanent headquarters of the Economic Commission for Western Asia
6. Other business
7. Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council on its second special session

D. Consideration of applications of States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in the second special session

10. The Commission agreed unanimously to invite the States Members of the United Nations listed in document E/ECWA/39, which were not members of the

Commission, to participate in a consultative capacity in its second special session. Those States were France, Germany (Federal Republic of) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

E. Site of the permanent headquarters of the Commission^{1/}

11. In introducing the item the Executive Secretary made a statement in which he thanked the Amir, the Government and the people of the State of Qatar for so kindly acting as hosts to the second special session of ECWA after having already acted as hosts to the third regular session and provided every facility for its success, thus deserving gratitude and appreciation. He also expressed his deep appreciation and that of the United Nations Secretariat to the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the assistance which it had extended to ECWA by kindly agreeing to receive the Commission's staff temporarily working in Amman, as stated in paragraph 25 below. He explained that the current session was being held in accordance with ECWA resolution 22 (III) of 12 May 1976 specifying, inter alia, that member States which had already submitted offers should be called upon to complete the studies and the detailed information required for consideration during that session. Moreover, the Commission had requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a report on the financial cost to the United Nations of implementing the offers submitted. An endeavour was made to meet the two aforementioned requirements in document E/ECWA/38 which was before the Commission and contained, among other aspects to be taken into account when choosing the headquarters, an amendment to the Syrian offer and a summary of the financial implications to the United Nations with respect to each of the proposals. After the preparation of that document the Executive Secretary had received a detailed offer from Lebanon, which was contained in document E/ECWA/38/Add.1, also before the Commission.

12. He indicated that the question of provision of office space for the Secretariat of the United Nations and its organs in all parts of the world fell within the competence of the Office of General Services in the United Nations Secretariat in New York and that the Commission was chiefly indebted for the report in document E/ECWA/38 to that Office, which had deputed two of its senior officials to assist in providing any clarifications which the Commission might require.

13. He concluded his statement with the following words: "You now have before you the offers submitted by member States wishing to act as host to the Commission's permanent headquarters. I am confident that your meeting at this session will lead to the adoption of the appropriate resolution conducive to furthering the aims of the Commission and achieving the desired objectives for which it was established".

14. The head of the Lebanese delegation made a statement in which he thanked the State of Qatar for acting as host to the Commission for the second time and explained that the Lebanese Government had prepared an integrated project for distribution to delegates. He called on a member of the Lebanese delegation to

^{1/} The Commission agreed to a proposal by the Iraqi delegation that a detailed summary should be made of the proceedings of the meetings relating to this item.

give a technical explanatory account of the project to enable all the delegates to have a clear insight into its main features.

15. A member of the Lebanese delegation gave a detailed account of the project submitted by the Lebanese Government (E/ECWA/38/Add.1) concentrating on the following points:

(a) The design concept of the project with its two wings, the conference centre and the office complex, which was distinctive on the one hand and interrelated on the other so that the project formed an integrated architectural and structural unit in both appearance and function;

(b) The adoption of a suitable module with positive advantages from all the engineering and technical aspects of the project, as well as from the cost standpoint;

(c) Siting, façades and adaptation to the local external environment;

(d) Entrances, stairways, elevators and facility of movement, communications and transport;

(e) Other architectural and functional aspects with regard to elevations, lay-out of the office floors, pillar section, etc. Care was also taken in the design to provide the maximum amount of functional services for the project such as toilet facilities, water, communications, conference halls, security, archives, library, computer and parking lots;

(f) A comparison of the total area of the building, including parking lots, as envisaged in the project, with the area required by the Commission;

(g) Estimated cost: the total cost of the project was estimated at around 27 million dollars.

The Lebanese delegation also exhibited a model of the project during the meeting.

16. A member of the Iraqi delegation made a statement containing certain comments on document E/ECWA/38 in the light of the Commission's resolution 22 (III) of 12 May 1976. His statement contained, inter alia, the following remarks:

(a) The comments of the Iraqi delegation were centred on two main points: first, the findings contained in document E/ECWA/38 concerning the suitability of the sites which it was possible to inspect; and secondly, the financial cost and budgetary implications to the United Nations of accepting any one of the three offers.

(b) With respect to site suitability, he referred to paragraph 11 on pages 5, 9 and 13 of the above-mentioned document and stated the following:

(i) With regard to the Lebanese offer, the size of the site together with the zoning restrictions on the height of buildings in the area would indicate the need to apply a horizontal concept of architectural design to meet the requirements of the construction programme. The size might present some problems if future expansion was required.

