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President: Mr. M. MIR KHAN (Pakistan).

Present:

The representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Indonesia, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

Observers from the following countries: Czechoslovakia, Federal Republic of Germany, Israel, Japan.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization.

AGENDA ITEM 3

World social situation (E/3008, E/CN.5/321 and Add.1 and 2, E/CN.5/324/Rev.1, E/CN.5/325 and Corr.1 and Add.1) (*continued*)

1. Mr. DAVIDSON (Canada) remarked that it was well-nigh impossible to do justice in a single statement to the array of scholarly and clear-sighted reports before the Council, and he would confine himself to a few brief comments on parts I and II of the *Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1), the Secretary-General's Report on Concepts and Principles of Community Development and Recommendations on Further Practical Measures to be taken by International Organizations (E/CN.5/325 and Corr.1) and the report of the group of experts appended to the Secretary-General's report, Maintenance of Family Levels of Living (E/CN.5/321, Appendix I). He would postpone his comments on the report on the eleventh session of the Social Commission (E/3008) until the discussion in the Social Committee.

2. Like its predecessor, the *Preliminary Report*,¹ part I of the *Report on the World Social Situation* was a symposium, representing the combined efforts of the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariats of the four

specialized agencies mainly concerned in the promotion of human well-being; as a result it showed the unevenness of style and treatment to which the Canadian delegation had drawn attention in the debate on the *Preliminary Report*. He hoped that further experience would make it possible to produce a report which was an integrated whole rather than a series of separate, though valuable, monographs.

3. He welcomed the fact that certain portions of the *Report*, notably the introduction and the opening part of chapter IV, on food and nutrition, presented a view of the world situation which was not merely social, but socio-economic in character, and took economic realities into account. Unlike the annual reports on the world economic situation, the *Report on the World Social Situation* clearly reflected the Council's constant preoccupation with integrated consideration of economic and social problems.

4. As regards its substance, the *Report* recorded a modest step forward along the long and tortuous road of human progress. Its chief significance in that respect lay in the evidence it furnished that progress could be made — always provided, first, that there was continued effort at the national level; secondly, that there was continued reinforcement of national effort as appropriate through the machinery of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other appropriate international organs; and thirdly, and perhaps most important, that an international climate was established and preserved in which national efforts could increasingly be devoted to achieving social progress in an expanding economy and in a world at peace.

5. It remained true that the *Report* provided incontrovertible proof that in social terms the phrase "the world we live in" meant a vastly different thing for different people. As reflected in it, the world community was a study in contrasts and from the social point of view it would be no exaggeration to speak of two worlds, not one.

6. On the one side, the *Report* recorded the terrible toll in loss of life, health and economic, social and cultural well-being that was being paid each year by the peoples living in the economically and socially less developed countries, characterized by very high birth rates, correspondingly high death rates, and many of the other indices of retarded social development that accompanied those two primary phenomena. It again drew the Council's attention forcibly to the unabated increase in the world's population, especially in certain countries, and the pressure on available economic resources that inevitably resulted if food, employment opportunities, housing and educational and health services were to be furnished on a basis that would keep pace with population growth, let

¹ *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*, United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1952.IV.11.

alone lift life from the primitive level of mere animal existence to one that was in keeping with present concepts of the worth and dignity of the human person.

7. On the other side, however, the *Report* made clear that even the industrially and economically more advanced countries which had been able to apply some of the fruits of their economic progress to the improvement of social conditions faced a whole range of essentially new social problems. In stabilizing their rates of population growth, achieving increasingly reasonable birth rates and forcing down their general death rates, as well as their rates of loss through infant deaths, maternity deaths and deaths from tuberculosis, pneumonia and other communicable diseases, they had surmounted one range of problems, but now found themselves faced with other no less formidable problems — the challenge of the degenerative diseases and the social consequences of an ageing population, the mounting toll of deaths from cardiovascular diseases and cancer, the still intractable problem of mental illness, for which in their highly industrialized and urbanized societies as many hospital beds were required as for all other illnesses put together, the additional problems raised by new technological developments, the safe disposal of industrial waste, the menace to health of water and air pollution in large towns, and the host of new industrial health hazards resulting from the industrial use of atomic energy. Since the war, there had also been a sharp rise in birth rates in the economically advanced countries. In his country, as a result of higher birth rates and heavy post-war immigration, the number of children of school age had increased by between 50 and 100 per cent within ten years, with all that meant in terms of increased capital requirements for schools, teachers and — at a later stage — facilities at the university level. Even in a so-called highly developed but still expanding country such as Canada, very heavy burdens of social cost on both capital and current account had to be borne if the social infrastructure of the rapidly increasing population was to be maintained on a basis adequate to meet the people's social needs and aspirations.

8. All those problems presented new challenges to the developed countries' ingenuity and capacity for imaginative social pioneering, the cost of which must inevitably be borne by their own peoples while the dividends — in terms of new health techniques or patterns of organization, in terms of new products of research in medicine, housing, education or agriculture — were passed on freely for the benefit of all mankind.

9. That brought him to part II of the *Report on the World Social Situation*, dealing with the social problems of urbanization in economically under-developed areas, for the problem of how to ensure orderly urbanization was common to all countries. In seeking the answer to that problem as it affected them, the more highly developed countries could help in the solution of the same problem in the explosive form in which it existed or was emerging in the under-developed countries. They would, of course, have been in a better position to give advice in that respect if they had given sufficient attention in the past to the problems involved in adequately controlling and regulating urban growth and devel-

opment, as well as the interrelated problems of urban and rural population balance and the means of improving rural living levels.

10. He recognized, of course, that the trend to urbanization in the under-developed areas was different in many ways from the phenomenon of urban growth in countries where steady industrial development had created a wealth of job opportunities and provided positive and constructive motivation for the orderly movement of people from the countryside to the city. The flight from the land in less developed areas was, on the whole, differently motivated; it was an effort to escape from the tedium and the intolerable, below-subsistence levels of living in the rural hinterland. At the same time, it was unfortunately a flight into a vacuum, which offered little possibility of healthy, stable social life. The representatives of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom at the 985th meeting had dealt with that problem, and he would therefore merely express his delegation's willingness to examine in the Social Committee the very interesting suggestions presented by the Netherlands representative.

