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Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

AGENDA ITEM 29

Programmes of technical assistance:

(a) Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3613,
A/3661, A/C.2/196) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. RAJAPATIRANA (Ceylon) said that the United Nations programmes of technical assistance were making a significant contribution to economic development by successfully attacking one of the under-developed countries' most serious handicaps, the lack of adequate technical skills. The year 1956 had, as the Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board (TAB) had indicated (471st meeting), been a landmark in that respect. The range and achievements of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance had been impressive and the implementation of the new country-programming procedures had been an important step forward. The new procedures had permitted fuller consultation between the participating organizations and Governments and their departments and greater co-ordination at every level of the programmes, resulting in better evaluation of projects and priorities and better planning. His delegation was particularly gratified to note the effective co-operation between the Expanded Programme and the Colombo Plan. In that connexion he referred to the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research, a project for the financing of which the Government of Ceylon, the Technical Assistance Administration (TAA), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Kingdom and the United States were co-operating.

2. Another significant development had been the increasing interest of Governments in obtaining assistance for the solution of concrete problems. Like the Director-General of TAA (471st meeting), his delegation welcomed that evidence of growing concentration on specific, practical and detailed problems. The experimental outpostting of TAA programme officers had also been an important innovation which could be successful given a suitable environment. His delegation looked forward with interest to the further report on the subject.

3. The future outlook was less promising. Although more countries than ever before had made pledges and 20 countries, including Ceylon, had increased their pledges at the Technical Assistance Conference, it was expected that contributions would be \$1 million less than the amount needed. With the progressive reduction of the United States matching percentage there would be difficulties ahead. While every endeavour should be made to find the necessary funds, his delegation would suggest, as a means of helping make good the deficit, that universities, educational foundations and world-wide industrial corporations might be asked to help by training personnel or by releasing personnel for short periods of service at little or no cost to the Programme. The "Burma Plan" might also be applied where circumstances warranted it and consideration might be given to general application of the principle that recipient Governments should meet the local living expenses of experts. The possibility of temporarily abandoning the international administrative service plan and related training programmes might also be considered. Problems such as currency utilisation having been solved, the finance problem might also be solved and the curtailment of programmes avoided.

4. Commenting on the financial inducements and conditions of service offered to experts, he said that he could not agree that remuneration was inadequate especially where the recipient Government was also paying the experts' living costs. It was true that from the standpoint of the expert concerned, other factors such as expatriation and insecurity of tenure had to be taken into consideration, but the new salary schemes adopted by the General Assembly at its eleventh session might help to overcome the difficulty, if any.

5. In conclusion, he welcomed the decision to include an evaluation of the Expanded Programme as a regular feature of TAB's annual report and, on behalf of his Government, thanked TAB, TAA and all the participating organizations for their valuable services.

6. Mr. JUDD (United States of America) emphasized that his Government was firmly committed to the support of the Expanded Programme as a vital means of promoting the economic development of the less advanced countries and believed that the Programme should continue to grow. Although the United States Congress had reduced appropriations for several items in various aid programmes, it had appropriated the whole amount requested for the United States contribution to the Expanded Programme.

7. While working in the Far East he had observed at first hand the needs of peoples in the economically under-developed countries and had proposed the first programme of technical assistance established by his Government outside Latin America. In the Republic of China spectacular results had been achieved under that programme in health, education, land reform, agricultural and industrial development, and public admini-

stration. As a physician he was particularly aware of the impact of health conditions on economic potentialities; he had therefore taken special interest in the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) within the Expanded Programme and in particular its work towards the eradication of malaria which constituted an enormous economic burden in the countries where it was rife. The United States was co-operating with WHO and the Pan-American Health Organization in developing a world-wide attack on the problem. His Government was also aware of the work being done under the Expanded Programme by the other specialized agencies as, for instance, the World Meteorological Organization, whose activities, surprising as it might seem, had a direct bearing on economic development. He instanced its efforts to combat potato blight in Chile.

8. His Government had always advocated the close co-ordination of the various economic and technical assistance programmes being carried out through and outside the United Nations and therefore endorsed Council resolution 659 A (XXIV) which requested the recipient Governments themselves—and he did not think that it would place any undue burden on them—to continue their efforts to co-ordinate their technical assistance programmes in order to make them more effective. His delegation also approved of the Council's resolution 658 B (XXIV); the suggestion that the Programme might be expanded by the provision of technical assistance on a payment basis, while not new, was constructive, and he hoped that participating agencies and Governments would give serious consideration to that method of speeding up economic development. His delegation looked forward with interest to TAB's report in that connexion.

