

Message Text

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ACTION IO-15

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TAGS: ECLA, OCON, UN, SENV
SUBJECT: ECLA SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES (COMMITTEE III)

REF: STATE 81310

1. ECLA SESSION COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES (COMMITTEE III) COMPLETED WORK ON APRIL 20 AND REVIEWED AND APPROVED THE FINAL REPORT OF THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON APRIL 21. THIS COMMITTEE WAS FORMED AT THE INNAUGURAL PLENARY SESSION TO REVIEW THE FOLLOWING: (A) CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THE REGIONAL MEETING ON THE ACTION PLAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE HELD IN SANTIAGO, CHILE IN OCTOBER 1978; (B) ECLA OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, ORGANIZATION AND WORK PLAN WITH REGARD TO WATER; AND (C) CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SESSIONAL CCOMMITTEE ON WATER. TRINIDAD WAS ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE III WITH CHILE AND CANADA BEING ELECTED VICE CHAIRMEN AND MEXICO ELECTED RAPORTEUR.

2. AFTER ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA, THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE REVIEWED THE REPORT, RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN UNCLASSIFIED

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REGIONAL MEETING ON THE ACTION PLAN OF THE UN WATER CONFERENCE HELD IN SANTIAGO. (REPORT IS OUTLINED ON PAGES 30-39 OF ECLA DOCUMENT 1066 DATED APRIL 12, 1979.) THE MEETING APPROVED ALL RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY CONSENSUS. US DELEGATION CONGRATULATED ECLA ON THE QUALITY AND COMPREHENSIVNESS OF THIS REPORT. ONLY MAJOR DISCUSSION INVOLVED RECOMMENDATION (B)

UNDER RESOLUTION V WHICH IDENTIFIES ECLA REQUIREMENT OF \$300,000 TO FINANCE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE WATER FIELD. US DELEGATION INDICATED THAT WHILE WE SUPPORT OBJECTIVES OF THE RESOLUTION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH US POLICY WE COULD NOT SUPPORT A NET INCREASE IN THE ECLA REGULAR BUDGET FOR THIS ITEM. ADDITIONAL FUNDING WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM REALLOCATIONS FROM WITHIN EXISTING ECLA BUDGET OR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. THE ECLA SECRETARIAT NOTED THAT APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION V DID NOT COMMIT ANY DELEGATION TO APPROVAL OF SPECIFIC BUDGET ALLOCATIONS, AND THAT THIS WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE FITH COMMITTEE.

3. THE COMMITTEE THEN PROCEEDED TO CONSIDER THE ECLA WORK PROGRAM WITH REGARD TO WATER CONTAINED IN THE FOLLOWING DECREEMENTS: (A) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAR DEL PLATA ACTION PLAN AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL (NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT - ECLA DOCUMENT 1077), AND (B) THE WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS DESCRIBED IN PAGES 85-87 OF ECLA'S 1979-81 WORK PROGRAM (ECLA DOCUMENT 1068) WERE REVIEWED IN DETAIL AND APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE.

4. MAJOR DISCUSSION OF SESSIONAL MEETING FOCUSED ON CEPAL DOCUMENT 1077 (ECLA OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, UNCLASSIFIED

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ORGANIZATION AND WORK PLAN WITH REGARD TO WATER) WHICH WAS APPROVED WITH THE MODIFICATIONS NOTED BELOW. US DELEGATION EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE DOCUMENT BUT REQUESTED FOLLOWING CHANGES: (A) DOCUMENT 1077 CALLED FOR REGULAR MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS OR GROUPS OF EXPERTS OUTSIDE THE REGULAR SESSIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS. IT WAS INDICATED THAT SUCH MEETINGS MIGHT BE HELD EVERY SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS. ARGENTINA STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF REGULAR MEETINGS EVERY SIX MONTHS TO GIVE GUIDANCE TO ECLA SECRETARIAT ON WATER RELATED MATTERS. US AND BRAZILIAN DELEGATIONS VIGOROUSLY QUESTIONED THE NEED FOR THESE REGULAR MEETINGS AND EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE GROWING PROLIFERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. TEX OF US STATEMENT TO THE COMMITTEE ON THIS ISSUE FOLLOWS. "WE AGREED LAST OCTOBER TO CREATE THIS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE AS THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODY FOR GIVING DIRECTION TO THE ECLA SECRETARIAT IN AREA OF WATER RESOURCES AND SANITATION. THE US DELEGATION IS GENERALLY CONCERNED ABOUT PROLIFERATION OF INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND MEETINGS. IF THERE IS GENUINE WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN HAVING OTHER EXPERTS MEETING TO CONSIDER

HORIZONTAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF WATER, SUCH MEETINGS COULD BE SCHEDULED IN THE FUTURE. FOR THE TIME BEING, HOWEVER, IT IS OUR DELEGATION'S IMPRESSION THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THIS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE IS ADEQUATE. INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS CAN SEND EXPERTS TO THIS SESSIONAL COMMITTEE. IF EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THE INTEREST OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS IN THE WATER AREA IS SUCH THAT THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE IS OVERWHELMED BY ITS WORKLOAD, WE COLD THEN ENTERTAIN THE IDEA OF MORE FREQUENT AD HOC MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENT WATER EXPERTS.

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IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, ECLA CAN PLAY NO MORE THAN A CATALYTIC ROLE. IT IS UP TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE REGION TO SHOW THE POLITICAL WILL AND MOBILIZE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MAKE BOTH THE WATER DECADE AND REGIONAL COOPERATION A SUCCESS. SIMPLY SCHEDULING MORE FREQUENT ECLA MEETINGS WILL PROVE TO BE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR RESOLVE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL."

COMMITTEE III ULTIMATELY AGREED WITH BRAZILIAN AND US RECOMMENDATION THAT REFERENCE TO THE PERIODIC MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS OR GROUPS OF EXPERTS CAN BE REMOVED FROM PARAGRAPH 8 OF ECLA DOCUMENT 1077. (B) SECOND MAJOR ISSUE OF US CONCERN WAS INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOLIVIA RESOLUTION ON "REMOTE SENSING SYSTEMS FOR THE STUDY OF NATURAL RESOURCES" WHICH WAS PRESENTED TO REPLACE A BOLIVIAN DRAFT RESOLUTION ON REMOTE SENSING FIRST PRESENTED AT THE OCTOBER REGIONAL WATER MEETINGS IN SANTIAGO (SEE REFTEL). NEW RESOLUTION RAISED SEVERAL IMPORTANT POLICY ISSUES INVOLVING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ROLE OF A LATIN AMERICAN REMOTE SENSING COUNCIL. BRAZIL, MEXICO AND US ALL INDICATED THAT WE COULD NOT

ACCEPT THE BOLIVIAN RESOLUTION AT THIS TIME. COMMITTEE
THEREFORE AGREED TO APPROVE FORMER BOLIVIAN RESOLUTION
(AS SUGGESTED IN REFTEL). US DELEGATION WAS ABLE TO
OBTAIN A MODIFICATION IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THIS
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RESOLUTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS: "REQUESTS THE SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES OF THE UN TO STUDY THE TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC
ASPECTS OF SATELLITE REMOTE SENSING, DRAWING UPON THE
STUDIES ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED AND UNDERWAY UNDER THE UN
COMMITTEE ON PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE AND ITS SUB-
COMMITTEES."

5. FINAL COSTA RICAN RESOLUTION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE MAR DEL PLATA ACTION PLAN WAS INTRODUCED AND MODIFIED
BY THE COMMITTEE TO CONFORM EXACTLY TO ECLA DOCUMENT
1077. RESOLUTION REQUESTS ECLA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR WATER RELATED
ACTIVITIES AND REQUESTS IMPROVED COORDINATION OF UN
WATER EXPERTS WITH ECLA'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION AND ECLA'S WATER COMMITTEE.
US DELEGATION RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING AND STATED
WE COULD NOT SUPPORT INCREASING ECLA BUDGET AND THIS
WOULD HAVE TO BE COVERED THROUGH REALLOCATION WITHIN
EXISTING RESOURCES.

6. ON APRIL 21 FINAL REPORT OF SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON
WATER WAS APPROVED.

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