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Chairman: Mr. Janez STANOVNIK (Yugoslavia).

AGENDA ITEMS 12, 29 AND 74

- Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters II (sections I, II and III A, except paragraphs 189-198), III, IV and VII (section I and paragraph 645)) (A/4415) (continued)**
- Economic development of under-developed countries (continued):**
- (a) **International flow of private capital: report of the Secretary-General and recommendations thereon by the Economic and Social Council (A/4487, E/3325 and Corr.1-3);**
 - (b) **Question of the establishment of a United Nations capital development fund: report of the Secretary-General (A/4488, E/3393, E/3393/Add.1-4);**
 - (c) **Methods and techniques for carrying out a study of world economic development: report of the Secretary-General and comments thereon by the Economic and Social Council (A/4489 and Add.1, E/3379, E/3379/Add.1-7);**
 - (d) **Promotion of wider trade co-operation among States: report of the Secretary-General (A/4490, E/3389)**

Land reform (A/4439) (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/C.2/L.490/REV.1) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to continue the consideration of the six-Power draft resolution on land reform (A/C.2/L.490/Rev.1).
2. Mr. WENTWORTH (Australia) recalled that during the general debate (663rd meeting) he had welcomed the work already done in the field of agrarian reform by the various United Nations bodies and the considerable progress made in many under-developed countries. It was obvious that land reform programmes could be implemented only by national Governments, and that consequently the role of the Secretary-General and of the specialized agencies in that particular sphere could be only advisory. That principle had been recognized in the draft resolution, which his delegation would support. Furthermore, his delegation was glad to note that the draft resolution provided for the intensification of work in existing fields, since the entry into entirely new fields might dissipate the energies of the Secretariat and detract from the quality of their studies.
3. His delegation particularly welcomed the reference in paragraph 3 (a) to the social factors involved in land reform. Such factors were particularly relevant to the situation in Papua and New Guinea, where the cardinal policy of the Administering Authority was to respect the views of the indigenous peoples, including their concept of land ownership. The system of tenure in those Territories was extremely complex and often militated against a rapid tempo of economic development. Generally speaking, it was suitable to subsistence agriculture, with emphasis on short-term cropping rather than to modern methods of cash-farming. The Administering Authority was therefore faced with the problem of bringing about the necessary changes gradually so as to avoid a head-on clash with local opinion. It was seeking to establish a reasonable rate of economic development while simultaneously making every effort to respect the wishes and customs of the local population.
4. Mr. PAYNE (United States of America) said that the welfare of farmers had long been of monumental importance in the United States. Some of the country's fundamental beliefs and even its Constitution were derived to some extent from the experience and common sense of the early settlers, who had acquired the skill of self-sufficiency from tilling the soil and who had built a new set of ideals for free men on free land. With the change from the colonial to the federal system, the United States had broken all historical precedents in its land policy. Farmers had led the country's westward expansion and low-priced land and high-priced labour had prompted an ingenuity that had resulted in improvements in farm equipment and revolutionary advances in mechanization. Their influ-

ence was reflected in the system of co-operative buying and selling, the establishment of land grants for agricultural colleges and the rapid development of agricultural science. Agriculture still bulked large in the United States economy and most of its farmers still had moderate or low incomes. Any land reform system which gave greater freedom and dignity to the individual would receive the sympathetic approval of the United States.

5. After recalling what the United States representative to the Economic and Social Council had said about land reform in 1951,^{1/} he stressed that land reform went far beyond the mere division of large holdings; it could encourage the establishment of voluntary co-operatives, the improvement of tenancy contracts, the settlement of title to land and water, reform of the tax system, the provision of educational and extension services and land development proper.

6. Having long recognized the importance of agriculture for the economic and social development of the less developed countries, the United States had welcomed the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the field of land reform and had played a leading role in proposing and supporting the resolutions already adopted on the subject. In addition, the United States had provided bilateral aid for the execution of land reform projects in Japan, Korea, Italy, Iran, Viet-Nam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Egypt, Spain, Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru.

7. The diversity of approach in each sovereign nation and the variety of their experience could serve as a guide to other nations planning their own land reform programmes. His Government was glad to have had the opportunity of assisting other Governments in their determined efforts to make significant progress in that field. In August 1960, Congress had authorized \$500 million as a first step in a broad new social development programme for Latin America. In announcing that programme, President Eisenhower had stressed that one of the goals was better land utilization within a system which provided opportunities for free, self-reliant men to own land without violating the rights of others.