9. It was also important, in view of the Programme's limited resources, that, as TAB had stated in its Annual Report (A/2965 and E/TAC/REP/103), the Programme's activities should in future be concentrated on the countries and territories in most need. It was of course a fact, as the Council had recognized, that the Programme's technical capacities far exceeded its present financial resources. His delegation therefore endorsed Council resolution 659 B (XXIV) on the possibility of increasing those resources and shared the hope that it would be possible to raise them to the \$50 million level. Naturally even that amount would not exhaust the possibilities of making available "technical assistance in depth". Expansion of the programme into such areas would require large outlays for supplies and equipment and raise new problems of financing. His delegation would take up the subject and submit some specific proposals on it later in the session. With regard to the present Programme, success obviously depended on the financial support of Governments: the United States Government would continue to play its part and it had been pleased to note that at the recent Technical Assistance Conference 21 Governments had increased their pledged contributions for 1958. It hoped that their example would be followed so that the Programme would remain a genuinely co-operative international effort.

10. Mr. KAMENOV (Bulgaria) said that technical assistance was the one United Nations activity whose usefulness was unanimously recognized and appreciated. The considerable increase in the funds spent on technical assistance and the relative reduction in

administrative costs during the past year was most encouraging. The growing number of requests for assistance proved, however, that needs were still great and that countries wanted the sort of disinterested help that an international programme could give them. As the available funds were insufficient to meet even the most immediate needs and it was likely, as the Executive Chairman had said (471st meeting), that the funds for 1958 would be \$1 million less than the amount required for the reduced programme for 1958, the problem of securing additional funds was extremely acute. While the question of disarmament was outside the Committee's province, the Committee could and should point out that agreement on disarmament would not only relieve the peoples of the enormous economic burden of military spending but would release the necessary funds for effective assistance to underdeveloped countries.

11. For the time being, however, the Programme must make the most of the funds available. First, every effort should be made to increase the Programme's efficiency and administrative costs should be cut to the absolute minimum. Secondly, full use should be made of all offers of assistance made. The refusal of the generous contribution offered by the German Democratic Republic was not only discriminatory, but deprived the Programme of much-needed funds. Similarly, his country's contribution for 1956 and 1957, offered in the form of fellowships and expert advice in medicine, agriculture, vine-cultivation and fruit and tobacco growing, fields in which Bulgaria had achieved considerable success, had not been utilized. Although the amount of the assistance in question was not perhaps great, the Programme was hardly in a position to ignore contributions, however modest. What was more, a number of recipient countries had informally indicated that they would like to take advantage of the facilities offered by Bulgaria.

12. Bulgaria was not alone in that position. Of the European experts invited to work under the Programme, only a few had come from the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and none from Bulgaria, Hungary or Albania. Yet the scientific standing of the USSR, as evidenced by the number of its training institutions and scientific workers, as well as by its recent spectacular achievements in space travel, was beyond dispute. His country was greatly indebted to Soviet experts for their valuable assistance under bilateral agreements.

13. Another consideration was the rational utilization of funds. In his delegation's view, the training of local staff able to take over the direction of their countries' development should be given priority over the dispatch of experts, and experts should be sent out primarily for training purposes. It was regrettable therefore that the number of fellowships granted in 1956 had dropped by 303. In addition to expert advice, countries should be provided with necessary supplies, machinery and technical documentation, such as plans, descriptions of processes, etc. He hoped that those forms of assistance would be used extensively in the future.

14. In making those criticisms, he did not wish to belittle valuable achievements of TAB and TAA, but to contribute to the further improvement of their work.

15. Mr. ROGERS (Canada) paid a tribute to the work of TAB and TAA during the past year and also to that of TAC and, in particular, of its six new members. The

main problem facing the Technical Assistance Programmes was, as both the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA had pointed out (471st meeting), that of reconciling increasing demands with resources which were not increasing and might even be decreasing. TAC and the Economic and Social Council had sought to tackle the problem by appealing to Governments to increase their contributions. That was useful and desirable but the Second Committee and the Council should realize that it was not the most constructive action which they could take. Whatever the size or volume of contributions the total amount of money available would always be less than enough to meet the demands for assistance. The emphasis ought therefore to be placed on how to make the best possible use of the resources available and it was to that aspect that he would devote most of his remarks.

