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Fifth Session

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## RELATIONS WITH "SECTIONAL" NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

At its fourth session the Executive Board decided to postpone further consideration of relations with "sectional" non-governmental organizations until its fifth regular session "because of the necessity for further study of the relations between international "sectional" organizations and the specialized agencies in the various fields, and because of the need for further experience".<sup>1</sup>

The Director-General communicated with the United Nations and specialized agencies enquiring what type of relations, if any, they had established with international "sectional" non-governmental organizations and of their experience. The following pages give relevant excerpts from the replies received.

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<sup>1</sup> Off. Rec. World Hlth Org., 22, 7

United Nations

....."As to your question about the admittance into official relations with the United Nations of "international sectional organizations", consultative status has been granted to various international organizations in accordance to the provisions of Economic and Social Council Resolution 3(II) of June 21, 1946. Under this resolution also, the Economic and Social Council established a standing committee on arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations, which reviews applications for consultative status submitted by non-governmental organizations, or makes recommendations to the Council. The full text of this resolution can be found on Page 360 of official records of the Second Session of the Council.

As regards differentiation between categories of organizations, see particularly Part IV of the arrangement. As you will see from the list of organizations in consultative status contained in Chapter VI of the Annual Report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly (A/922), a number of "sectional" organizations have been given status. See also Part III, paragraph 5, of the arrangement; in pursuance of this paragraph, the Council has, on a number of occasions, not granted applications for consultative status on the ground that the activities of the organization in question wholly or mainly duplicate those of the specialized agencies". (2 December 1949)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

"There are nine non-governmental organizations associated with FAO in categories 1 and 2. I am enclosing a copy of the draft resolution<sup>1</sup> which will be considered by the forthcoming session of the Conference of FAO on a revision of the category system of relationships with non-governmental organizations as now in force.

None of the non-governmental organizations at present associated with FAO may be described as "sectional". You will also note from the attached draft resolution that the whole problem of relationships with non-governmental organizations is about to be considered by the annual conference". (6 October 1949)

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<sup>1</sup> Annex

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

....."I beg to inform you that The Bank has not entered into any agreements with any international organization, whether regional or otherwise, and therefore has no experience in that field". (18 October 1949)

International Labour Office

... "I am instructed by the Director-General to acknowledge your letter (reference 400-1-8) of 29 September 1949, in which you ask for information concerning the types of relations which the International Labour Organization has established with international non-governmental organizations, and to forward you in reply copies in English and French of a statement describing the constitutional provisions and the policies, procedures and arrangements which apply in the matter, and giving information as to the international non-governmental organizations already granted formal consultative status by the International Labour Organization.

"As you will already be aware, the question of relationships with international non-governmental organizations has not arisen to the same extent in the case of the International Labour Organization as in the case of the United Nations and the other specialized agencies, owing to the fact that the original Constitution of the Organization, in laying down what is known as its tripartite structure, made provision for full participation in the meetings of the Organization by representatives of management and labour as well as by representatives of Governments.

"The present tendency of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office in regard to the establishment of formal consultative relationships with international non-governmental organizations is to limit the granting of formal consultative status to those international non-governmental organizations with an important interest in a wide range of ILO activities; at the same time, the Office maintains the closest informal relationships with all international non-governmental organizations who are concerned with the work of the ILO, including those who are concerned only with particular aspects of the work of the Organization.

"If, as appeared to be the case from WHO Executive Board discussions at which a representative of the International Labour Organization was present, the term "sectional" is used to describe international non-governmental organizations in which members of a particular religious

faith, for example, are grouped for some external purpose, such experience of relations with these organizations as the International Labour Organization may have had would not appear to afford a basis of policy differing in any respect from the policy described in the preceding paragraph". (5 November 1949)

#### International Monetary Fund

"Our only contact with non-governmental organizations is in matters of public information, unless one is to consider our relationships with the central banks in our member governments as such. In general it has not been the experience of the Fund that its problems can easily be approached on a regional or sectional basis". (5 October 1949)

#### International Civil Aviation Organization

"The term "sectional" has not been used in our relations with international organizations and I assume that it refers to a geographic section or region.

"Our relations with non-governmental organizations in general are based upon a decision taken by our First Assembly (Resolution A1-11), a copy of which is attached, and these have been limited mainly to participation in each other's meetings where matters of mutual interest arise. I attach a list of the organizations which this agency has "recognized" in this limited sense. Our experience has thus far been very satisfactory, and much profit has been derived from the participation of representatives of these organizations in our work.

