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MEETING**

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**New York**

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**Chairman:** Sir Douglas COPLAND (Australia).

**AGENDA ITEM 26**

**Programmes of technical assistance: report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2661, A/2686, A/2702; A/C.2/L.224) (*continued*)**

1. Sir Alec RANDALL (United Kingdom) reaffirmed his Government's support for the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, which it believed to be one of the most positive, constructive and fruitful activities of the United Nations. As concrete evidence of that support, his Government had increased its 1954 contribution from £500,000 to £650,000. It had also made a special effort to pay almost a quarter of that contribution in January and the remainder at the beginning of the United Kingdom financial year in April. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's plea (315th meeting) that Governments should do everything in their power to alleviate the financial uncertainty of the Expanded Programme by early pledging and payment of contributions. During the past year the United Kingdom had provided 308 experts to assist other countries in their economic development and had granted facilities for study in the United Kingdom to 196 fellows from abroad. Those few details were enough to show that his Government did not merely pay lip-service to the Expanded Programme but played an active, practical part in it.

2. The reports before the Committee and the statement made to it by the Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board (TAB) at the 315th meeting clearly showed that the Expanded Programme was, in general, developing on satisfactory lines and that, in particular, assistance received had been better integrated within national development schemes. Despite inevitable difficulties the Expanded Programme appeared to be settling down and developing steadily.

3. During the past year the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) and the Economic and Social Council had taken steps which would undoubtedly ensure continued progress. Firstly, there was the decision taken by the Council at its seventeenth session under resolution 521 A (XVII) that a working capital and reserve fund be established for the Expanded Programme and that other measures be taken to increase its financial

security. The creation of a working capital and reserve fund would undoubtedly improve the Programme's efficiency in the long run and it was to be hoped that the General Assembly would endorse that and the other recommendations.

4. The United Kingdom had supported Economic and Social Council resolution 542 (XVIII) and hoped that it too would be endorsed by the General Assembly. The most important decision it contained concerned the substitution of a new system of moving percentages for the old system of fixed allocations. The United Kingdom delegation, though originally opposed to any change in the method of allocating funds on the grounds that the existing system should be given a longer trial, had eventually supported the resolution, as a compromise which was workable and acceptable to the participating organizations. The proviso that no organization should receive less than 85 per cent of the amount it had received the preceding year was an essential safeguard against undue annual fluctuations.

5. His delegation believed that the Working Group set up by TAC at the eighteenth session of the Economic and Social Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the Programme, would be able to do useful work but felt strongly that the work should be achieved without any increase in administrative expenditure. TAC had generally agreed with that view and in its report on the Expanded Programme (A/2661), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had endorsed the opinion of TAB that "an elaborate and costly system of project evaluation would not be justified in relation to the possible benefits to be derived" (E/TAC/41, para.8).

6. At the eighteenth session of the Economic and Social Council the United Kingdom delegation and several others had submitted a draft resolution (E/TAC/L.76 and Corr.1) proposing that that be enlarged by the annual election, in addition to the present membership, of two States which were non-Members of the United Nations and two States Members of the United Nations but not represented on the Council. His delegation regretted that the proposal had been shelved and had not been discussed fully on its merits. The States in the two categories mentioned were making very considerable financial and technical contributions to the Expanded Programme and ought to have some say in its administration. It was to be hoped that the proposal would be raised again at an appropriate time and fully discussed.

7. There was considerable force in the Advisory Committee's criticisms of the heavy administrative expenses of the Expanded Programme. Although some progress had been made in reducing those expenses, it was obviously essential that expenditure should be constantly reviewed and a conscientious effort made to devote the greatest possible proportion of contributions to actual technical assistance in the field.

8. The Advisory Committee's general recommendations concerning the administration of the Expanded Programme as a whole called for very careful and detailed examination by the Secretary-General and the heads of the specialized agencies before any final decision was reached. He had been gratified to hear the Secretary-General state at the 315th meeting that, in carrying out its study of the organizational relationships in the Expanded Programme, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination would take full account of the Advisory Committee's comments.