8. In fact, the rights of others were sometimes violated by totalitarian régimes which had seized power by force and which, not being elected, were not responsive to the will of the majority. Under the disguise of "land reform" the property of legal owners was confiscated and brought under the State control of appointive bureaucrats. Peasants were mobilized to work the land under registration laws that did not allow them to change occupations or even to work at all, except at the behest of the State. Their pay was usually lower than what they had previously earned and took the form of scrip money that could purchase only State-owned goods in State-controlled stores. The State became a massive owner of latifundia, a single large estate run for the benefit of a few individuals who maintained themselves in control by the force of arms and the anaesthesia of propaganda. On occasions, such régimes doled out a few parcels of land to the proven party faithful, while the huge majority of persons not only did not acquire ownership of property but were actually denied the right ever to acquire property under such a system. In the meantime, the arms and propaganda

necessary to shore up the State latifundia drained additional hundreds of millions from the public treasury so that expenditure on anything of value to the human being became impossible.

9. It was the individual and not the State that should benefit from land reform. It was the prerogatives of the legal owner and the new owner, not of the State, that must be preserved and respected. Land reform must improve society as a whole and in particular must raise the living standards of needy citizens, who would in turn derive untold satisfaction from the ownership of a small plot. If that was the type of land reform carried out by a Government, the result could only mean a happier and a more confident people working towards a stronger and more progressive economy for the benefit of the country as a whole.

10. His delegation enthusiastically endorsed the draft resolution.

11. Mr. SHERDYUKOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) thanked the Cuban delegation for the valuable initiative it had taken in bringing the question of land reform before the General Assembly. Land reform was of paramount importance to the under-developed countries, which were heavily dependent on exports of agricultural commodities. The studies recommended in the draft resolution would be most useful, as the economic organs of the United Nations had not as yet fully digested all that was going on in the world in the field of land reform. The draft resolution also filled many of the gaps which had been left in previous resolutions on the subject, particularly Council resolution 712 (XXVII). Radical programmes of land reform were now being carried out in many countries such as Cuba, Mexico, the United Arab Republic, India and Iraq, and much could be learned from their experience.

12. It was a sad fact that in the Western economies the poor were getting poorer and the rich richer. Land reform could do much to close that gap and help the under-developed countries make greater progress towards mobilizing their own national resources. It was strange, for example, that Latin America, a potentially wealthy sub-continent, imported foodstuffs valued at \$1,000 million. That paradox had been attributed by many eminent Latin American economists to the existence of latifundia. In countries like Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile, a very small percentage of the population owned an enormous percentage of the land. A similar situation had existed in Byelorussia before the revolution but the land had since been nationalized and handed over to the peasants in a way that satisfied the interests of both the State and the individual. The land reform measures adopted had resulted in the mobilization of the country's huge potential resources and had led to radical changes in its economy. The obsolete pre-revolutionary system had given place to a progressive and mechanized agriculture.

13. His delegation could not accept the view that the existence of small holdings was beneficial to agriculture. On the contrary, they tended to raise costs and lower productivity. Changes in the agrarian structure should involve more than the liquidation of large estates and foreign holdings. It was also necessary to introduce more efficient methods of production which would make countries less dependent on foreign markets and less vulnerable to discriminatory measures. The rational organization of agricultural production was an extremely complex problem but the establishment of

^{1/} See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixth Year, Thirteenth Session, 533rd meeting, paras. 88-96.

co-operatives could do much to solve it, and in that respect the experience of the Asian countries would be most helpful.

14. The draft resolution contained a number of excellent recommendations and his delegation would support it.

15. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution because of its importance for increased agricultural productivity. His country would co-operate with the Secretary-General and FAO in the studies contemplated and hoped that they would result in a clearer picture of the whole problem of land reform.

16. In Sudan there was no problem of land shortage, feudalism or the presence of foreign settlers. The Government was mainly concerned with measures to ensure the fullest possible utilization of existing land and the opening up of new land for agricultural development. Full use was being made of agricultural co-operatives and credit agencies, and Sudan's land laws and system of land registration were among the best in Africa.

17. Mr. FLERE (Yugoslavia) expressed satisfaction at the general support for the draft resolution. There seemed to be agreement on the two main ideas embodied in it: that land reform was a basic pre-condition for more efficient agriculture and for social and economic progress in general, and that any redistribution of land should be accompanied by the introduction of modern techniques and improved credit and marketing facilities. Radical land reforms had been introduced in his country since the war and the co-operative system had proved to be the most appropriate way of utilizing redistributed land. A number of resolutions adopted by the United Nations and FAO urged Governments to speed up land reforms and recommended the provision of assistance and advice by competent international organizations. He hoped that such assistance would be broadened and would include financial aid for the measures which should accompany the redistribution of land. The United Nations and FAO had already worked in that field and the draft resolution, which followed the lines of its predecessors, was designed to extend those activities. He understood that that was also the wish of FAO. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

18. Mr. SAMSURI (Albania) expressed his appreciation of Cuba's initiative in seeking the inclusion of the question of land reform in the agenda. Land reform would stimulate the economic development of under-developed countries, particularly those with one-crop economies, enabling them to make better use of land, increase agricultural production through the introduction of modern techniques, and diversify their economies. Such measures could eliminate food shortages and help to stimulate industrialization, which must advance in step with agricultural development if higher living standards and general economic and social progress were to be achieved. Land reform was particularly necessary in under-developed countries, since their agriculture had been neglected to suit the interests of the colonial Powers. In other countries agricultural development was impeded by inequitable systems of land ownership and land tenure. Progress could be achieved only if land was equitably distributed and utilized rationally with the aid of modern equipment.