"With regard to regional non-governmental organizations, we have so far had relations with the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History which is, I believe, at least a quasi governmental organization and therefore does not come within your definition. We have also communicated with the International Union of Railways, which is an organization of railroad administrations in Europe, but practically nothing has developed so far from this contact. On one occasion a non-governmental organization - the Airline Dispatchers Association - was not granted recognition because it did not meet the specifications for recognition laid down by our Assembly; in particular it was felt by our Council that this Association was not sufficiently international in character". (6 October 1949)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

... "I am enclosing herewith a copy of the list of international non-governmental organizations which have been so far approved by Unesco for consultative arrangements. You will note that out of a hundred international bodies included on this list, sixteen organizations (marked with pencil) may be termed as "sectional", their membership being limited confessionally. Since the field of Unesco covers education and culture, this Organization does not hesitate to associate with such bodies its work, provided that they have aims and purposes in conformity with the Constitution of Unesco and that they otherwise fulfil the criteria laid down in the Directives (document XR/NGO/1 revised, enclosed).

... "Working relationships with these organizations have proved quite satisfactory during the past two years. Nine of the organizations are active members of a consultative Committee concerned with matters of educational reconstruction (TICER). By inviting representatives of these sectional organizations to advisory meetings dealing with such questions as youth activities or women's access to education, Unesco believes it can obtain a more comprehensive picture of the problems involved than would be the case if such organizations were excluded.

"Further, Unesco appreciates the support and publicity which it has received from such "sectional" bodies in their publications and otherwise. For this purpose, Unesco maintains informal relations with many other "sectional" organizations which are not eligible for consultative arrangements. However, no formal agreements have been so far concluded with "sectional" bodies, nor has any contract been concluded with them". (9 November 1949)

International Telecommunications Union

(Extracts from the exposé made by the ITU representative at the Conference of International Consultative Organizations held in Geneva, 28-29 April, 1949, under the auspices of the Interim Committee of Consultative Non-governmental Organizations)

(Translation)

"We may now approach the question of the relations between ITU and non-governmental organizations, but only in so far, however, as we can identify the concept of 'non-governmental organizations' with that of 'international organization' in the sense of ITU.

Relations between ITU and Non-governmental Organizations

"First of all, it is important to stress that ITU makes no distinction between inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. This attitude is explained no doubt, by the fact that only arbitrary definitions, which are subject to criticism, can be assigned to these two types of organization, and that, above all, ITU is less concerned with the character or legal nature of the organizations than with knowing if they are interested or not in telecommunication.

"It is for this reason that the following provisions are to be found in article 27 of the International Telecommunication Convention, Atlantic City, 1947, under the heading 'Relations with International Organizations':

'In furtherance of complete international co-ordination on matters affecting telecommunication, the Union will co-operate with international organizations having related interests and activities'.

"Apart from the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, we can cite thirty-four international organizations with which ITU co-operates, which we believe can be classed as non-governmental organizations: (.....)

"Of course, the list is not of a limiting nature, and in practice, any non-governmental organization concerned with telecommunication (and in this connexion, I would refer to the definition which is advisable to give for the word 'telecommunication') may collaborate with ITU.

Practical Conditions Governing Co-operation between ITU and Non-Governmental Organizations

"Observers attached to non-governmental organizations are not admitted to the plenipotentiary conference. Non-governmental organizations which wish to take part in an Administrative Conference or in a Meeting of the International Consultative Committee must apply to the government of the country where the conference or meeting is to be held. These organizations are allowed to take part in the proceedings on an advisory basis if their request is approved by the majority of the Members of the Union before the opening of the Conference, or failing this, if the Conference itself decides to admit them during its first plenary meeting.

"It should be noted that this admission procedure must be repeated for each Administrative Conference or Meeting of the International Consultative Committee.

"However, the Conferences and Meetings involve considerable expenditure and in article 14, the Telecommunication Convention it is provided that international organizations, in particular, shall contribute towards the extraordinary expenses of Administrative Conferences and Meetings of the international consultative committees in which they take part. Nevertheless, ITU is very liberal in this point also; the international organizations are given the opportunity of choosing in what proportion they wish to participate in the expenses. Moreover, according to the same article 14 of the Telecommunications Convention the ITU Administrative Council may exempt certain international organizations from all contribution towards the expenses of the Conferences or Meetings. In point of fact, ITU is willing to grant this exemption, subject to reciprocity of course, to organizations which make a useful contribution to its activities.

"The new system only came into force on 1 January, 1949, but already ten non-governmental organizations have been exempted from all participation in the expenses occasioned by the meetings of the International Telephone Consultative Committee (C.C.I.F.) .....

"It should be clearly understood therefore, that the principle of participation of non-governmental organizations in the costs of the Conferences and Meetings has absolutely no restricting effect on the co-operation of the said organizations in the activities of ITU, indeed the contrary is true.

"We would add that every non-governmental organization, whether allowed to participate in a Conference or Meeting or not, has a right to submit proposals in connexion with questions on the agenda.