11. Turning to the Secretary-General's excellent Report on Concepts and Principles of Community Development (E/CN.5/325 and Corr.1), he took the opportunity of also expressing his delegation's satisfaction with the paper on community development annexed to the twentieth report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (E/2931, annex III). In its reply to the request for observations from governments, in accordance with resolution 585 C (XX), paragraph 2, referred to in the Secretary-General's report, the Canadian Government had explained its view of the meaning of community development in terms of specific programme content, operational methods, psychological motivation and fundamental purpose. Not all governments held the same views on those matters, with the inevitable result that, as the Argentine and United Kingdom representatives had pointed out, the report continued to manifest a certain lack of clarity as to what community development really meant. There was, however, enough in the way of a common core of understanding to justify further patient explanation that would eventually produce a widely acceptable and accepted definition. His delegation was convinced that the concept of community development, as it understood it, was wholly worthy of support and encouragement: there was a great potential for constructive social advance in soundly conceived programmes that drew upon the initiative and capacity for self-help of the people themselves, and gave increasingly wide expression to their capacity and desire for local self-motivated action, which was in reality a constructive expression of the universally held desire for self-government. It further believed, with the report, that the encouragement of community development programmes was an appropriate field for international action and support, essentially in the form of technical assistance. It was, however, always necessary to bear in mind the relative importance of efforts in that field compared with other programmes of social betterment, and his delegation would therefore give careful consideration to any detailed proposals presented to the Social Committee as to the extent and content of the work

programme on which the Council might justifiably embark in that connexion during the next few years.

12. Referring to the report of the group of experts appended to the Secretary-General's report, Maintenance of Family Levels of Living (E/CN.5/321, appendix I) he said that the report had not only been signed by all members of the group, over which he had had the pleasure of presiding, but was the joint product of their individual contributions. Under its terms of reference the group had been instructed to concentrate on "methods and guiding principles for the establishment of a concerted national programme aimed at the maintenance and improvement of family levels of living". Inevitably, its conclusions had been tentative and stated only in very general terms, since the methods and guiding principles it had sought to establish were designed to be of general application, under vastly differing local conditions. Even so, he was sure that discussion of them in the Social Committee would be of considerable practical benefit.

13. In conclusion, he said that his delegation was in entire agreement with all that had been said regarding the complementary nature of economic and social development; it would merely add that the ultimate purpose of all work in either field was the social betterment of the peoples of the world.

14. Mr. CHERNYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the *Report on the World Social Situation* was of great interest, based as it was on much up-to-date factual and statistical information. The authors had rightly paid a great deal of attention to the problems of the under-developed countries. He fully agreed that recent progress in the social field was insignificant compared with the immensity of current needs, and that it had been very uneven both as between the different social sectors and as between different countries. The *Report* also stressed that the gulf between the industrially developed and the under-developed countries in terms of per capita national income had widened, and that the inequality in distribution of the national income among the various sectors of the population had increased still more. That last point was made particularly with reference to the under-developed countries. In his view, it was as true—if not more true—of industrially developed countries in the west, including the United States of America. The course of economic development in those countries amply bore out Karl Marx's teaching concerning the growth of social contradictions under capitalism, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the property-owning classes, and the increasing gulf between the handful of millionaires and the mass of the population.

15. The Council had been told at the 985th meeting that a peaceful revolution was under way in the United States of America whereby traditional capitalism was changing into a new so-called "people's" capitalism. The main difference between a capitalist and a worker was not that one owned more cars than the other, but that one owned the means of production, whereas the other had only his labour to sell. That was the root of social inequality. The Council had been told that in 1956 there had been 8,600,000 shareholders in the United States of America; but of that number only some

890,000 had been factory workers, craftsmen, tradesmen or farmers, out of a total working population of more than 60 million. According to Mr. Wright Mills, an American sociologist, 98.6 per cent of American workers owned no shares. The means of production remained firmly in the hands of the capitalists.

16. The Soviet Union did not wish to impose its philosophy or its social and political system on anyone. It was convinced that peaceful co-existence and peaceful competition would show which of the two systems was better fitted to meet the material and spiritual needs of mankind.

17. In his delegation's opinion, an exchange of views on the *Report on the World Social Situation* could be of practical value in making clear the desirability of introducing certain changes in particular regions, of overcoming obstacles which prevented further development and of encouraging progressive social trends. However, he also felt obliged to draw attention to the *Report's* defects. In the first place, he agreed with the Egyptian representative (984th meeting) that it was wholly incomprehensible that it should pay no attention whatsoever to the gigantic efforts made by the People's Republic of China to raise the most populous country in the world from its former pitifully low economic and social level. Without proper information on what had been done in the People's Republic of China, the *Report* could not really be called a report on the world social situation at all.

18. Another of the *Report's* defects was that the social situation was treated as something entirely separate from the economic situation. Economic progress was the basis of all social progress and any attempt to study social questions without reference to the level of production and the way in which the national income was distributed among the various sectors of the population could only lead to superficial results.

19. The *Report* paid far too little attention to the social consequences of inflation, which was rampant in many western countries, particularly those that were highly developed and industrially strongest. Inflation resulted in a redistribution of the national income to the detriment of the wage-earners, and more especially the fixed income groups, such as old-age pensioners, war-disabled persons, etc. Moreover, inflation in certain countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America was not simply an internal phenomenon. Its effects were felt in other countries whose resources were held in pounds sterling or dollars, or which were dependent on British or American export goods for which they had to pay higher and higher prices. The Council could not ignore those problems, and he felt the time had come to instruct the Secretariat to give serious consideration to them and prepare a report on the social consequences of inflation.

20. During the forty years of the Soviet regime, a cultural revolution had been carried out in the Soviet Union on the basis of the great strides made by the national economy. Illiteracy had been eliminated. A system of seven years' compulsory education was now being replaced by a system of ten years' compulsory education. The tremendous progress that had been

made in the field of higher education was well known. Over four million students had attended secondary or higher specialized classes in 1956/57, and the number of scientists, engineers, etc. who completed their training annually in the Soviet Union was more than twice as high in relation to total population than in western Europe as a whole. A public health system had been built up almost from scratch, all services being provided free of charge. The general death rate in the Soviet Union was now one-quarter what it had been in pre-revolutionary Russia, and the infant mortality rate one-sixth. In 1956, the general death rate had been less than eight per 1,000, which was considerably lower than in the great majority of countries in the world. The Soviet Union paid a great deal of attention to improving the working and living conditions of working women. In 1956, a law had been enacted increasing paid maternity leave from 77 to 112 days. The Soviet Government, which was deeply concerned with the welfare of Soviet children, also supported all proposals made to United Nations organs for protecting and assisting children throughout the world, particularly in the under-developed countries. He had been instructed to inform the Council that, in addition to making its regular contribution to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) of 2 million roubles in the form of food, medical supplies and other supplies for children, the Soviet Union could in 1957 make available to UNICEF experts in children's diseases and their prevention, and in mother and child welfare.

