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Eighth session  
Cartagena de Indias, Colombia  
8 February 1992

PRE-CONFERENCE MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

Held at the Convention Centre, Cartagena de Indias,  
on 6 and 7 February 1992

Report by the Chairman of the Meeting

1. The Pre-Conference Meeting of Senior Officials was opened on Thursday, 6 February 1992, by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.
  
2. At its 1st meeting, the Pre-Conference Meeting adopted the agenda circulated in TD/PCM/1.

1. Election of the Chairman of the Pre-Conference  
Meeting of Senior Officials

3. The Meeting unanimously elected as its Chairman  
H.E. Mr. Thomas Ogada (Kenya), President of the Trade and Development  
Board.

2. Procedural and organizational arrangements  
for the Conference

(a) Inaugural Ceremony

4. The Meeting was informed that an Inaugural Ceremony, to be arranged by the host country authorities, would be held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, 8 February. The Ceremony would be addressed by H.E. Dr. Cesar Gaviria, President of the Republic of Colombia, and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Butros Butros Ghali.

(b) Opening plenary meeting

5. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with rule 16 of the rules of procedure, the 221st (opening) plenary meeting would be opened on Saturday, 8 February, by the head of the delegation (Zimbabwe) from which the President of the previous session had been elected. Accordingly, the meeting would be opened by the Honourable B.T.G. Chidzero, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development of Zimbabwe.

(c) Election of the President (Item 2 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

6. The Meeting recommended to the Conference that H.E. Mr. Juan Manuel Santos, Minister for Foreign Trade of Colombia, be elected President of the eighth session of the Conference by acclamation.

(d) Election of Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur (Item 4 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

7. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure, the Bureau of the Conference would consist of 35 members, comprising the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference, the Chairman of the Main Committee and the Rapporteur of the Conference. The Conference would need, therefore, to elect 32 Vice-Presidents.

8. The Meeting recommended to the Conference that the composition of its Bureau should be based on the same geographical distribution as that of the Bureau at its seventh session, i.e. seven members from Africa, seven from Asia, seven from Latin America, nine from List B, four from List D and China.

9. The Meeting also recommended that H.E. Mr. W. Reichenbaum (Germany) be elected as Chairman of the Main Committee.

10. Accordingly, the Meeting recommended that the distribution of the posts of Vice-Presidents of the Conference should be as follows:

Group of 77

African Group:

Egypt  
Ethiopia  
Morocco  
Namibia  
Nigeria  
Uganda  
Zambia

Asian Group:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea  
Indonesia  
Islamic Republic of Iran  
Jordan  
Oman  
Pakistan

Latin American Group:

Brazil  
Chile  
Cuba  
Jamaica  
Peru  
Venezuela

Group B:

Italy  
Japan  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Portugal  
Spain  
Switzerland  
United States of America

Group D:

Bulgaria  
Poland  
Russian Federation  
A fourth Vice-President to be announced

China

11. With regard to the procedure for the election of the 32 Vice-Presidents and in order to expedite the work of the Conference, the Meeting recommended that the nominations made to these posts be communicated directly by the President to the Conference for their election, thus waiving rule 58 of the rules of procedure.

12. The Meeting noted that, pursuant to rule 22 of the rules of procedure, the President of the Conference, or in his absence a Vice-President designated by him, shall serve as Chairman of the Bureau of the Conference.

13. The Meeting also noted that, in accordance with the rotation of officers of the Conference, the Rapporteur of the Conference would be a representative of one of the States in List A.

14. Accordingly, the Meeting recommended that H.E. Mr. H. Villaroel (Philippines) be elected as Rapporteur of the Conference.

15. In accordance with past practice, the Meeting recommended that the Chairmen of other sessional bodies, together with the co-ordinators of regional groups, be fully associated with the work of the Bureau of the Conference.

(e) Credentials of representatives of the Conference

(Item 5 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

16. In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure and in keeping with past practice, the Pre-Conference Meeting recommended that the Credentials Committee be composed of the same nine States as were

appointed by the General Assembly to serve on the Credentials Committee at its forty-sixth session, i.e. Belgium (Chairman); Belize; Chile; China; Lesotho; Russian Federation; Singapore; Togo; and United States of America.

17. Also in accordance with past practice, the Meeting recommended that, should any of the above States not be represented at the Conference, the regional group concerned be requested to nominate a replacement.

(f) Schedule of participation of persons of Ministerial or equivalent rank

18. The Meeting was informed that a conference room paper was being issued (TD(VIII)/CRP.1) providing the information received so far on the schedule of participation of Ministers. The Chairman stated that the secretariat would be grateful to receive, as soon as possible, information on the duration of stay of other Ministers in Cartagena so that their presence could be used to the best advantage of the Conference.

(g) General debate (Item 7 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

19. The Meeting noted that the general debate would be opened on Monday, 10 February 1992, and would continue until the list of speakers was exhausted, possibly until Friday, 21 February.

20. The Meeting recommended that every effort be made at the Conference to observe a time-limit of 15 minutes for statements by representatives of States and 10 minutes for other participants.

21. The Meeting also agreed to the proposal that a special meeting during the Conference, to be held at 4 p.m. on 11 February 1992, be devoted to the consideration of LDC issues, including (i) Review of progress in implementation of the Programme (Trade and Development Board resolution 390 (XXXVII) of March 1991) and (ii) Implications for the Programme of additions to the list of LDCs (General Assembly resolution 46/206).

22. In this connection, the Chairman stated that it was his intention to propose to the President of the Conference that he request the head of the delegation of France - the country which had hosted the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries - the Honourable Minister Alain Vivien to chair this special meeting.