#### Conclusions

"The present relations between ITU and non-governmental organizations are the result of long experience. They are based, not on political or legal considerations, but essentially on the desire to bring about the development and advance of international telecommunication in the interest of all groups and individuals.

"At all events, ITU considers that the present regulations governing the consultation of non-governmental organizations are completely satisfactory, in view of their simplicity and liberalism. For a long time ITU has recognized that consultative collaboration on the international level - even between governments - is extremely effective and that it should proceed collaboration on a contractual basis, often by many years, in dealing with any given problem. This

view has been completely justified by the success of the ITU international consultative committees, in whose work the non-governmental organizations actively participate".

Universal Postal Union

(Translation)

"The Universal Postal Union has entered into relations with only one non-governmental organization, the International Air Transport Association, to consider questions relating to the transport of mail by air". (13 October 1949)

Accordingly, owing to the recognized importance of the work done by "sectional" non-governmental organizations, as defined, in the field of health, and in view of the request of the World Federation of United Nations Associations,<sup>1</sup> it is suggested that the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following resolution:

The Executive Board

NOTES the report of the Director-General and the request of the World Federation of United Nations Associations with regard to relations with international "sectional" non-governmental organizations, and

RESOLVES that international non-governmental organizations, including "sectional" non-governmental organizations, not granted official relations with the World Health Organization pursuant to the criteria laid down by the First World Health Assembly<sup>2</sup> but having certain interests in common with the World Health Organization, shall be dealt with by the Director-General on an ad hoc basis, according to the merits of each case. The Director-General may consult with the Executive Board's Standing Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations with respect to such ad hoc relationships.

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<sup>1</sup> Document EB5/8

<sup>2</sup> Off. Rec. World Hlth Org. 13, 326

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

"RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Note by the Director-General<sup>1</sup>

1. The Second Session of the FAO Conference recognized that FAO depends to an important extent for its successful operation upon the co-operation of scientific, technical, trade and civic organizations, whose membership in all countries totals many millions of people. In order to establish appropriate channels for consultation with them, the Conference then set up three categories of organizations with which FAO might expect to consult, with accompanying procedures and privileges for each. This system was in close conformity with the pattern set up by the Economic and Social Council, since no other precedent existed. (Report of Second Session pp 7-8).

"The Council has found that this system is not suited to the purposes of FAO because (a) it is too rigid; (b) it sets up distinctions between organizations which may be suitable for the purposes of an agency of very broad interests such as the Economic and Social Council, but are not applicable for FAO, which has more specific interests; and (c) it bears little relevancy to the types of co-operation which in practice have proved most useful to FAO. The Council therefore proposes the adoption of a somewhat simpler mechanism for providing channels of consultation with non-governmental organizations with interests similar to those of FAO, the details of which are presented in a draft resolution below. In making this proposal, the Council notes that of all the specialized agencies, only FAO at present follows the category system of the Economic and Social Council; other specialized agencies, such as WHO and UNESCO, have established procedures for association with non-governmental organizations more nearly resembling the proposal outlined below".

(The following extract from the draft resolution is in the form in which it was subsequently adopted by the FAO conference, 5th Session)

"RESOLUTION TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE  
COUNCIL REGARDING THE REVISION OF THE CATEGORY SYSTEM

'A. Important international non-governmental organizations, institutions

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<sup>1</sup> FAO document C49/20

or federations of recognized standing, and with interests covering a substantial portion of FAO's field of activity, (including all organizations heretofore placed in Category I or Category 2 pursuant to the procedures established by the Conference at its Second Session), shall, upon recommendation of the Committee of the Council on Relations with International Organizations, and with the approval of the Council and of the Conference, be accorded consultative status, which shall entitle them to the right of representation at the Conference by an observer, who may be accompanied by advisers, without the right to vote; the provision by the Director-General to the organization, in advance of the session, of all documents bearing on policy or technical questions; provision for circulation to the Conference of the organization's views in writing without abridgement; the right to speak before the Committee on Relations with International Organizations; the right to speak before technical committees of the Conference but not to participate in discussions unless requested by the Chairman; and upon request addressed to the Director-General and with the consent of the General Committee of the Conference, the right to speak before the Conference itself.

B. The Committee on Relations with International Organizations, shall meet periodically, at times to be announced by the Committee, with representatives of international non-governmental organizations accorded consultative status pursuant to paragraph A above, and to exchange views with non-governmental organizations on subjects in which the organizations have a particular competence.

C. International non-governmental organizations not accorded consultative status pursuant to paragraph A, but having certain interests in common with FAO, shall be dealt with by the Director-General on an ad hoc basis according to the merits of each case; and the Director-General may consult with the Committee on Relations with International Organizations with respect to such ad hoc relationships', and recommends that those organizations now having Category 1 or 2 status be accorded the new 'Consultative status'".