(ii) With regard to the Iraqi offer, the nature and size of the site would permit the construction of a permanent headquarters for the Commission and the area of the proposed plot of land would allow for an adequate development on the site of an appropriate building in keeping with the status of the United Nations as a world organization. Additionally, the site would appear to be large enough for future expansion should that requirement arise.

(iii) In the case of the Syrian offer, the size of the site at Al-Mezza would suggest that a vertical architectural design concept would be required for construction purposes and account would have to be taken of existing zoning restrictions limiting the height of buildings to five floors. The size of the site would not permit future expansion of the building complex. However, those problems might be eliminated should member States and the United Nations find it advisable to select the "Dimas" site.

(iv) The Iraqi delegation considered the financial cost to be a fundamental and important point due to its bearing on the expenses to be borne by States Members of the United Nations as a result of any resolution that might be adopted by the Commission or referred to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the subject of the site of the headquarters. He then compared the financial cost implications of the offers submitted to the Commission as shown on pages 16, 17 and 18 of the document under discussion.

(c) He stressed that in the view of the Iraqi delegation at least, in the light of the current difficult conditions in Lebanon, the formal Lebanese offer was the relevant decision in principle taken by the Lebanese Council of Ministers in 1974 to donate a plot of land of 50,000 square metres and extend an interest-free loan of one half of the construction cost of the building, the loan to be repaid in annual instalments. As evidence of the difficult conditions being experienced in Lebanon he mentioned that the United Nations technical team assigned to inspect the proposed sites had been unable to reach the proposed site in Lebanon. Furthermore, ECWA had been obliged to evacuate the secretariat staff from Beirut.

(d) On the other hand, the Iraqi offer contained no financial implications for the United Nations. In the case of the Syrian offer, it was stated in the document under discussion that the financial implications would amount to 31.4 million dollars.

17. The head of the Lebanese delegation stated that there were numerous points which could be raised but he concentrated on what had been mentioned about the lack of security in Lebanon, the inability of the United Nations technical team to make an inspection visit to the site allocated to the permanent headquarters and the data contained in document E/ECWA/38. He emphasized that the distressing circumstances currently prevailing in Lebanon must inevitably soon come to an end and be replaced by normal circumstances and conditions that would restore to Lebanon its security, stability and unity. Other countries in the region had experienced grievous events similar to those now besetting Lebanon and had been able to overcome them. In spite of all the current painful circumstances, Lebanon was manifestly still meeting its financial obligations. As an instance of that he cited the salaries and wages that were, even currently, still being paid to staff

and employees in government service. He pointed out that the Government in Lebanon was still holding meetings in the form of a ministerial council and made it clear that he was fully empowered by the higher official authorities to take any requisite measures to provide all the necessary requirements of land and funds for the establishment of the Commission's permanent headquarters in Lebanon.

18. The head of the Lebanese delegation went on to make the following comments in connexion with document E/ECWA/38:

- (a) Comments in connexion with the site in Lebanon:
 - (i) There was an inconsistency in the text of the document where it stated that the site was generally level and sloped sharply on all sides, seeing that the normal and characteristic slope of the Lebanese coastal regions was in the region of 8 to 10 per cent which was a most appropriate slope for such a project.
 - (ii) The further description "diplomatic and salubrious, in addition to being in the immediate neighbourhood of the Presidential Palace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the projected German University" should be added to the paragraph relating to the site on page 3.
 - (iii) The climatic factors enjoyed by Lebanon were not available in other member States, as could be clearly seen from the document.
 - (iv) With regard to public transport there were also "service" taxi and bus routes operating daily in the area.
 - (v) The official instructions given to the designer of the project submitted by the Lebanese Government specified that, with regard to the elevation of the building, he should regard himself as restricted only by those architectural and functional factors appropriate to the project.
- (b) Comments in connexion with the site in Iraq:
 - (i) In view of the fact that the site was 3 kilometres from the airport, aircraft landing and take-off paths should be investigated from the safety point of view.
 - (ii) There was an inconsistency between the plans, which presupposed a ground slope, and the document which affirmed that the site was level over a distance of several kilometres in all directions.
 - (iii) The wording used in the paragraph on geology gave rise to questions regarding the presence of loose, friable soil on the proposed site. With regard to the Iraqi project the document stated that there was a shortage of available housing and that the existing schools and hotels were inadequate to meet the requirements of the Commission. In the case of the Syrian offer the document reviewed the old site which was cancelled by the latest note submitted by the Syrian Government and there would, therefore, be no point in discussing that subject.