16. In the first place it was obviously important that the Expanded Programme should be co-ordinated with other programmes of economic assistance; naturally, the primary responsibility for such co-ordination rested with the recipient Governments themselves but, as the representative of Ghana had pointed out, the United Nations should assume responsibility for ensuring that scarce economic aid resources were not wasted. His delegation looked forward with interest to TAB's report on that subject to the Council at its twenty-sixth session.

17. The Netherlands representative had spoken of the necessity of avoiding confusion between technical assistance and capital assistance. But it was not always easy and was perhaps undesirable to maintain a rigid distinction between the two: they ought certainly in practice to be closely related, as Canada had learned through its participation in the Colombo Plan to which, incidentally, it intended to contribute \$35 million in assistance in 1958.

18. The Mexican representative had made a suggestion regarding the desirability of concentrating the Programme's resources on particular subjects and activities, which TAC might well study. While supporting TAB's provisional decision, subsequently approved by the Economic and Social Council, concerning new programmes for European countries his delegation agreed that assistance ought not to be concentrated geographically but should be concentrated on particularly useful subjects and activities and should be made available to all countries and territories needing it. The subjects and activities would, as the Mexican representative had indicated, have to be chosen by recipient Governments under the terms of the country programming procedure; Governments might, however, be urged to choose those in which the United Nations was particularly well qualified to provide assistance as, for instance, public administration, industrial development or the development of natural resources.

19. His delegation noted with interest that the distinction between donor and recipient Governments was fast disappearing. There was no doubt that almost all countries, whatever their own difficulties, had experience or facilities which they could usefully share with others. The "Burma Plan", too, was an interesting development; it showed that Governments were finding it cheaper and more effective to use the machinery of the Technical Assistance Programme even when they had foreign exchange resources of their own. That ap-

plied in particular to the recruitment of experts and the sending of students abroad.

20. His delegation agreed with the Netherlands suggestion that the item, technical assistance, ought in future to be divided into two sub-items, but it felt that TAC was the appropriate body for a detailed study of the TAA programmes. With regard to the question of technical assistance in the field of atomic energy, to which the Mexican representative had drawn attention, his delegation believed that it should be related to other forms of technical assistance provided by the United Nations and the specialized agencies and that there should be no duplication of administrative machinery already set up under TAB.

21. A number of suggestions had been made for a better use of experts; the Netherlands practice of appointing junior experts to assist senior experts was certainly worthy of further consideration. It was also clear, as the Mexican representative had said, that short-term experts ignorant of the general economic and cultural conditions of the countries to which they were sent could not do very valuable work; on the other hand the practice of using short-term high-level experts for particular projects, initiated by the Director-General of TAA, merited support. His delegation's attitude to the outposting of TAA programme officers was similar to that of the Netherlands delegation; it did not think it desirable to establish regional technical assistance administrations. There were, however, obvious advantages in continuing the present experiment in Latin America. Canada was in favour of a continuation of current evaluation work, which would show what changes ought to be made in the operation of the Expanded Programme. Some solution must be found to the problem of the Programme's administrative and operational costs; in the meantime, his delegation hoped that no specialized agency would take hasty action likely to prejudice a final decision.

22. The Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA had spoken at the 471st meeting of the United Nations work in the field of public administration; his delegation looked forward to the further study of the Secretary-General's proposal for the provision of administrators for employment in national administrations. The proposal might result in a useful new type of technical assistance. Canada strongly supported the French delegation's view that it was undesirable for the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council to pass resolutions concerning technical assistance for a particular country. The practice did not increase the amount of assistance available and might well raise hopes which could not be fulfilled. His delegation had been interested in the remarks made by the United States representative at the present meeting about the possibility of expanding the scope of technical assistance and looked forward eagerly to its promised proposals.

23. His delegation's concern with details should not lead the Committee to believe that it underestimated the Programme's ultimate human value. Canada wholeheartedly supported the Programme and its objectives, and for 1958 had pledged a contribution of the same order as its contribution for 1957, \$US 2 million, fully convertible and entirely at the disposition of TAB.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.