21. The Soviet Union also had a progressive state social insurance and social security system, wholly financed by the State, without any contribution from the workers.

22. During 1956, 36 million square metres of living space and 700,000 houses in rural areas had been constructed. In 1957, 46 million square metres of living space would be constructed, apart from building on individual initiative.

23. Although different countries found different ways of solving their social problems, all countries, whatever their social system, could benefit from the social experience of other countries. The Soviet Union's own experience had proved that the exchange of information and contacts between peoples of different lands could powerfully stimulate and assist social progress.

24. For that reason his delegation proposed to submit to the Council a draft resolution² recommending governments to extend international co-operation in the social field and, in particular, to develop personal contacts and the exchange of experience, and to organize widespread exchanges of delegations of doctors, teachers, constructional engineers, social welfare workers, child welfare workers and other specialists in the social field. Such international co-operation and personal contacts would, his delegation believed, facilitate the development of mutual understanding between States.

25. In his delegation's view, the main obstacle to social progress was the colossal wasteful expenditure on armaments. The armaments race could only be financed at the expense of those sectors of the economy which pro-

duced goods and services for the benefit of the broad masses of the population. The reduction of armaments expenditure would ease the burden of taxation, develop internal markets and contribute to economic growth, the only possible basis for social progress.

26. Moreover, the stock-piling of armaments inevitably increased international tension and brought closer the threat of a catastrophic new war. The nuclear arms race had already reached the point where it had caused incalculable damage to present and future generations. The authors of the *Report on the World Social Situation* were to be congratulated on daring even to mention the question of health hazards due to atomic radiation, but what they said on the subject was altogether insufficient. The suspension of tests of nuclear weapons was clearly a question of the utmost importance to all mankind, and not least to the Council, which had the important task of promoting well-being amongst all peoples. The Soviet Union had consistently urged the suspension of all tests of nuclear weapons. It was of course also in favour of speedy and effective decisions being reached on the whole complex question of disarmament, but the problem of nuclear tests was so urgent that it seemed clearly preferable to seek agreement on it first of all as a separate issue. In present circumstances, the unilateral suspension of tests of nuclear weapons was clearly impracticable, so the Soviet Government had no choice but to continue to press for agreement in that respect. To that end the Supreme Soviet had appealed to the United States Congress and the British House of Commons in May 1957 to co-operate in bringing about an agreement between the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union for the immediate suspension of nuclear tests, and had suggested the establishment of an inter-parliamentary committee to consider possible means of achieving that goal. The response to that appeal had been slight. Instead, the United States and the United Kingdom representatives on the Sub-Committee on Disarmament had proposed that the agreement should be confined to the mutual registration of tests. Subsequently, they had proposed a simple moratorium on all tests for a ten-month period. That, however, was no solution of the problem. It was an ill concealed manoeuvre, which would do nothing to protect the peoples of the world from the harmful consequences of such tests to their health. The peoples of the world would be content with nothing less than the complete suspension of all nuclear tests. The Council could not ignore the increasingly widespread demands that were being made to that effect. It must add its own voice to the protest.

27. He therefore proposed the adoption of a draft resolution,³ in which the Council, noting the universal anxiety about the dangers inherent in the testing of nuclear weapons, and taking into account the warnings of eminent scientists that human health might be endangered if nuclear tests were continued, would express the hope that the Governments of the United States of America, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom would conclude an immediate agreement on the simultaneous suspension of test explosions of atomic and hydrogen bombs, regardless of whether a general agreement was

² Distributed later as E/L.758.

³ Distributed later as E/L.759.

reached on the problem of atomic weapons and hydrogen bombs.

28. Mr. CHENG PAONAN (China) congratulated the Bureau of Social Affairs and the four specialized agencies concerned on their *Report on the World Social Situation*, which did not merely try to indicate the trend of social progress, but also analysed the problems that were likely to arise in the near future.

29. The *Report's* general conclusion that the world social situation had significantly improved in vital sectors since the period covered by the *Preliminary Report* was gratifying. While the increase in per capita national income since the Second World War had undoubtedly been greater in the advanced countries than in the economically under-developed countries, it was not entirely correct to say that the gap in levels of living as a whole had also widened. The level of living was not the same thing as per capita national income; it could be determined only by analysing the various components representing internationally accepted values such as health, food, education, housing, clothing, social security and human freedoms.

30. The under-developed countries had made unqualified progress in health and education. The decline in mortality rates from infectious or contagious diseases proved the effectiveness of the measures taken by their governments, on the one hand, and by the United Nations and specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, on the other. The fact that since the early 1950s more than half the total number of children of school age in the world had been enrolled in schools clearly demonstrated the progress that had been made in the educational field, thanks in large measure to the devoted work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). But in other fields progress had been much less satisfactory.

31. One basic problem with serious economic, social and at times political consequences was the problem of population growth. The present rates of population growth in some of the economically under-developed countries were unprecedented. If those countries were to progress towards a satisfactory level of living, means would have to be found to increase their production of goods and services still faster.

32. Similarly, although recent years had seen an impressive increase in food production in nearly all regions of the world, per capita food consumption in many less developed countries was still below the pre-war level.

33. In the field of housing too little had been achieved, partly because many under-developed countries hoped for external assistance to finance housing projects while the developed countries had serious doubts as to whether such projects should be financed from international resources. In those circumstances, and in view of the urgent need in many parts of the world for low-cost housing projects, his delegation would urge the under-developed countries to take advantage of the wealth of technical information already available in that field and at the same time to apply the principle of self-help and mutual aid, particularly in rural areas.

34. Turning to part II of the *Report on the World Social Situation*, he said that in considering problems of urbanization both the results and the causes should be examined. In any study of urbanization as a whole, the "push" factors in the rural areas should receive at least as much attention as the "pull" factors in the towns.

35. A healthy country should have a number of evenly developed cities rather than one or two great cities. Concentration of effort in solving problems in urban localities would not decrease the "push" factors in the rural areas, and might increase the attraction of the towns. Such a vicious circle could only be broken if attention were directed to improving the social condition of the rural areas with the dual object of easing the pressure on large cities and developing small cities within the rural areas.

36. As regards the form of future reports on the world social situation, he hoped that due attention would be paid to the enjoyment of human freedoms, which had been recognized as one of the major components of level of living both by the United Nations *Report on International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living*⁴ and by the report of the working group of experts on a co-ordinated policy regarding family levels of living (E/CN.5/321, appendix I). It was of course difficult to present statistical indices in that connexion. Even in such questions as education and health, however, it was not possible to rely solely on statistical information, since quality as well as quantity had to be taken into account. Future reports should deal also with difficulties and shortcomings as well as achievements and progress, since the Council's object was to see not so much what had already been achieved, as what remained to be done. Lastly, his delegation would like to see a special chapter containing the conclusions and observations of the Secretary-General on the world social situation as a whole included in future reports. In such conclusions, the Secretary-General might indicate the possible action which in his view could be taken by the United Nations and the specialized agencies in meeting the major problems that arose in different fields.