9. Finally, he wished to pay tribute to the valuable work done by the Technical Assistance Board, the Technical Assistance Administration and the specialized agencies.

10. Mr. HALIQ (Saudi Arabia) said that although Saudi Arabia's contribution to the Expanded Programme was modest, its requests for assistance were also small and had, moreover, been preceded by extensive preparatory work done by commercial experts at the Saudi Arabian Government's expense. Being neither a major contributor nor a major beneficiary, Saudi Arabia was in a good position to discuss the Expanded Programme objectively in terms of the needs and duties of the international community.

11. He regretted that, at a time when the Expanded Programme was in jeopardy, neither the Secretary-General nor the Executive Chairman of TAB had put forward a single idea to increase its usefulness. They had sought to justify the *status quo*, stressed the need for reducing expenditure or pleaded for greater financial security. Important though they were, organizational matters were really the concern of TAC; the General Assembly and the Second Committee were chiefly interested in the general direction and management of the Expanded Programme. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee had touched on matters of great interest to the Committee, but their consideration would be left to the next session of the General Assembly as they had yet to be discussed by the Economic and Social Council.

12. The difficulties facing TAB had become more complex in recent years and were not merely of a financial nature. What had begun as a straightforward crusade to provide technical assistance everywhere and in nearly every field had turned into a somewhat bewildered search for a more selective policy of operation. Nevertheless, although there was no simple yardstick by which to measure the results achieved, the report of TAB recorded significant operational and administrative progress. The rivalries between the participating agencies were being eliminated. The progress made during the year towards a simplification of the chain of command was helping to establish a sound administrative machine.

13. The programmes of technical assistance were now entering upon a phase in which they had to prove themselves or fail. The main problems were how to persuade the contributing countries that the enterprise was worth expanding and how to increase administrative economy and efficiency. Originally missions had been sent to various countries to make recommendations about specific projects; now emphasis was being placed on integrated programmes. In keeping with that trend, resident representatives had been stationed at strategic points to ensure administrative co-ordination. There was a danger that the new trend might lead to more requests from recipient countries than could be fulfilled from the slender resources available.

14. A review of the objectives of TAA and the specialized agencies was essential; emphasis should be laid on the economic rather than the humanitarian aspect of technical assistance. For most of the under-developed countries the primary aim of technical assistance was industrialization, but, with the exception of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), most of the specialized agencies were not concerned with economic or industrial development. Both the administrators of the Expanded Programme and the recipient countries should concentrate their efforts on such basic objectives as domestic capital formation, the better utilization of resources and plans that would yield practical results. A modified pattern of development priorities could perhaps be worked out. United Nations experts called in to advise Governments had to decide whether their recommendations should be dominated by economic objectives or whether precedence should be given to the removal of social and cultural obstacles to development.

15. The suggestion of the Executive Chairman of TAB that pledges of contributions be made for more than a year at a time would contribute to the financial stability of the programme. Consideration might also be given to the possibility of arranging for reputable insurance companies to underwrite such long-term contributions.

16. The remuneration of United Nations technical assistance experts and field workers had been the subject of much critical comment. If, as he believed it to be the case, the cost of aid offered under bilateral governmental programmes and by private organizations was less than that of assistance given by the United Nations and the specialized agencies, consideration should be given to the principle of sub-contracting.

17. Mr. RENOUF (Australia) said that the Expanded Programme was the most significant achievement of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. Although the amount of money spent on the Programme was small in relation to the needs of the under-developed countries, the dividends were high.

18. Australia had given continuous support to the Expanded Programme over the last four years and had contributed a total of over \$1,300,000 in Australian currency, in addition of course to its contribution to the Colombo Plan. As a mark of its faith in the Expanded Programme, his Government had decided to make a considerably increased contribution for the coming year.

