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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVENTH MEETING (CLOSED)

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 4 October 1961, at 3 p.m.

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(draft outline circulated)

Consideration of draft reply to Arab League request for microfilm of the Registry of Arab properties in Israel-controlled territories in Palestine (memorandum from Acting Principal Secretary dated 28 September 1961)

Other business

PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. ELDEM

Turkey

Members:

Mr. DAUGE

France

Mr. PLIMPTON

United States of America

Secretariat:

Mr. GAILLARD

Acting Principal Secretary

Mr. JARVIS

Land Expert

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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

IDENTIFICATION AND VALUATION PROJECT

- (a) CONSIDERATION OF INTERIM REPORT (A/AC.25/W.83)
- (b) QUESTION OF PUBLICATION WITH DELETIONS

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America) commented that the Interim Report was excellent and congratulated Mr. Jarvis, the Commission's Land Expert, on the work accomplished. Should it be published, he did not think redrafting necessary to eliminate the implication that a new over-all valuation figure had been obtained. If questioned, the Commission could reply that it had reached certain tentative figures but wished to consider other factors bearing on compensation before considering publication of a total.

Mr. DAUGE (France) associated himself with the thanks and congratulations offered to Mr. Jarvis. He agreed that no further redrafting was necessary. Regarding the absence of the over-all figure the Commission could indicate that its project was not complete and that the Commission's experts were continuing work.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Turkey, congratulated Mr. Jarvis on his very useful and comprehensive report. Although an ultimate goal was a global valuation of Arab immovable property holdings in Israel, he thought all were agreed that it was not the proper time to publish such a figure now. In view of the publication of Mr. Berncastle's valuation in 1951, he suggested an explanatory note stating that the global valuation undertaken related to the properties in Israel of all Arabs and of Israelis bearing Arab names and it was felt that it would be a mistake to publish a figure before the valuation of individual properties had been completed.

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America) remarked that according to his understanding compilation of final estimates must await the completion of further studies. A carefully phrased sentence to that effect could be inserted.

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Mr. DAUGE (France) asked whether the explanatory note was intended for Mr. Jarvis' report or for the Commission's progress report. He asked Mr. Jarvis whether the explanation suggested would be technically valid.

Mr. JARVIS (Land Expert) explained that when the valuation of individual holdings had been completed, the Technical Office would be no nearer a global valuation for Arab refugee property holdings in Israel because data was lacking which would permit deletion of the value of properties belonging to Arab residents in Israel. The suggested note would not interfere with the technical work in progress.

Regarding the revised Interim Report with its deletion of the over-all figures, Mr. Jarvis drew attention to the fact that the remaining text indicated that in fact a total figure had been reached. To avoid that implication much redrafting would be necessary. The result would suggest much work on methods and procedures had been done but wrongly imply that few results had been achieved.

For technical reasons he would like to see the Interim Report published with deletions of the over-all figures as indicated on amended copies which had been circulated to the members. If he were to discuss valuation with any of the parties concerned, such a report would assure that the techniques had been sufficiently considered before any outright rejection of the total took place as had occurred in the case of Mr. Berncastle's report. Deletion of totals would force concentration on techniques and lessen the likelihood of wild unsubstantiated estimates.

Mr. Jarvis concluded by suggesting that any explanatory note regarding the problem of over-all value be included in the Commission's own progress report and not in the Interim Report which he had drafted in accordance with the terms of reference of the Technical Office.

It was agreed that there should be no further changes in the amended Interim Report (A/AC.25/W.83) and that some explanation regarding the over-all value of Arab immovable property in Israel should be included in the Commission's nineteenth progress report.

(c) FUTURE PROGRAMME OF LAND EXPERT'S OFFICE

The CHAIRMAN posed the question of whether the future programme should be considered now or left to a future meeting.

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America) felt that a decision regarding expansion of staff and target dates for completion of the stages of work outlined in the Land Expert's memorandum dated 29 September 1961 should be deferred until after the Special Political Committee had considered the report of the Director of UNRWA.

Mr. DAUGE (France) agreed with the views of the representative of the United States but asked Mr. Jarvis whether a decision could be postponed from a practical standpoint.

Mr. JARVIS (Land Expert) replied that an answer was difficult since the work would have to be programmed in accordance with any Commission decision on objectives and target dates. A deferred decision might involve difficulties in terms of retention of present necessary professional staff and delay in recruiting the expanded clerical staff expected to be needed for most efficient completion of the outlined programme, including the totalling of each individual's holdings. Without such expansion the programme could not be completed by the opening of the seventeenth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America) asked whether it was not up to the individual owner to locate his various parcels in connexion with any compensation scheme.

Mr. JARVIS (Land Expert) remarked in reply that without totalling of an individual's holdings one could not answer questions about what percentage of the refugees would benefit by compensation and by how much.

Mr. GAILLIARD (Principal Secretary) proposed that the Commission confirm that part of the programme calling for valuation of individual holdings and authorize steps to retain the existing professional staff necessary for that

(Mr. Gaillard, Principal Secretary)

valuation but postpone decision on further stages of the work, including target dates for completion and the question of an expanded clerical staff.

It was so agreed.

CONSIDERATION OF CONTENTS OF 15 OCTOBER PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America) considered the draft outline a good one but thought it would be useful to include some short progress report by Dr. Johnson.

Mr. DAUGE (France) suggested that such a report might be sufficiently precise to satisfy public curiosity without being too detailed. It should be submitted as the Commission's report, not Dr. Johnson's.

It was agreed that Dr. Johnson be requested to draft appropriate paragraphs.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY drew attention to the problem presented in drafting the "blocked accounts" section by the split up of the United Arab Republic. Concurrence had not yet been received from the United Arab Republic and now the Syrian Arab Republic would have to be approached.

It was agreed that in the circumstances the report should indicate, if full concurrence in the scheme had been received from Lebanon and Jordan, that the release operation would be initiated in the near future. It could be said that arrangements as to other areas had not yet been completed. The Secretariat was requested to circulate a draft of the nineteenth progress report by 6 October.

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPLY TO ARAB LEAGUE REQUEST FOR MICROFILM OF THE REGISTRY OF ARAB PROPERTIES IN ISRAEL-CONTROLLED TERRITORIES IN PALESTINE (MEMORANDUM FROM ACTING PRINCIPAL SECRETARY DATED 28 SEPTEMBER 1961)

It was agreed to send the revised draft reply prepared by the Secretariat with the deletion, however, of the sentence "The Commission does not consider it appropriate to release records which form only part of the data being used by the Commission's technical staff in its continuing study."

OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed to invite Dr. Davis, the Director of UNRWA, to meet with the Commission at an appropriate date in the near future.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY announced that the working papers on Reintegration by Repatriation or Resettlement and on Compensation were expected to be available for distribution in English by 15 October and in French by 31 October.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.