37. As regards the suggestion that more information on the Chinese mainland should be included in future reports, he would merely say that, in accordance with accepted United Nations practice, the Secretary-General could only include material derived from Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies.

38. Community development had recently come to be recognized as one of the most effective means for economic, social, and even political, advancement. In the light of the experience they had gained, the United Nations and specialized agencies had worked out ten guiding principles in that field. In his view, two were of fundamental importance—namely, that full and balanced community development required concerted action, and the establishment of multi-purpose programmes, and that community development should aim at increased and better participation of the people in community affairs, vitalization of existing forms of local

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1954.IV.5.

government and transition towards effective local administration where it was not yet functioning.

39. The general relevance of the former principle was shown by the fact that China — the oldest country in Asia — and Ghana — the youngest country in Africa — had both found, at an interval of thirty years, that a community development programme in the educational field could not be carried out successfully unless accompanied by health and agricultural extension programmes. The second principle he had mentioned was of particular importance when national resources were limited and the local population were hesitant about taking part in public affairs, since their direct participation in community development programmes would not only help in carrying out welfare programmes, but also foster the spirit and habit of self-government.

40. In his delegation's view, sufficient studies had now been made on the concept and principles of community development and future effort should be concentrated on practical measures for their implementation. Useful though the guiding principles were, the long-term community development programmes should not fall into a fixed pattern, since no two countries had the same needs.

41. Expressing his appreciation of the group of experts' report appended to the Secretary-General's report on the maintenance of family levels of living (E/CN.5/321, appendix I), as well as of the Secretary-General's valuable comments on it, he said he would for the present merely voice the opinion that the conclusions reached, though necessarily general in nature, provided an excellent basis for further action.

42. He further expressed the hope that all future work in that field would be referred to under the heading of the "Improvement of Family Levels of Living" in accordance with the recommendation the Social Commission had made at the suggestion of the Chinese representative (E/3008, paragraph 15).

43. Turning in conclusion to the report on the work of the Social Commission, he welcomed the fact that the Commission had been able to concentrate its attention on a few major subjects in the social field, and that its programme of work for 1957 to 1959 represented a further concentration of work since 1955. He could not however avoid the feeling that the Commission could have done better in dealing with the important items on its agenda. In examining the *Report on the World Social Situation* it had spent half its time discussing how often future reports should be published and the other half listening to statements concerning the social and economic progress in the speakers' own countries. Again, the Commission had had before it two reports on the financing of housing and community improvement programmes (E/CN.5/323 and E/CN.5/327) but had made no concrete recommendations in either respect to the Council. Most of its recommendations to the Council related to requests for further studies or the transmission of completed studies to governments for comment. Apart from those recommendations the Commission had seldom come to any agreement on any subject. His delegation sincerely hoped that at its twelfth session the Social Commission, on which the Council relied in dealing with technical matters in the

social field, would make a more positive contribution to the Council's work.

44. Mr. DOUBLET (France) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the *Report on the World Social Situation* and stressed the importance his country attached to the survey, which was one the United Nations alone was in a position to make. The *Report* gave a most valuable synthesis, remarkable for the amount of information assembled and for the variety and importance of the questions covered. A working paper in the true sense of the word, it brought out the progress made in certain branches of social affairs, while drawing attention to the new problems that had arisen. At the same time, there were some faults and omissions to which his delegation wished to draw attention in the hope of improving a document which deserved the widest possible circulation.

45. As the *Report* was now planned, some omissions seemed inevitable. His delegation had been sorry, however, to see no reference to some achievements of undoubted importance. For instance, in the passages dealing with leprosy (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1, page 34) there was no mention of France's campaign against it in Africa, due tribute to the scale and effectiveness of which had been paid by the representatives of WHO. Perhaps, also, too little emphasis had been placed on the results achieved in the prevention of disease by mobile medical services (page 159); those achievements had been particularly remarkable in Madagascar, where malaria had practically disappeared, with the result that the annual excess of births over deaths had risen from 8,000 to 80,000 in the course of five years. It was also to be regretted that the *Report* was essentially a survey of achievements in the social field throughout the world and did not always indicate possible lines of future action as clearly as might be desired. For instance, while giving a very clear account of the problems created by under-nourishment in the world, it dealt less lucidly with the employment problems set by an ageing population in Europe and by the changes in the structure of the labour force in under-industrialized countries. In that connexion, he would recall that the forecasting of future labour demand had assumed considerable importance in his country in the preparation of the third modernization plan. Continual progress was being made in the long-term study of employment opportunities. An effort was made to determine within the framework of regional programmes the extent to which geographical mobility of labour was to be encouraged and to decide which zones and industries should be earmarked for expansion, having regard to the disequilibria created by the flight to the towns and the population situation.

46. Part II of the *Report* was devoted to various aspects of urbanization, but no indication was given whether urbanization should be encouraged or the fields in which governmental action could be most effective. The problems of the rural population and of urbanization were dealt with separately, a distinction that seemed somewhat artificial, in view of the fact that the immediate repercussions of the structural dislocation which was one of the effects of urbanization were experienced in the countryside. Further, his delegation would suggest that, while problems of urbanization and industrialization should

undoubtedly be dealt with on the scale that they deserved, the Secretariat should not reduce the space hitherto reserved in the report for social defence questions.

47. There was a connexion between the value of the information in the *Report* and the basic documents collected by the Secretariat; it was essential for the Secretariat to have increasingly accurate data and to limit the space given to theoretical concepts.

48. He took the opportunity to supplement the *Report* with some information about the progress achieved in the social sector in the overseas territories administered by France. In the field of public health, over 13 million people had been brought within reach of the medical services in 1956, and 2 million had received medical attention; between 1951 and 1955, the number of clinics had risen from 1,057 to 2,260, the number of consultations from 17 to 25 million, and the number of hospital cases treated from 421,000 to 750,000. In the field of education, the percentage of children attending school had gone up from 15.7 to 28.2 and the number of pupils from 752,000 to 1,141,000. Progress had been made in implementing the Labour Code (Overseas Territories) of 1952 and substantial progress in the field of social security, as well as in urban housing. Various organizational measures had been taken in relation to the social services.