19. Commenting on the operation of the Expanded Programme, he said that his delegation was at a loss to understand why recipient countries had made so few requests for equipment under its provisions. A limit of twenty-five per cent had been placed on the expenditure of funds for equipment, but in 1953 only ten per cent had been so spent, and apparently only six per cent in 1954. The Technical Assistance Board had rightly pointed out in its sixth report to the Technical Assistance Committee (E/2566 and Add.1),<sup>1</sup> the important connexion between the demonstration of unfamiliar methods and the use of equipment. Countries receiving assistance under the Programme should be actively encouraged to submit more and larger requests for equipment.

20. His delegation was not entirely satisfied with TAB's views on the geographical distribution of assist-

<sup>1</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 4.

under the Expanded Programme, and in particular the amount of assistance being given to Asia and the Far East. Although approved over-all project expenditure for that region had increased it was disturbing to see that the proportion of funds spent in the region had declined in the case of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization. He could not accept TAB's view that, in determining the amount of aid a country should receive under the Expanded Programme, the volume of assistance received under other programmes should be taken into account. To ensure the equitable distribution of aid among countries, full consideration should be given to the criteria of population and *per capita* national income. Obviously, countries with the lowest *per capita* income had the most urgent need for technical assistance. However, adjustments might be necessary to enable each country to receive a worthwhile programme and to ensure that countries such as India, with large populations and low *per capita* incomes, were not allocated too large a proportion of available funds. Asia and the Far East, with well over half the population of countries and territories receiving assistance under the Expanded Programme, should receive about 50 per cent of the over-all expenditure. The emphasis on the planning of comprehensive technical aid schemes at the country level should, he felt, help to bring about a more equitable geographical distribution of assistance.

21. His delegation believed that the time might have come to increase the membership of TAC by the inclusion of two Members of the United Nations who were not members of the Economic and Social Council and two States which were not members of the United Nations. It might be unfair not to give all Governments participating in the Expanded Programme an opportunity of helping to determine its operation.

22. His delegation fully approved Economic and Social Council resolution 542 B II (XVIII) regarding the revised allocations and financial procedures and hoped that it would be endorsed by the General Assembly.

23. Australia would regard it as a great tragedy if the programmes of technical assistance were to lose momentum. The Australian Government would continue to support the Expanded Programme as it was operating at present and was sure that the other Governments would do the same.

24. Mr. CAFIERO (Argentina) expressed his country's gratitude to all the staff members of the United Nations and specialized agencies concerned with the provision of technical assistance to under-developed countries. Argentina attached great importance to both the regular and the Expanded programmes of technical assistance, which were becoming increasingly effective instruments for the economic development of under-developed countries.

25. The primary purpose of the United Nations programmes of technical assistance was to promote economic development, and the funds provided should not be expanded to provide assistance in such fields as human rights and freedom of information. Although his Government attached the highest importance to the improvement of social conditions, which was indeed the ultimate objective of economic development, it felt that requests for assistance for social welfare schemes should be considered in the light of their importance to economic development. He was glad that that point had

been made clear by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 542 B II (XVIII).

26. His delegation had, in principle, supported the establishment of the working capital and reserve fund to increase the financial stability of the Expanded Programme, but had pointed out that the creation of that fund should not prevent the initiation of new projects. As mentioned in paragraph 14 of the TAC report to the seventeenth session of the Council (E/2558 and Corr.1) the decision to build up the working capital and reserve fund over three years might have to be modified if there were substantial fluctuations upwards or downwards in the level of contributions. He still felt that that fund should consist principally of convertible currencies.

27. As the Expanded Programme had been established by the United Nations and as the United Nations was pledged to raise the living standard of the under-developed countries, it was only logical that a United Nations organ, TAC, should analyse and review that Programme. TAC reflected the discussions and decisions reached by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

28. Efforts should be made to achieve greater co-ordination and in that connexion he drew attention to the information furnished by TAB to TAC (E/TAC/40), the sixteenth report of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (E/2607) and paragraphs 42 and 51 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/2661). As the Advisory Committee pointed out in paragraph 51 of the report, the supervision exercised over the Expanded Programme by TAB was more apparent than real, which led him to feel that in future the Advisory Committee should assume more direct supervisory powers and thus help to overcome the difficulties experienced each year in connexion with administrative and operational expenditure. Those remarks should not be taken to mean that he overlooked the substantial contribution made by the specialized agencies; the contrary was evident from the second paragraph of the preamble of Economic and Social Council resolution 542 B II (XVIII) which he had co-sponsored.

