



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Seventh session
19 - 24 April 1980
Baghdad, Iraq

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Note of the Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary received the following statement from the head of the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

" Sir:

"I request that you kindly circulate the attached statement as one of the documents of the seventh session of the Economic Commission for Western Asia and that you take appropriate action on it.

"Accept, Sir, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Mohamed Said Lutfi
Head of Delegation,
Arab Republic of Egypt "

Statement of the delegation of the
Arab Republic of Egypt

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman:

"Allow me to begin this statement by congratulating you on your election as chairman of the seventh session of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, after your having led us through the meetings of the Commission's sixth session. Your re-election as chairman is an expression of the appreciation of the member States of the Commission for you personally and for the role of Iraq in the Commission's various activities, which I hope will prosper on the occasion of the transfer of the headquarters of the Commission to your beautiful capital, Baghdad.

"Allow me, Mr. Chairman, also to congratulate my colleagues, the heads of the delegations of Jordan, the Yemen Arab Republic, and Lebanon on their election as officers of the session. The Egyptian delegation records its deep appreciation to the people, and Government of Iraq and to their leader and President for acting as hosts to the present Commission session and for generous hospitality accorded to the delegations, which is worthy of brethren welcoming their brothers from a country which is as their own. We rejoice at the comprehensive resurgence and the foundations of progress and prosperity that Iraq is establishing. This is a source of pride for us and we congratulate you on it.

"Mr. Chairman:

"Egypt had the honour of becoming a member of the Economic Commission of Western Asia in 1977 through the support of the member States and on the basis of a decision taken by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In the final analysis, the membership of Egypt was based on objective principles - geographic, historic and economic. The insistence of Egypt on joining the Commission was prompted first and foremost, by the realization that it shared intrinsically in the future of the Arab World, regardless of whether its countries were located in Asia or Africa. This intrinsic relationship constantly prompts Egypt to seek to interact on a give-and-take basis, with the peoples of the Arab homeland, and to participate

in its cultural resurgence and economic prosperity. We are all undoubtedly aware of the fact that the Arab nature of Egypt is a genuine feature inherent to its character and this cannot be erased by resolutions or affected by invective. This is an approach from which Egypt remains aloof and to which it does not respond. It only notes that the time will inevitably come when it is the turn of those who at present consent to listen to others being reviled to be reviled themselves, because they have accepted invective as a style and approach to be employed in civilized dialogue within the United Nations system.

"The insistence of Egypt on the affirmation of its membership in the Economic Commission for Western Asia and on the exercise of the prerogatives of membership emanates from the realization of its people, government and leader that its Arabism is an issue evolving from history, destiny and identity, and not an issue dependent on decisions, slogans or exercises in one - upmanship.

"Mr. Chairman

"Let us not waste our time in exercises that are of no value to our work and only bring division and bitterness to our peoples. The serious duties which are the responsibility of this esteemed Commission are worthy of every effort being devoted to their performance. We are certain that our brethren here are worthy of the confidence placed in them by the peoples of the Arab homeland, a confidence which must prompt them to concentrate their activities on those things which are beneficial in terms of achievement and development.

"The Egyptian delegation affirms that Egypt adheres tenaciously to its membership in the Commission and will exert every effort to exercise its prerogatives of membership. This position is based on the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and on our conviction that the Government of Iraq will respect its commitments under the agreement concluded between Iraq and the United Nations on the relocation of the headquarters of the

Economic Commission for Western Asia in Baghdad. Consequently, the Egyptian delegation has decided to address the following protest to the Chairman of the current session and to the Executive Secretary, with the request that the text of this protest be included among the documents of the present session of the Commission and distributed to all the members.

"The Chairman of the Commission

The Executive Secretary
Economic Commission for Western Asia

"The delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the seventh session of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, being held in Baghdad from 19 to 24 April 1980, objects to the recommendation that a reservation be adopted on decision 49/1979 of the Economic and Social Council, for the following reasons:

"1. Such a reservation represents an infraction of the terms of reference of the Commission and conflicts with its specialized economic nature, inasmuch as it constitutes an interference in the political affairs of a member State. It also poses a threat to the importance of the Commission's activities and to its technical character.

"2. The membership of Egypt in the Commission is final and well-established, and is derived from geographical, historical, economic and cultural objective criteria. These criteria have not changed. Moreover, Egypt has not violated any of the commitments or principles pertaining to membership in the Commission.

"3. It is totally illogical that the efforts of Egypt to achieve peace should be used as a pretext for such a reservation, especially at a time when these efforts have led to the restoration of Sinai - which falls within the geographical scope of the Commission - to Egyptian sovereignty.

"4. The Egyptian delegation warns that such an approach, and the setting of such a precedent, could be used against those very member States of the Commission which are at present attempting to obstruct the exercise of the prerogatives of membership by Egypt. The injection of political issues is a two-edged sword that in no way serves the interests of the Commission.

"The Egyptian delegation requests that the text of this protest be included as an official document of the current session and that it be circulated to all members. It also requests that the Secretary-General of the United Nations be notified of this protest and that we be duly notified that this action has been taken."