49. In metropolitan France, several recent collective bargaining agreements contained a guaranteed wage clause. In addition, a national agreement had recently laid down the conditions for the organization and management of supplementary pension schemes, which had originally been established for the higher categories, but were being extended more and more widely to employees and workmen. Lastly, the French parliament had passed a law providing for unpaid leave for workers who wanted to attend courses or workers' educational or trade union training conferences.

50. Reverting to the *Report on the World Social Situation*, he observed that the proposed new timetable for reports would permit more extensive studies on social action in the various countries. The scheme would only be fully effective, however, if the questionnaires were sent to governments soon enough for them to make the necessary enquiries within the prescribed time-limits. In addition, the preparation of interim reports would involve participation by the specialized agencies and close co-ordination under the Secretariat's guidance.

51. His delegation supported resolution A, submitted by the Social Commission, on the maintenance of family levels of living (E/3008, annex III). He drew the Council's attention, however, to certain points raised by the Social Commission which were not, perhaps, dealt with fully enough in the *Report*. While it was desirable to encourage a policy of raising family levels of living within a general plan prepared by the governments, it must not be forgotten that social problems were inter-related; it was important, therefore, to decide as soon as possible in what fields action could be most effective. While the part played by the State in that connexion was fundamental, the voluntary organizations had an equally important part to play. Accordingly, the importance to the State of securing the co-operation of voluntary

organizations in certain fields of action should be emphasized. In addition, the raising of levels of living created special problems in the under-developed countries. France had tried at the national level to co-ordinate the various aspects of economic action and social action through a number of committees on which overseas peoples had their elected representatives. Co-ordination was ensured in each territory, under the basic law, through local authorities elected by the people.

52. The Commission's work on the question of community development had engaged the attention of the French delegation, which was gratified to note how much broader the concept had now become in the light of the Secretariat's studies and the findings of the United Nations expert missions in Africa. The Secretariat had formulated a number of principles which the French delegation, without regarding them as sacrosanct and final, was prepared to endorse. It considered that community development was a process of creating conditions conducive to the economic and social progress of the entire community, undertaken with its active participation and, so far as was possible, on its own initiative. That process, however, called for the combined efforts of the community and the authorities. Under African conditions, such co-operation was not always easily realizable, a fact which had compelled the French Government to apply different methods adapted to local needs in the overseas territories. For instance, attempts had been made, in agreement with the people's elected representatives, to fit traditional communities into a new framework and to promote the establishment of economic units, such as the native provident societies, the modernized indigenous rural communities (in Madagascar) and the mutual rural production societies (in French West Africa). He would also mention the activity of the cultural groups in French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, the experiences in the field of fundamental education, and the activity of the rural centres.

53. He wished, in addition, to explain his delegation's views on the study of balanced economic and social development (E/3008, annex II, project I.2.2). The study would, as it were, set the seal of approval on a concept which had frequently been expounded in the Council — namely, that economic development must lead to social progress. The problem was therefore to ensure that economic development and social development kept pace with each other. To achieve that end, not only the economic data for each country but also its political, social and demographic situation must be considered. The basic data differed from country to country, and the proposed study could only be of real use if it led to practical results. It was desirable, therefore, to proceed very cautiously, and first of all to define the problem correctly for the guidance of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the various governments in their study of the conditions required to promote the people's welfare. The specialized agencies — the International Labour Organisation in particular — had already embarked on work along those lines. It might perhaps be helpful to prepare a preliminary report showing the difficulties of the study and examining the solutions proposed. When carrying out those enquiries, the Secretariat must always remember that its conclusions would have to fit into a co-ordinated

policy and would, of course, come up against the facts.

54. His delegation fully approved the programme of work on social welfare policy. The work was concerned with different subjects which were complementary: the raising of family levels of living and community development directed to the same end. The Council would be well advised to adopt the systematic approach, which the Social Commission appeared to have done. The United Nations programme of action in the social field must include studies of different kinds which would be complementary. He hoped that in the work undertaken in the social field there would be close co-operation between the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

55. Mrs. LEIVO-LARSSON (Finland) expressed her appreciation of the work of the Social Commission and of the Secretariat's reports.

56. Commenting on the interrelation between social and economic conditions, she said that there were countries in which the importance of social questions was disregarded, and in which a balanced state budget was maintained at the expense of relatively slow progress in the field of social reform. In many countries — including Finland — industrialization had taken its own independent and often rapid course unaccompanied by, or accompanied by only slight, legislative activity in social matters. Consequently, disproportionate progress had been made in some areas of social policy, while in others, progress lagged. Incoherence in social policy was also often due to other factors, such as lack of effective planning or failure to carry out such plans as had been made.

57. In many States, progress was limited by economic factors, but great cultural differences among the various groups of society and a lack of social-mindedness in general were the main cause of social backwardness.

58. The establishment of a comprehensive programme for the introduction, development and improvement of social services was of primary importance in countries where such conditions prevailed. At the same time, an inventory of basic needs should be made, taking into account prevailing social conditions, economic possibilities and the availability of men and women able to carry out the programme. The possibility of obtaining help from outside the country should also be considered.

59. In such countries, her delegation believed that limited experimental projects on an area basis might be advisable, as the material resources and staff required for a comprehensive state-wide programme might not be available. The pilot projects would set an example, and provide training facilities for social workers. The programme could then be gradually expanded until community development was an established fact.

60. With regard to the order of priority to be observed in organizing social services, her delegation agreed that preventive measures should come first, followed by social assistance and social security. Social security was an advanced form of assistance which required more complicated administrative machinery than other forms of social assistance, and presupposed both an advanced social standard and a well developed sense of individual responsibility among the population.

61. Though necessary in certain cases, institutional care should be resorted to only where other facilities had proved inadequate. Assistance in kind was greatly preferable, since it could be combined with guidance and the inculcation of a sense of social responsibility. In Finland, for example, guidance in matters relating to domestic economy was combined with the supplementary children's allowance granted to large families. Guidance was given by women's organizations, whose instructors visited the homes of recipients of the allowance to ascertain the circumstances in which they lived, and to advise them in the planning of their family budgets. No one was compelled to take the advice, but most families were glad to be able to discuss their financial problems and plans with an adviser.

62. Stressing the importance and value of municipal self-government in large and sparsely populated countries like Finland, she said that participation in the administration of local social welfare services had helped to teach people to understand the operation of the social machinery and the interdependence of the various sectors of society.

63. In Finland, 12 per cent of the net national income was used to cover social expenses and the costs of other related services. That percentage might seem excessive, but it should be related to Finland's comparatively low national income. During the war, and in the immediate post-war period, there had been a marked increase in social welfare legislation, necessitating a considerable rise in state and municipal expenditures. In addition to measures to assist the family, such as maternity aid, home establishment loans for the newly married, children's allowances and supplementary children's allowances for large families, the national Pensions Act had been amended to assist old-age and other pensioners who had been hard hit by inflation.

