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SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

Chairman's Committee

(Heads of Delegations)

Summary Record of the Sixth Meeting held on Friday,
13 June 1947 at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. Suetens (Belgium)

Agenda Item 1: Review of the work of the Second Session with
a view to establishing a target date for its termination

1. Mr. WYNDHAM WHITE (Executive Secretary) believed that the programme for Charter discussions drawn up by the Charter Steering Committee could be adhered to in view of the progress to date. On the basis of this schedule, the Charter discussions could be finished by the end of July or the first week in August. Allowing for a "tidying up" period, he suggested that 15 August be established as the definitive date for the termination of this Session, so far as Charter discussions were concerned. As to the date on which tariff negotiations might be concluded, Mr. Wyndham White suggested that the Committee seek the advice of Mr. Wilgress, Chairman of the Tarriff Negotiations Working Party, but urged that 15 August should be adopted as the final date for the Charter work regardless of the status of tariff negotiations on that date. The Acting Secretary-General had just advised him that the technical services being provided by the United Nations Secretariat would have to be withdrawn by 15 August at the latest in view of the requirements of other United Nations conferences.

2. Mr. WILGRESS (Canada) agreed that the work on the Charter, including the text of the General Agreement on tariffs and trade, could be completed by 15 August, but regarded the situation with respect to tariff negotiations as more difficult to appraise. The information elicited beginning next week as a result of the new machinery being set up to ascertain the progress of tariff negotiations would be helpful. However, on the basis of the information now available to the Working Party, he felt sure that tariff negotiations could not be completed by 15 August, and suggested that 15 September be established as a target date for the completion of negotiations and the tariff schedules to be annexed to the General Agreement. Mr. Wilgress enquired whether the Acting-Secretary General's advice implied that the limited though essential services provided by the United Nations Secretariat for tariff negotiations would not be available after 15 August.

3. Mr. WYNDHAM WHITE (Executive Secretary) stated that the Secretariat could provide the limited facilities required for tariff negotiations until 15 September.

4. Mr. WILCOX (United States) suggested that 1 August be established as a target date for completion of the Committee's work on the Charter, allowing two additional weeks for a "tidying up" period during which the work of the Legal Drafting Committee should be completed. He believed that the Conference should continue until all its work was finished since it was important that both the Charter discussions and tariff negotiations be completed before the World Conference. He would be willing to accept 15 September as the target date for the completion of tariff negotiations, subject to reconsideration on the approach of that date.

5. Mr. HELMORE (United Kingdom) agreed that the work on the Charter could be finished by 15 August, with 1 August as the target date for the completion of the work in Committee and 15 August as the final date for completion of the Draft Charter. Moreover, in view of the interrelation between the Charter discussions and the tariff negotiations, Mr. Helmore believed that there should be some reasonable similarity between the dates established for their termination. He suggested that if a satisfactory tariff agreement, if not as far-reaching as contemplated originally, could be completed by 15 August, the Conference would be subject to less criticism than if negotiations were extended for a longer period. Mr. Helmore proposed that 15 August be established as the target date for the completion of tariff negotiations as well as of Charter discussions.

6. Dr. SPEEKENBRINK (Netherlands) suggested that if it were necessary to extend the Conference in order to achieve better results, it would be desirable to do so. By 15 August, the Committee might be able to judge the status of tariff negotiations and to know where they stood. There would still remain, however, the important work of formulating the multi-lateral agreement. This might be done by 15 September.

7. Dr. COOMBS (Australia) regarded it as difficult to disassociate the subject under discussion from the second Agenda item, i.e. date and place of World Conference. The Australian Government intended, at the end of this Session, to present to Parliament the Tariff Agreement, the Reports of the First and Second Sessions and the Draft Charter. Although the Draft Charter could not be presented

for final acceptance, this procedure would enable the Australian Delegation to go to the World Conference with a clear understanding of what its Parliament was prepared to accept. He therefore regarded it as essential that there should be an interval for the examination of these documents between the end of this Session and the beginning of the World Conference. He agreed with Mr. Helmore as to the close interrelation between the Charter and the Tariff Agreement, although not necessarily with the former's conclusion. It would be necessary for tariff negotiations to be completed before his Government at least could pass judgment on the Draft Charter. He believed it was fundamental, therefore, that the Committee be prepared to carry on until they had concluded a sufficiently satisfactory agreement on tariffs and trade as to render the Charter an unacceptable document. For these reasons he wished to suggest that an early date be set for the termination of both the Charter and tariff discussions, but that whatever date was set should be subject to review. He proposed that 1 September be established as a target date for the completion both of the Charter discussions and the tariff negotiations, on the understanding that if at that date it looked possible to reach an even more satisfactory Tariff Agreement, the time should be extended.