29. He attached considerable importance to the activities of the resident representatives and agreed with the observations contained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Advisory Committee's report.

30. The Expanded Programme would lose in effectiveness if it was not possible to meet certain requests for assistance because funds had been allocated to the participating organizations not on the basis of requests for assistance but on the basis of fixed percentages. At the seventeenth session of the Economic and Social Council, Venezuela and Argentina had proposed to TAC that such automatic allocation of funds should be discontinued and the Council had incorporated that proposal in its resolution 542 (XVIII).

31. From the information contained in the report of TAB it could be deduced that over fifty per cent of the funds approved in 1954 were already earmarked for operations in 1955. The percentage was considered to be experimental and TAC would be able to determine whether the system should be continued or not. He looked forward to the findings of the Working Group set up by TAC to assess the effectiveness of the Expanded Programme.

32. His delegation had supported the proposal to defer consideration of the question of the representation of

States not members of the Economic and Social Council in the management of the programmes of technical assistance, in view of the fact that, as TAC was an organ of the Council, it should have the same composition as the Council. He felt that the matter should be further deferred because, in 1955, when the United Nations Charter came up for possible revision, the membership of TAC might be changed and the United Nations might acquire new Members.

33. Mr. NASH (United States of America) said that the President of the United States had stated that he was prepared to request from Congress funds for a contribution to the 1955 programme. He had expressed the hope that the Expanded Programme would continue to operate at least at the current level and that it would obtain increasing support from all Governments. While the President's request did not constitute a pledge, it did indicate his continuing support of the scheme.

34. Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 542 (XVIII), he pointed out that very much depended on the participating organizations. It was extremely gratifying that the discussions on the various organizational arrangements had been held in an atmosphere of mutual good will. The achievements of the Expanded Programme were due to the technical skill, general competence and devotion of the participating organizations. To be effective, the Programme had to make full use of the operations of the specialized agencies within their respective fields. Closer and more effective co-ordination and not centralization should be the objective.

35. So far as the procedures outlined in Economic and Social Council resolution 542 B II (XVIII) were concerned, his delegation assumed it to be thoroughly understood that the activities of the resident representatives, including the development of country programmes, would be carried out in full co-operation with the field staff of the participating organizations. Thus the resident representatives would consult with agency

representatives on all matters affecting their agencies, keep them informed of any developments that came to their knowledge and co-operate with them in carrying on negotiations affecting their programmes. Conversely, agency representatives would keep the resident representatives similarly informed. It was also understood that the resident representatives would not have technical staffs of their own but would depend on the participating agency for the development and execution of country programmes.

36. With regard to the staffing of TAB, he assumed that the Board would continue to look to the participating organizations for substantive assistance in technical fields and that the TAB staff would be concerned with those aspects of the Expanded Programme which involved general problems and inter-relationships. A new and costly bureaucracy had to be avoided.

37. In explanation of his delegation's understanding of paragraph 1 (*iv*) of Economic and Social Council resolution 542 B II (XVIII) he pointed out that, in order to give the concept of country planning the widest practicable application and, at the same time, to provide for an adequate general review, there should be no substantial re-arrangement of programmes or reallocation of funds among the specialized agencies or among the agencies within a given country for the year in question when TAC reviewed and approved the programme. The evaluation and review authorized to be made by TAC should be as specified in TAC's original terms of reference. TAC should continue to be largely concerned with eliminating duplication and achieving more effective co-ordination.

38. The Executive Chairman of TAB had stated that he would consult with the participating organizations as appropriate with respect to the allocation of the 5 per cent "free money". His delegation assumed that the Executive Chairman would consult either with the agencies or with TAB in that connexion.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.