64. Two committees were studying certain gaps in Finland's social security system — the absence of a health insurance scheme and of unemployment insurance. Among the reasons for those defects might be mentioned the unpreparedness of public opinion, emotional resistance, and the influence of political factors. Basic programmes for the development of social security policies had repeatedly been drafted, but only too often they had been forgotten or discarded as the result of mass feeling or political circumstance.

65. Despite the absence of health insurance and unemployment schemes, both the state and the municipal authorities provided help in the case of unemployment or illness. Any unemployed person could register with the municipal authorities, who were responsible for finding him work. If no work was available, it was the obligation of the commune to assist him by other means. In the event of large-scale local unemployment, the municipal authorities were responsible for arranging public works projects and could draw on state funds when the funds provided for unemployment relief under their own budgets were exhausted. In addition, several trade unions had state-subsidized unemployment funds. With respect to health insurance, the position was somewhat similar. The trade unions had special sick relief funds for their members and special health insurance policies were also issued by ordinary life insurance companies.

The general compulsory health insurance scheme under preparation would comprise maternity insurance for housewives who did not go out to work, and for women employed outside the home.

66. Almost all the hospital services were provided by communal and state hospitals owned and managed by the municipalities, municipal federations or the State. The fees were low, and patients without means were treated free of charge. Fees were reduced in cases of long illness, and the cost of treatment was covered entirely from public funds in cases of chronic disease such as tuberculosis, permanent insanity, cancer and poliomyelitis.

67. No provision was made for a maintenance allowance in the event of illness. If the family breadwinner fell ill, the family had to be assisted by the municipal authorities. The assistance was reimbursable in some cases. Every commune had a communal doctor whose services were available free to needy patients. The doctors were assisted by public health nurses. The communes also provided the services of midwives. Under an agreement between Nordic countries, nationals of one Nordic country resident in another Nordic country were entitled to the same benefits in respect of social insurance and social welfare services as the nationals of the country concerned. Consequently, the Nordic countries had tried to develop their social legislation as much as possible on parallel lines.

68. Until recently, Finland had been predominantly agricultural, but industrialization had changed the traditional pattern. Although over 60 per cent of the population lived in purely rural areas, only about 35 per cent derived their livelihood directly from farming and forestry. Over 30 per cent were engaged in commerce, communications and various other types of services. The inadequacy of the economic and social welfare services in rural areas was causing an influx of undesirable elements into the towns. In recent years, the improvement of social conditions in the rural areas had therefore been much discussed. In that connexion, she drew attention to the report of a panel discussion on the mental health aspects of urbanization, arranged by the World Federation for Mental Health, and held at United Nations Headquarters in March 1957. The report mentioned a number of factors which had a negative influence on mental health, such as structural changes in the population connected with age and sex distribution and the trend of the birth rate, variations in the structure of families, changes in the status of women and children, an increase in the female labour force, cramped living conditions, and the growing need of social assistance. The basic problem, from the mental health point of view, was the feeling of isolation, of not belonging to any social group, and growing mental strain.

69. It was obvious that the trend towards urbanization could not be reversed without upsetting the economic life of the community. The tendency to agglomeration was, however, counteracted by such forces as the rapid development of transport facilities, amenities such as radio and television which made country life more attractive, and industrial decentralization. Deliberate measures for checking the flow of population should be based on social realities and on a strengthening of the

effects of existing forces. The question involved not merely slum clearance and related measures in cities, but also a general improvement of rural living conditions, with special emphasis on raising the productivity of rural enterprises. One possible corrective measure was the exchange of visits such as those organized by women's organizations in Finland, and the organization of holidays for housewives, with financial help from the State. Housewives from rural areas visited the cities in the winter, while housewives from the urban centres visited the country in summer.

70. One of the greatest difficulties Finland had had to overcome after the war was the acute housing shortage. Under special legislation enacted to alleviate the shortage, the Government subsidised the building of new houses by granting long-term loans in urban districts on easy terms. Some local housing schemes had been started, under which loans for building new houses were also granted by the communes. Much building had also to be done to replace the schools, hospitals and other communal institutions in the ceded territories. The needs of the growing post-war population, as well as of the displaced population, had had to be provided for.

71. In conclusion, she wished to express her delegation's gratitude to all the specialized agencies for their very valuable work in the social field, as well as for their educational and assistance work. Her delegation also wished to express its gratitude for the large amount of preparatory work on the subject done by the Secretary-General and his staff, and especially by the Under-Secretary and Director of Social Affairs at United Nations Headquarters.

72. Mr. ORTIZ (Dominican Republic) said that his delegation considered that the *Report on the World Social Situation* was a valuable supplement to the *Preliminary Report* published in 1952. While his delegation realized the difficulties involved in producing such reports, it regretted that many of the statistics in the present *Report* dated back several years and suggested that in future, if up-to-date figures were not available, the Secretariat might obtain them by means of a questionnaire addressed to governments.

73. The picture presented by the *Report* was generally optimistic. As was pointed out in the introduction, the position in regard to health, the consumption of food-stuffs, education and income had considerably improved. Death rates had fallen. Notable progress had been made in education. There were important qualifications to that general picture of social progress, but it was obvious that the world had advanced considerably in the period covered by the *Report*, though the advance had admittedly been slow and unequal.

74. As had been pointed out by other delegations, the *Report* showed that social policy was being increasingly integrated with economic policy. The Mexican representative had emphasized the unity of the policies in the two fields and the impossibility of planning them separately. In the last resort, both had the same purpose, the greater welfare of mankind. In the light of the report submitted to the Council, it would be possible to ascertain what advances had been made, in which directions greater effort was required, and what form that

effort should take to ensure more rapid progress through national action and international co-operation.

75. In his own country there had been great developments in education in recent years. Under the literacy programme which had been recently put into execution, a total of 290,000 adults had registered in 1956 at 12,000 literacy centres staffed by 10,000 teachers. Of the students registered, 86,000 had become literate and 23,000 had received the certificate for the second course, which was designed not only to make the students literate but to assist the adult student to play his part in the community with more advantage to himself and to the country. That campaign, the greater part of the cost of which was covered by the Government, had received enthusiastic moral and economic support from individuals. The school building plan, under which more than 100 modern school buildings had been built in the preceding five years, had been continued in 1956. A school of fine arts and schools of crafts and occupations had been completed. The revenue from a new direct tax on commercial and industrial profits had been entirely devoted to the financing of the school building programme. In 1956, school attendance had reached the highest levels ever recorded. In that year, there had been 4,419 schools for children attended by half a million pupils. The average rate of school attendance had been 86 per cent. The school meals and school clothing service, which served over 30,000 pupils, had been further developed in 1956. A successful school savings scheme had also been established. School co-operatives had been established some years previously and were in operation in all schools in the capital and in the principal provinces.

