

SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT.CONSULTATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN
CATEGORY ANOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY *

In an address made to a plenary session of the Preparatory Committee on April 11, 1947, Monsieur Jean Duret, representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions, complained about the limited opportunities afforded to the Federation to participate in the work of the First Session of the Preparatory Committee. This matter has also been the subject of representation by Monsieur Duret to the Executive Secretary. There is circulated herewith a draft communication which the Chairman, with the Committee's concurrence, proposes to address to Monsieur Duret. (Annexure).

The Committee is also invited to consider the question of the arrangements to be made during the present Session for consultation with non-Governmental agencies.

The Committee's position in this matter is set out in Rule 46 of the Rules of Procedure (page 46 of the Report of the First Session), and follows the practice endorsed and applied by the Economic and Social Council. The Committee has, for this purpose, assimilated itself to a Commission of the Council.

It is true, however, that owing to the pressure of business at the First Session and to the fact that most of its work was conducted in closed meetings, the non-Governmental organizations were afforded comparatively limited opportunities to observe the

This paper will receive preliminary consideration by the Chairman's Committee (Heads of Delegations) prior to its submission to the Preparatory Committee.

discussions or to enter into consultation on matters of particular interest to them. The Committee may wish to consider whether more ample opportunity should not be afforded during the present Session.

The first relevant point is to determine whether the Charter discussions at the Second Session should, as was the case at the First Session, be conducted in closed meetings. The decision to work in closed meetings at the First Session was taken because the members of the Committee would be expressing views as officials on matters of policy on which they were not competent to commit Governments. It was felt that this distinction would not be appreciated by Press or public and it would therefore tend to inhibit discussion if the meetings were public. It might be argued that this consideration has not the same force at the Second Session in view of the publication of the Report of the First Session and the subsequent ventilation of views in the Press and on the platform. If the Committee were in these circumstances to decide that Charter discussion were to be conducted in open meetings, then one of the difficulties encountered by the non-Governmental organizations would be eliminated in that they would be in a position to follow the detailed discussions on the Charter. If, however, the Committee should decide that Charter talks should be conducted in closed meetings, the question arises whether the Committee would, nevertheless, allow representatives of the non-Governmental agencies to attend these meetings as observers. It should be pointed out here that this would be going somewhat further than would appear to be contemplated in the Report of the Committee of the Economic and Social Council on this matter since that report makes no reference to the admission of representatives of non-Governmental organizations to closed sessions.

In any event it is suggested that the Preparatory Committee should establish at an early date a Committee to consult with the representatives of non-Governmental organizations in Category A. and that this Committee, after studying the comments made by any such organizations on the Report of the First Session, should invite the representatives of the organizations to discuss these comments with the Committee, together with any other points which the organizations might have to raise on the Report of the Drafting Committee. The consultative Committee would remain in being when the Charter talks are resumed and would consult with the non-Governmental organizations from time to time during the course of the Charter discussions.

Dear Sir,

I wish to refer to the following statement contained in the address which you made to the Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee:

"It is true to say that very grave difficulties were encountered because restrictive measures were applied to its intervention.

The Federation was not permitted to participate regularly in the work of the Commission where the real work was performed and could only be admitted to make one declaration before the First and Second Commissions without obtaining any assurance that productive discussions would be engaged in on those propositions, and it did not even receive an answer to the questions which the delegation had asked on a certain number of points which appeared to be particularly important."

I also wish to refer to your representations on the same subject addressed recently to the Executive Secretary.

The Preparatory Committee is a working body established by the Economic and Social Council and as such it is bound to follow the procedures of the Council. The procedures of the Council with regard to consultation with non-governmental organizations are laid down in the Report of the Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations adopted by the Council on 21 June, 1946. By Rule 46 of its Rules of Procedure the Preparatory Committee at its First Session decided to apply this Report as the basis of its relations with non-governmental organizations.

The abovementioned Report does not make any mention of relations between non-governmental organizations and working committees of the Economic and Social Council as distinct from the Council itself and its commissions. However, the Preparatory Committee at its First Session decided to interpret the Report liberally and to assimilate its position to that of a commission, thus enabling consultation between itself and non-governmental organizations in Category A. Accordingly, such organizations were invited to send representatives to the First Session.

With regard to consultation between commissions and non-governmental organizations in Category A, the Report provides that a commission may arrange consultation either directly or through ad hoc committees either on the initiative of the commission or of an organization. Accordingly the Preparatory Committee at its First Session invited the four non-governmental organizations in Category A to submit in writing views upon questions on which they desired consultation and informed them that after considering these views the committees concerned would decide what arrangements could be made for consultation. To this invitation the World Federation of Trade Unions did not reply.

Notwithstanding this failure to reply to the Committee's invitation, the representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions and of one other non-governmental organization in Category A were invited to present views orally to the two committees of the Preparatory Committee in whose work it was considered these organizations would be most interested, and to present general views to a plenary meeting of the Preparatory Committee itself. These invitations were accepted.

I feel that I should point out to you that the Preparatory Committee is purely a working body composed of representatives of governments and charged by the Economic and Social Council with a very difficult task which has to be completed within a limited timetable. The work being done is still preliminary and formative. We hope to carry it a stage further at Geneva and I feel that the assistance of your organisation and of other non-governmental organisations will then be of greater value to the Committee. Moreover the Preparatory Committee will in due course present a report to the Economic and Social Council and submit the result of its work to a World Trade Conference and there will therefore be ample opportunity for the effective representation of the views of the organisations concerned.

I should add that the Preparatory Committee appreciates the interest and advice of your organisation and hopes shortly to be able to communicate to you suggestions for consultation during the current session in Geneva. It is envisaged that in the somewhat different circumstances of this Session, it will be possible to afford more ample opportunity for these consultations.

Yours faithfully,

Monsieur Jean Duret,
World Federation of Trade Unions,
Paris.