8. M.. COLBAN (Norway) proposed that 15 August be fixed as the target date for the termination both of the Charter discussions and the Tariff negotiations, having in mind the importance of a reasonable interval between the end of this Session and the World Conference.

9. Mr. HELMORE (United Kingdom) suggested that the work of the Conference could be expedited by (a) commencing now the work of the Legal Drafting Committee, (b) speeding up tariff negotiations, and (c) commencing now in so far as feasible the work of embodying the results of the tariff negotiations in tariff schedules to be annexed to the General Agreement.

10. Dr. COOMBS (Australia) pointed out, and Mr. Baraduc (France) agreed, that the text of the General Agreement, apart from the tariff schedules attached thereto, should be regarded as a part of the Charter discussions.

11. After some further discussion, the Committee accepted the Chairman's proposal to establish the following target dates:

1 August - Completion of Charter discussions in Committee;
15 August - Completion of "tidying up" work on Charter;
15 August - Completion of tariff negotiations;
1 September - Completion of "tidying up" work on tariff agreement all these dates to be subject to review if necessary.

Agenda Item 2: Date and place of World Conference

12. Dr. SPEEKENBRINK (Netherlands), supported by Mr. Feivovich (Chile) and Mr. Wu (China), proposed that the World Conference be held in Havana, Cuba.

13. Dr. COOMBS (Australia) suggested that the decision as to the site of the World Conference must be taken primarily in the light of the technical considerations, e.g. staff and services, hotel and office accommodation, transportation, general working conditions, and the cost involved, both to the United Nations and to individual countries. He proposed that a small committee, on which the Secretariat should be represented, be appointed to examine from a technical point of view the two proposals before the Committee, i.e. Lake Success and Havana.

14. Mr. CLARK (Cuba), after thanking Dr. Speekenbrink and the seconders of his motion, assured the Committee that there was adequate accommodation available in Havana for the World Conference. He had in fact been instructed by his Government to invite the World Conference to convene in Havana.

15. Sir PILLAI (India) added his support to the proposal that the World Conference be held in Havana.

16. Dr. HOLLOWAY (South Africa) objected to holding the World Conference in Lake Success, primarily because of the difficulties of transportation and other physical arrangements.

17. Mr. BARADUC (France) and Mr. VARGA (Brazil) added their support to the proposal to hold the World Conference in Havana.

18. Dr. COOMBS (Australia), after hearing Mr. Clark's reassurances, withdrew his previous remarks.

19. The CHAIRMAN concluded that a majority of the Committee favoured holding the World Conference in Havana in view of the difficulties regarding physical arrangements, e.g., transportation, accommodation, etc., if the Conference were held in Lake Success.

20. Mr. WYNDHAM WHITE (Executive Secretary) pointed out that there were certain material considerations which must be taken into account before reaching a decision as to the site of the World Conference: (a) the date was of equal, if not of more importance, than the place of the Conference. In this connection, he had been advised by the Acting Secretary-General that if a decision were reached to hold the World Conference at other than one of the United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Secretariat would not be in a position to supply the necessary technical services by the date mentioned in the Secretariat paper - November 21; (b) the expenses of the World Conference. If the Conference were to be financed by the United Nations, the Secretary General might find it difficult to justify to the responsible Committee a proposal which would involve heavy additional expenditure. If on the other hand the expenses were to be made a charge on the funds of the new

Organization, this factor would be primarily the Preparatory Committee's responsibility.

21. Mr. WILCOX (United States) urged that the time and place of the World Conference be considered together. It was highly desirable that the World Conference be convened at the earliest possible date. If it were necessary for technical and administrative reasons that a certain interval of time elapse between the end of the General Assembly and the beginning of the World Conference, that would have to be accepted. He would be reluctant, however, to see the Conference held in Havana if this meant that the date would have to be postponed until 1948. Such a postponement would have serious repercussions so far as the United States was concerned in that a prolonged delay in the completion of the work of the Conference might mean that the Charter could not be submitted to Congress for ratification until 1949. He would regard this as extremely unfortunate and therefore hoped that the World Conference would be held as early in November as possible. He wished to support Dr. Coombs' previous proposal that a Committee be appointed to investigate the technical considerations and report back to the Chairman's Committee.

22. Mr. CLARK (Cube), after thanking the supporters of the proposal to hold the Conference in Havana, said that he had no objections to a committee being appointed to investigate the technical aspects.

23. Mr. MOBAREK (Lebanon) urged that a sufficiently long interval should be allowed to elapse between the end of this Session and the World Conference to enable non-members of the Preparatory Committee to be fully prepared for the World Conference.

24. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee would continue its discussion of the second Agenda Item - date and place of the World Conference - at its next meeting to be held on Tuesday, 17 June 1947, at 10.30 a.m.

25. The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.