76. The Dominican authorities had also undertaken extensive programmes for the construction of modern hospitals and health centres, especially for workers and children. The Dominican social security fund, which had been in operation for many years, was substantially increasing each year the volume of the assistance it supplied in the form of medical assistance, aid to the unemployed, pensions and other benefits. Diseases such as malaria, which in the past had affected large sections of the population, considerably reducing productivity, had been virtually eradicated by means of national health programmes.

77. Progress had also been made in regard to conditions of work and employment. In addition to the modern labour legislation embodied in the Labour Code, the Government had instituted a programme to improve the living conditions of the workers. The programme provided for the construction of workers' housing, the construction of specialized health centres, the establishment of day nurseries, the construction of social centres for workers, the establishment of unemployment offices, a maternal and child welfare service and other projects of similar importance.

78. As the Netherlands representative had pointed out at the 985th meeting, the problems of urbanization must be considered in conjunction with the problems of the rural population. A well conceived plan of rural improvement would help to reduce the flight to the towns. His delegation supported the suggestions in that connexion made by the Netherlands representative.

79. The population of most Latin American countries was concentrated in one or two principal cities. The increase in the urban population, which was general in the modern world, seemed to be due to the growth of the bureaucracy, to a preference for town life on the part of wealthy inhabitants of rural areas, and to the increase in agricultural productivity. The last factor had been particularly important in many countries, notably in Europe. In the Dominican Republic, the flight from the land had been less serious than in other countries. Nevertheless, the Government had taken measures to maintain a balance between the urban and rural population. Legislation had been enacted to provide landless peasants with land, and about fifty settlements with a total population of 60,000 had been established. In addition to measures to deal with the problems of urbanization, an attempt had been made to improve living conditions in the country so as to avoid the harmful effects which might otherwise have resulted in a country which, though in the process of development, was still predominantly agricultural.

80. Most peoples and governments were striving to achieve a higher level of living and a better world. If that goal was to be achieved, economic wealth must be reflected in social benefits, for economic development in itself had no justification unless it was directed towards the betterment of mankind. Success would be impossible without genuine and close international co-operation to promote what the United States representative had called the twin aims of economic development and social progress. His delegation sincerely hoped that the Council's discussions would result in practical achievements and examples of such co-operation.

81. Mr. THAJEB (Indonesia) said that his delegation thanked the Secretary-General for his opening statement at the 984th meeting, and expressed its appreciation of the reports submitted to the Council.

82. In his delegation's opinion, particular attention should be directed towards the housing problem, for in many under-developed countries large numbers of people lacked shelter of any kind. After food and clothing, therefore, housing programmes should receive priority. Although methods of financing must be adapted to local conditions, the experience of one country might be useful to others. The methods discussed in the Social Commission — such as the use of co-operatives, non-profit housing associations, mobilization of individual savings and external financing — seemed to be practical, and could be adapted for use in almost any country. Governments could play an important role in financing housing and giving the necessary guidance. In Indonesia, a Department of people's housing had been established under the Ministry of Public Works.

83. In that connexion, he drew the Council's attention to the statement in paragraph 67 of the annex to the *Report on the World Social Situation* that the hope had been expressed at the Joint UN/UNESCO Seminar on Urbanization in the ECAFE Region, held at Bangkok in August 1956, "that an international financial agency, such as the proposed Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development, would be able to provide, on a long-term basis, loans to Asian countries

for ameliorating serious social, physical and economic conditions arising from urbanization ”.

84. The *Report* emphasized the importance of population movements as a factor which not only directly affected the standard of living, but also had a bearing on such basic activities as agriculture and industrialization. The *Report's* conclusions concerning the social and economic implications of population growth in the under-developed countries were particularly interesting in that connexion (part I, chapter II, pages 21-27). He hoped that it would be possible to improve the material available for study, and to improve the methods of collecting and using data relating to population movements. Indonesia itself was preparing to take a census in or about 1960, which might fit in very well with the proposal of the United Nations concerning a world population census to be taken about that time (resolution 622 B (XXII), paragraph 1).

85. The growing improvement in health was a reflection of the progress in science and international co-operation in that sphere. The importance of government action in improving health conditions in the less-developed countries could not be over-emphasized. With the co-operation of UNICEF, WHO and other international bodies, the Indonesian Government had achieved significant success in controlling mass diseases like malaria and yaws.

86. The position with regard to food and nutrition was less satisfactory. Although food production had increased in nearly all parts of the world and some countries had large food surpluses, in many less developed countries per capita food consumption had not even reached the pre-war level. Long-term solutions recognizing the interests of all parties were required to enable the problems of the production, marketing, distribution and consumption of food to be dealt with effectively.

87. As the *Report* indicated, education had made progress in most of the world since 1950. It was estimated that 55 to 57 per cent of the world's population above the age of 14 years was now literate. Nevertheless, illiteracy still hampered the development of under-developed countries. For that reason Indonesia attached great importance to action to improve literacy, and illiteracy among Indonesians up to 45 years of age had been reduced to 50 per cent. In addition, primary education for children who had reached the age of 8 years was compulsory. Owing, however, to the many difficulties, such as the shortage of teachers, it was expected that the compulsory education provisions would not be satisfactorily implemented until 1960/61.

88. His delegation was glad to note that labour conditions had improved substantially, though irregularly. Employment, productivity and wages had reached high levels. In Asia, however, where countries were still in the less developed category, the gains had been uneven. In that connexion, he would stress the importance of social security and social insurance, especially in the less developed countries. Governments could play an active part in promoting or stimulating the improvement of social security and social insurance for the workers.

89. The problem of urbanization had received the attention it deserved. It was now one of the many problems with which the under-developed countries had to cope.

Even in the industrially more developed countries, the social implications of urbanization were a pressing problem, but in the less developed countries where there were employment opportunities for the flood of migrants from rural areas the problem was even more urgent. As one of the major causes of urbanization was under-employment or disguised unemployment in the rural areas, the decentralization of industry might help to check the trend towards urbanization. Community development programmes would certainly help to create favourable conditions in rural areas and thus reduce the desire to migrate to urban centres. That, however, was only one aspect of the problem, and attention should not be diverted from the problems which had to be solved in the towns themselves.