(c) Comments in connexion with the financial implications:

- (i) The document contained certain phrases from which it would appear that advantage had not been taken of the integrated technical file included with the Lebanese offer. As, for example, where it was stated that the offer did not include an architectural plan indicating a development concept or site utilization for the respective projects and that the cost estimate was made as a result of a theoretical development concept of the site.
- (ii) The idea that construction costs were uniform throughout the world, as mentioned in the document, was not necessarily true.
- (iii) The document disregarded removal and operating costs and the various consequent allowances and expenses, while such would not constitute a financial burden on the United Nations in the event of the permanent headquarters being located in Lebanon.
- (iv) The document stated that there was a "typical" cost for the project amounting to 29 million dollars while it estimated the cost of the Iraqi project at 37.5 million dollars and concluded at the same time that there were no financial implications in that offer in spite of the fact that the amount allocated for that purpose was 27 million dollars.

19. He submitted two proposals to the Commission, the first being to hold a closed meeting and the second to suspend the meeting to enable the heads of delegations to hold the necessary consultations on the item. The Commission agreed to the second proposal and it was decided to suspend the meeting.

20. The following draft resolutions on the site of the permanent headquarters were submitted to the Commission:

- (a) Draft resolution submitted by Iraq (E/ECWA/L.41);
- (b) Draft resolution submitted by Lebanon (E/ECWA/L.42); the delegation of Lebanon subsequently withdrew the draft resolution;
- (c) Draft resolution submitted by Lebanon (E/ECWA/L.43) amending the draft resolution submitted by Iraq in document E/ECWA/L.41;
- (d) Draft resolution submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic (E/ECWA/L.44).

21. In accordance with the Commission's provisional rules of procedure the Lebanese draft resolution amending the Iraqi draft resolution was put to the vote. The secretariat explained the procedure relating to voting on draft resolutions, and the Executive Secretary pointed out that there would be financial implications in the event of the adoption of the Lebanese draft resolution. On being put to the vote, the draft resolution was not adopted by the Commission.

22. Voting then took place on the Iraqi draft resolution containing a recommendation by the Commission to the Economic and Social Council that it

accept the offer of the Government of Iraq to establish the Commission's permanent headquarters in Baghdad (E/ECWA/L.41). The Iraqi delegation requested a roll-call vote to which the Commission agreed. The draft resolution was adopted by 7 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions 2/ (see resolution 35 (S-II) below).

23. In the light of the adoption of the above draft resolution, the draft resolution submitted by the Syrian delegation was not put to the vote.

24. The head of the Iraqi delegation made a statement thanking members of delegations for their decision to make Baghdad the permanent headquarters of the Commission and stressing the desire of the Iraqi Government for co-operation with all States members of the Commission and its resolve to exert continued endeavour to make the Commission a model worthy of imitation among international and regional organizations. He also thanked all those working in the secretariat for the efforts they had made.

F. Other business

25. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Western Asia drew attention under the item to the decision of the Commission at its third session concerning the temporary move of the secretariat staff, collectively or individually, from Beirut and authorizing him to take such measures as he deemed appropriate to that end, priority being accorded to the States of the region. He expressed his appreciation for the positive position adopted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which had agreed to act as host to the Commission temporarily. The arrangements for the transfer had been made in stages. The first stage had been completed. The second stage would commence in early September 1976, since the Jordanian Government had provided the necessary offices and other facilities. The secretariat would retain an office in Beirut to conduct the affairs relating to its work there.

III. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION

35 (S-II). Site of the permanent headquarters of the Economic Commission for Western Asia

The Economic Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolution 22 (III),

Having considered the question of the permanent headquarters of the Commission,

Taking note of documents E/ECWA/L.24, E/ECWA/L.24/Add.1, E/ECWA/L.25, E/ECWA/33, E/ECWA/38 and E/ECWA/38/Add.1,

2/ The member States voted in the following manner: Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia voted in favour of the draft resolution; Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic voted against it; and Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen abstained from voting.

Having heard the statements made on the subject during the third session and the second special session,

Decides to recommend to the Economic and Social Council to accept the offer of the Government of Iraq to establish the permanent headquarters of the Commission at Baghdad.

3rd meeting
23 August 1976

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

26. At its 4th meeting held on 23 August 1976, the Commission considered the draft report on its second special session to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council and adopted the report as amended during the discussion.

Annex

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT
ITS SECOND SPECIAL SESSION

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>
E/ECWA/36 and Rev.1	Provisional agenda
E/ECWA/36/Rev.2	Agenda
E/ECWA/37	Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council on its third session
E/ECWA/38 and Add.1	Report on the site of the permanent headquarters of the Economic Commission for Western Asia
E/ECWA/39	Invitations to States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in the second special session of the Commission
E/ECWA/L.41 to L.45	Draft resolutions
E/ECWA/L.46	Draft report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council
E/ECWA/INF.12 and Rev.1	Notes for the information of participants
E/ECWA/INF.13	Provisional list of participants
E/ECWA/INF.13/Rev.1	List of participants