19. The socialist countries had gained most valuable experience in the field of land reform. Albania had been a backward agrarian country with a feudal system of agriculture and virtually no industry. Its arable land had largely been the property of a few landowners and the average holding of about 100,000 peasant families had been one hectare. The present régime had redistributed the land free to all peasants and agriculture was now developing in harmony with industry. Certain categories of landowners were allowed compensation by law for land taken from them. The wide-spread establishment of co-operatives had greatly facilitated mechanization and land improvement and agricultural production was expanding rapidly.

20. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that the revised text of the draft resolution was an improvement on the original version. With regard, however, to operative paragraph 1, he noted that Council resolution 712 (XXVII) implicitly endorsed the twofold programme of work described in the Secretary-General's report on land reform (E/3208): namely, the long-term programme referred to in paragraph 55 of that document, and the short-term programme, embodying more particularly the material of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General in 1962, referred to in paragraph 57. While the purpose of the draft resolution under discussion was to broaden the scope of the 1962 report representing the immediate programme of work, no reference was made to the equally worth-while long-term programme. He would therefore suggest the addition of the words "as mentioned in paragraph 55 of the 1959 report by the Secretary-General (E/3208)" at the end of the paragraph. He would also suggest the deletion of paragraph 2, as an interim report to the General Assembly at its sixteenth session seemed unnecessary in view of the fact that the Secretary-General would be presenting his full report to the Council a few months later. An interim report would be appropriate only if the Secretary-General encountered difficulties in carrying out the recommendations of resolution 712 (XXVII) of the Council: the matter should be left to his discretion. Subject to those reservations, his delegation would support the draft resolution.

21. Mr. JURASZ (Poland) said that land reform was of major importance to the economic development of the under-developed countries. His delegation had for some years advocated speedy reorganization of agriculture in those countries in the interests of their economic and social progress. Despite United Nations resolutions, land reform was encountering considerable opposition in certain countries, where the landowner system was still firmly entrenched. In others, colonial administrations had designated areas for exclusive European occupation and confined indigenous farmers to other areas. According to the Economic Survey of Africa since 1950 (E/CN.14/28), 89 per cent of the land in the Union of South Africa had been alienated or reserved for European occupation; in Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland that proportion was 49 per cent. Elimination of the vestiges of feudalism and the consequences of colonial rule was a matter of prime importance to the under-developed countries.

22. The six-Power draft resolution was a valuable contribution and provided a firm basis for United Nations action in that field. He attached particular importance to the reference in paragraph 1 to "a detailed and critical examination of the basic problems

of land reform in under-developed countries". It was the responsibility of the United Nations to evaluate the obstacles to land reform in those countries, where programmes were often obstructed by powerful minorities or foreign monopolies. His delegation would support the draft resolution.

23. Mr. ERROCK (United Kingdom) protested against the offensive and unwarranted references to certain groups of countries made by both the Polish and the Albanian representatives.

24. Mr. BURGER (Union of South Africa) deplored the remarks which had been made about his country and which were irrelevant to the present discussion.

25. Mr. MAHDAVI (Iran) said that land reform was a matter of great concern to his country, since about 80 per cent of its inhabitants obtained their livelihood from the land. His Government viewed the subject in the context of economic and social development. The first steps had been taken in 1950, when the Shah had initiated an extensive land reform project to distribute crown lands. The purpose of the measure had been to increase the number of small holders, thereby redressing a social injustice, and to raise agricultural production. Redistribution of land should be accompanied by collective efforts to improve techniques and skills, and agricultural co-operatives, agricultural credit systems and land improvement schemes had therefore been instituted. The measures had however been carried out with due regard for demographic, legal, social, economic and other factors. As in all under-developed countries, difficulties had been encountered owing to the lack of skills and capital, although better yields had already been obtained in some regions after the redistribution of land. State-owned land was now being distributed and the size of private holdings had been limited by law; new legislation would shortly govern the relationship between landowners and peasants. Crown lands were expected to render 400,000 villagers independent owner-operators and State lands a further 200,000.

26. With regard to the text of the draft resolution, he understood that ILO was also interested in land reform studies and he would therefore suggest the insertion of the words "and the executive heads of the other specialized agencies concerned" after the words "Director-General of FAO" in paragraph 1. His delegation welcomed the draft resolution and would support it.