(h) Establishment of sessional bodies (Item 3 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

23. In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure and with the proposals put forward at the first part of the seventeenth special session of the Trade and Development Board, the Pre-Conference Meeting recommended to the Conference that it establish a Main Committee, open to the participation of all members of the Conference, to consider and report on the matters referred to it by the plenary.



24. Under rule 63, the Main Committee could set up such sub-groups as might be required, to consider and report to it on issues referred to them. The Meeting accordingly recommended that the Main Committee establish two subsidiary Working Groups.

25. In response to a proposal by the representative of Colombia, the Meeting recommended that the Main Committee should be asked to consider setting a deadline for the completion of the work of the two Working Groups, with a view to facilitating a successful outcome of the negotiations.

(i) Allocation of items

26. The Meeting recommended that the general debate and all procedural and related matters be taken up in plenary, and that the substantive issues be allocated to the Main Committee and its Working Groups.

27. The Meeting also recommended that the sessional bodies of the Conference should follow the same broad division of labour as had been adopted by the Board at the second part of its seventeenth special session. Taking as a basis the negotiating text in document TD/L.320 and Add.1-5, Working Group I could pursue the work initiated by the Board in relation to Part I: Challenges and potentials for international trade and development in the 1990s (TD/L.320/Add.1); Part II: Broad policy orientations (TD/L.320/Add.2); and Part III: UNCTAD in a changing

political and economic environment: institutional matters

(TD/L.320/Add.3); while Working Group II could take up Part IV:

Policies and measures (TD/L.320/Add.4) and Part V: Economic co-operation among developing countries (TD/L.320/Add.5).

28. The Meeting further recommended that the Main Committee would oversee the work of the two Working Groups and ensure the necessary coordination in relation to deliberations and conclusions reached in one working group which might have an impact on the work of the other. In addition, it could be entrusted with the consideration of specific issues allocated to it, as required.

29. In response to a question raised by the representative of Brazil, the Chairman indicated that the above arrangements, as well as consultations as appropriate between the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, would serve to ensure the necessary coordination in respect of questions dealt with by the two Working Groups affecting institutional issues.

30. The Meeting noted that, in the context of the preparatory process in the Trade and Development Board, views had been expressed on the desirability of elaborating a Political Declaration for adoption by the Conference. It was understood that the President of the Conference would be making arrangements for consultations on the elaboration of such a Declaration.

31. In view of the fact that statements for the record were to be made in the plenary, the Meeting proposed that the report of the Main Committee should be a brief communique-type report which transmitted to the plenary the action recommended by the Committee and its sub-groups as a result of their deliberations.

(j) Officers of sessional bodies

32. The Meeting noted that, under rule 65 of the rules of procedure, the Main Committee was to elect its own Chairman who, under rule 22, would be a member of the Bureau. Having already acted on the nomination for the post of Chairman of the Main Committee when it adopted the composition of the Bureau of the Conference, the Meeting recommended that the same procedure be followed by the Conference, which would proceed with the simultaneous election of all members of the Bureau, thus waiving rule 65.

33. The Meeting also recommended that the election of the Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Main Committee would be conducted by the Main Committee, in accordance with rule 65. Under the same rule, any sessional bodies set up by the Main Committee would elect their own officers, as required. In accordance with past practice, the Chairmen of any such bodies would be associated in the work of the Bureau.

(k) Meetings facilities

34. The Meeting agreed that the total meetings facilities would be distributed, as required, among the plenary, the Main Committee and other sessional bodies, it being understood that a maximum of three official meetings with full interpretation would be held simultaneously. Limited facilities would also be available for group meetings.

(l) Timetable of proceedings

35. The Meeting noted that, for the purpose of facilitating the work of the Conference, a tentative schedule of meetings for the first week had been circulated in TD(VIII)/Misc.2.

36. After an exchange of views in which several delegations emphasized the need to begin all meetings strictly on time in order to make efficient use of the time available, the Chairman stated that he would convey to the Conference the view of the Meeting that it was imperative for meetings to begin at the appointed time. He would recommend that the plenary and the working groups begin promptly at 10 a.m.

(m) Report of the Trade and Development Board to the Conference

37. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with section II, paragraph 2, of General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX), the reports of the Board to the General Assembly on the first and second parts of its thirty-fourth, thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh regular sessions and the first part of its thirty-eighth regular session, as well as on its sixteenth and the first and second parts of its seventeenth special session, would be deemed to constitute the report of the Board to the Conference at its eighth session.

(n) Friends of the Rapporteur

38. The Meeting recommended that, in the preparation of the draft report, the Rapporteur of the Conference would be assisted by a group of "Friends of the Rapporteur", the composition of which would follow the same geographical distribution as that of the similar group at previous sessions of the Conference (two members from Africa, two from Asia, two from Latin America, two from List B, two from List D and one from China).

(o) Format of the report of the Conference

39. The Pre-Conference Meeting recommended that the format of the report of the Conference on its eighth session would follow that of the reports on its earlier sessions, and would thus consist of three parts: part one would relate to the action taken by the Conference;

part two would contain an account of the proceedings of the Conference, including summaries of statements made in the general debate; and part three would contain a succinct account of organizational and procedural matters. The final report would also include the customary annexes.

3. Report of the Pre-Conference Meeting of  
Senior Officials to the Conference

40. At its 3rd (closing) meeting, on 7 February 1992, the Meeting of Senior Officials authorized the Chairman of the Meeting to prepare a brief report on the recommendations agreed upon by the Meeting of Senior Officials. The Chairman was invited to present his report to the Conference for consideration at its opening plenary meeting.

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