90. The Indonesian Government attached particular importance to community development programmes, and believed that the most efficient results could be achieved by integrating national and international programmes of community development. It was necessary, however, not only to co-ordinate national and international activities, but also to achieve a proper balance between the role of the central and local bodies. The Indonesian Government had therefore recently issued a government regulation on community development to ensure smooth co-operation between the various government agencies at different levels. Special bodies had been established to deal with community development. Stress had been laid on the local initiative of the village community, and arrangements had been made to ensure the necessary guidance and training.

91. His delegation recognized the importance of a social policy aimed at raising family levels of living, and fully endorsed the Social Commission's recommendation that the report of the working group of experts on family levels of living should be made the basis of further studies and research by governments, the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (E/3008, annex III, resolution A).

92. Finally, he wished to bring up a controversial point. His delegation thought that the condition of 600 million of the world's population was worth recording, irrespective of political considerations — he was referring to the People's Republic of China. His delegation, therefore, was in favour of including information on the social situation of the People's Republic of China in future reports.

93. Mr. N'GOM (World Federation of Trade Unions), speaking at the invitation of the PRESIDENT, expressed his organization's satisfaction with the *Report on the World Social Situation*. While that document bore witness to some improvement in the social situation, it showed that the progress made was relatively slight in comparison with all the want and poverty still existing in the world. Amongst the factors contributing to social progress was the increasing awareness of the masses of the people who were pressing for an improvement in their living standards. The world trade union movement, which now had over 160 million members, was pursuing measures to defend and improve the working and living conditions of the masses. However, the situation was still serious in many countries. Prices of consumer goods

and rents were rising steadily. Armaments expenditure resulted in inflation, higher taxation and cuts in the social services. Though unemployment was decreasing in some countries in comparison with the pre-war period, in many others there were tens of millions of unemployed. Finally, in some countries full freedom of trade union activity was still not guaranteed and the unions or their leaders were violently attacked.

94. Examining the main points of the *Report*, he emphasized the point that, for the worker, wages were the essential element in determining his standard of living and social situation. That was why rising prices led to claims for higher wages. To attempt to impose a wages standstill when prices were moving upwards was a disastrous policy from both a social and an economic standpoint.

95. Noting that in chapter VI the *Report* dealt with the question of reduced hours of work, he pointed out that the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was pressing for shorter hours without a reduction in wages. The introduction of new production techniques, particularly automation, should permit a reduction of hours of work and WFTU was happy to note that, thanks to the identity of views between the three international trade union organizations, the International Labour Conference had adopted a resolution at its 40th session requesting the Governing Body to include the question of hours of work in the agenda for its 42nd Session, in 1958.

96. During the last few years, there had been a perceptible increase in cases of over-work and accidents caused by speeding up and longer hours. WFTU attached special importance to that question, and had taken the initiative in convening a meeting of trade unionists and doctors specializing in safety at work to decide on the measures necessary for protecting the workers.

97. With regard to the increasing participation of women in industrial life, he said that his organization had taken steps to promote the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work. While recognizing the value of the recommendations by the International Labour Organisation and the Commission on the Status of Women, WFTU hoped that the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation would pay still more attention to those questions in order to accelerate the progress already made in that field. His organization would shortly organize an international seminar in which women trade union members would participate, with a view to helping women workers to take a larger share in trade union activity.

98. WFTU regretted that the *Report on the World Social Situation* had paid but scant attention to the problems of women workers. The Federation had decided to convene an international conference to deal with that question in 1958.

99. With regard to the question of housing, he said that WFTU believed that much larger sums should be invested in house-building, and that rents should be at a level working-class families could afford; a reduction in non-productive expenditure on armaments would obviously facilitate the financing of new housing.

100. WFTU would also like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that new problems were constantly arising and that technical progress in general, and automation and the use of nuclear energy in particular, would bring fresh problems in their train, which should be taken up by the Social Commission as soon as possible.

101. With regard to the improvement in family living standards, WFTU noted with satisfaction that the report of the group of experts (E/CN.5/321, appendix I) outlined the various factors which influenced them. It hoped that preliminary survey would be followed by more thorough studies, which would give an opportunity to go fully into the highly important question of social security. In particular, it would be useful if the authors of the next study were to establish close collaboration with trade union organizations both at the national and the international level.

102. Turning to the examination of social problems arising in the under-developed countries, he pointed out that inadequate wages, under-nourishment and bad housing and health conditions were still among the most serious problems awaiting solution there. That state of affairs was the result of the total or partial lack of social security systems. WFTU was of the opinion that the Council might well recommend the establishment of social security systems for the benefit of the working population in the under-developed countries, particularly in Black Africa.

103. WFTU had noted with interest the report on community development and on experiments already undertaken in certain under-developed countries. The campaign against illiteracy, family education, and mass education in health and nutrition would undoubtedly prove most successful if they formed part of community development. The trade union organizations could make a valuable contribution in that field. It would also be advisable to establish more international fellowships for the countries concerned with a view to training leaders for community development.

104. Noting that the *Report* had touched on the problem of uncertainty of employment in Latin America and in Africa, he pointed out that that situation was often due to the fact that colonial employers tended to evade their legal obligations by dismissing unskilled or semi-skilled workers before they had acquired a right to social benefits which depended on length of service. In addition, workers belonging to a trade union not approved by the employer were sometimes victimized by dismissal. To remedy uncertainty of employment, not only should wages be increased and vocational training, housing and health conditions improved, but colonial employers should also be required to comply strictly with social legislation in favour of the workers and to respect trade union freedom.

105. As a trade union leader who was a native of Black Africa, he would like to say a few words about the tasks devolving on the unions in Africa. The trade union organizations drew up standard budgets to serve as a basis in fixing wages; they prepared draft collective agreements and supervised their application; they had a share in administering the family benefit funds; and they

educated the workers and trained trade union personnel. In nearly all the under-developed countries, the trade unions were experiencing great difficulties and some were being driven to defend their very right of existence. They were often subjected to oppressive measures, particularly in territories where the people were struggling to attain independence. Such a state of affairs was extremely detrimental to the workers' interests, and hampered the functioning of social institutions.

106. WFTU drew the Council's attention to the need to call on governments of under-developed countries and colonial countries to conform strictly to the provisions of the international labour Conventions and

effectively to guarantee the exercise of trade union rights. The Council should support the struggle waged in those countries to obtain independence, for experience had shown that independence stimulated the economic and social development of the countries concerned.

107. In conclusion, he stressed the close interrelationship between economic and social problems, and expressed the hope that the United Nations would extend its activities in Africa, and would set up a regional commission for that continent.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.