27. Mr. EL-MUTAWALLI (Iraq) said that his delegation, in its statement in the general debate (659th meeting), had dealt in detail with the question of land reform, which was one of the essential factors in economic development, and had informed the Committee of the progress made and the difficulties encountered by his country in carrying out such reforms. In that connexion, he would assure the United States representative that the purpose of Iraq's agrarian reform law was to raise the standard of living of its rural population.

28. The objectives of the draft resolution, which his delegation had co-sponsored, were very clear and had been fully explained by the Cuban representative. The general studies requested would help his own and many other countries to benefit from the experience of others in land reform, while the country studies requested under paragraph 3 (b) would be of great assistance to the countries concerned. His delegation also considered that the help of the specialized agencies, and

particularly FAO, would continue to be needed in studying the problem; it hoped that those agencies and the United Nations would continue to give attention to the vital question of land reform.

29. Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Chile) said that his delegation continued to support measures intended to increase agricultural productivity and to raise the standard of living of rural populations. It also believed that the question of land reform should continue to be examined by the United Nations bodies best qualified to deal with it, in particular FAO.

30. It was his Government's conviction that land reform could not be approached from the merely quantitative point of view, but must be studied and implemented with due regard to all the qualitative factors involved. His Government was continuing its own study and implementation of measures to increase agricultural productivity, the amount of land under cultivation, and the number of landowners. It was also examining its tax structure with a view to promoting increased land utilization and was carrying out other measures to help small holders. His delegation considered that the draft resolution had been improved by its recognition of the role which should be played by FAO in work on the subject, and agreed that studies of all aspects of the question would be of great value to the under-developed countries. For those reasons, it would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

31. Mr. SERAFIMOV (Bulgaria) said that the question of land reform was of great importance to many under-developed countries, which, because of their lack of national industries, were almost exclusively dependent on agricultural development for their general economic development. Most of those countries were characterized by an inequitable distribution of land, the predominance of latifundia in their agricultural structures, the companion tendency towards extreme subdivision of the land owned by small holders, and in some cases by foreign ownership and exploitation of land. Those structural conditions made it difficult to increase agricultural productivity in order to finance capital investment from the savings realized and thus to break the vicious circle of poverty.

32. Before the establishment of the socialist system in his country, Bulgarian agriculture had been characterized by extreme fragmentation of land holdings and subsistence production. As a consequence, Bulgaria's agricultural productivity had been among the lowest in the world. The land reform and agricultural modernization carried out since 1946 had been based on a long-standing tradition of rural co-operation; at present 98 per cent of the country's land was included in farm co-operatives. Side by side with those co-operatives, State farms had been set up to serve as models for modern land cultivation. Agricultural modernization and the consequent increase in agricultural productivity had made possible a great improvement in the lives of the country's peasants. Parallel with that modernization of agriculture, his Government was making great efforts to industrialize the country, since economic backwardness could be overcome only by the harmonious development of both industry and agriculture.

33. It was obvious from his country's experience, and that of others, that land reform served as a powerful stimulant to increased productivity and to the mobilization and utilization of human and natural resources. His

delegation would consequently give its enthusiastic support to the draft resolution.

34. Mr. CAMARA SIKHÉ (Guinea), expressing his delegation's whole-hearted support of the draft resolution, said that the question of land reform was as simple as it was important. Guinea shared with other African countries a legacy of colonialist exploitation characterized in the agricultural sphere by monoculture, foreign ownership and the exclusion of indigenous inhabitants from ownership, cloaked by colonialist protestations of respect for local customs and traditions. On attaining independence, it had therefore been necessary for his country to take steps to diversify and extend its agricultural production, to restrict foreign ownership of land, and to promote agricultural productivity through the establishment of co-operatives. The effect of those reforms had been economically encouraging and socially satisfactory.

35. Mr. ROA KOURI (Cuba) drew attention to the changes made in the revised text of the draft resolution. The sponsors had agreed to incorporate the additions to operative paragraph 1 suggested by the Iranian and French representatives, but had been unable to

accept the French representative's suggestion concerning the deletion of paragraph 2, as they felt that a progress report should be made to the Assembly at its sixteenth session. In order to meet the suggestions advanced by the Dominican representative, the sponsors would add a third preambular paragraph, reading: "Recognizing the usefulness of studies concerning the obstacles which impede or render difficult the implementation of land reform,". In paragraph 3, the words "paragraph 1" would be replaced by "the present resolution".

36. Mr. GREEN (New Zealand) thanked the Cuban representative for his consideration of the suggestions jointly put forward by the representatives of Mexico, China and New Zealand, which had been incorporated into the revised text of the draft resolution practically in toto. Their adoption made it possible for his delegation to give the draft resolution its full support.

The revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.490/Rev.1), as amended, was unanimously adopted.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.