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AGENDA ITEM 26

Programmes of technical assistance (*continued*):

**(a) Report of the Economic and Social Council
(A/3154, A/C.2/189 and Add.1, A/C.2/L.283)
(*continued*)**

1. Mr. VALLADARES (Brazil) said that the regular programme and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance had developed into a general plan which linked all parts of the world. The under-developed countries had always enthusiastically supported the concept of technical assistance, but they had also feared that the proposed programmes might mask the real nature of the problem, namely, the need to increase the volume of investment. The more developed countries tended to help the poorer countries through the least costly form of assistance—the transmission of technical and other knowledge. Fortunately, such assistance had the advantage of adding to the knowledge of the donating and receiving countries alike.

2. Despite the administrative difficulties resulting from the great variety of currencies and services, the present technical assistance machinery was functioning satisfactorily. So long as the principle of the universality of contributions was maintained, ways and means must be found to facilitate payment by the under-developed countries.

3. Brazil attached particular importance to three projects: the Brazilian School of Public Administration at Rio de Janeiro, financed by the United Nations and the Brazilian Government; the industrial training programme, financed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Brazilian industry; and the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), which had started an intensive course at Rio de Janeiro for training in economic development programming. His Government hoped that that training programme would become permanent, since Brazil's economic development required a growing number of economists familiar with programming techniques.

4. The misgivings recently expressed in the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) regarding so-called excessive decentralization of technical assistance were exaggerated. Brazil had always greatly appreciated the collaboration of ECLA, which was constantly concerned

with the problems and difficulties which technical assistance was capable of solving.

5. There was a need to co-ordinate the various authorities and government agencies in the countries receiving technical assistance, and also to co-ordinate the work of foreign experts with such authorities and agencies.

6. Closer co-ordination should be ensured between the technical assistance programmes and the activities of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The procedure whereby the Bank examined not only repayment probabilities but also the technical and economic merit of each project prepared with the technical assistance of the specialized agencies was detrimental to the prestige of Technical Assistance Administration (TAA) and was an obvious duplication of effort.

7. The principle of universal and proportional contributions to the Expanded Programme, although basically desirable, was economically unrealistic and tended to restrict the scope of the programmes, since the contributions of the under-developed countries were necessarily small. The general level of technical assistance had therefore been modest for many years, despite the increasing needs of countries facing the difficult transition from backwardness to rapid technological development.

8. The greatest possible priority should be given to determining the form and rate of industrialization best suited to the needs of the under-developed countries. His delegation therefore fully supported the proposals regarding industrialization and productivity submitted by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-second session (E/2895).

9. The recent decision to establish the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) opened up a new and important field of technical assistance. It was highly desirable that close co-ordination should be maintained between TAA and IAEA. It was above all the lack of adequate sources of energy which had retarded the economic progress of so many under-developed areas.

10. Mr. MOLDOVAN (Romania) stated that one important aspect was the constant increase in the number of fields of technical assistance due, among other things, to the substantial post-war-increase in production in the economically under-developed countries which had resulted from the higher volume of investment. Only through industrialization could the under-developed countries raise their level of production efficiently. Yet production in the manufacturing industries of the under-developed countries as a whole was only 5 per cent of total production in the private sector. The possibilities of development were great. Studies should therefore be made of the most rational utilization of national resources, and technicians should be trained to carry out the economic development programmes. In that connexion, the activities of the regional commissions were highly commendable. The complex needs of the under-developed countries were also partially satisfied by the technical assistance programmes. The

new system by which Governments drew up their national development plans in co-operation with the resident representatives was an improvement, since the maximum number of projects were devoted to the most urgent needs of the receiving countries.

11. Unfortunately the allocations for industrial development were still less than 10 per cent of the total allocations, which was inadequate. The allocations for equipment and supplies, despite a slight increase, had been only 11 per cent in 1955 as compared with the allocation of 60 per cent for experts. During the discussion on the allocation of funds, some representatives had explained that the proportion of equipment and supplies was small because they were not intended for essential purposes. That was so, but the experts could work more effectively if a larger volume of technical equipment was available to them.

12. Particular attention should be given to training experts who were nationals of the recipient countries, and fellowships could be granted for that purpose.

13. The Economic and Social Council had decided, at its twenty-second session, that the amount of the Working Capital and Reserve Fund should be fixed annually and that the figure for 1956 would be \$12 million. That decision was logical and appropriate; but the allocations to the Working Capital and Reserve Fund and the Contingency Fund amounted to 46.3 per cent of total contributions, so that correspondingly less funds were available for countries requesting assistance. That aspect of the budget should therefore be reviewed.

14. It was gratifying to note from the Economic and Social Council's report (A/3154) and the documents issued by the Technical Assistance Board (TAB) that efforts had been made to make full use of all contributions. It was apparent that, so far as the utilization of contributions was concerned, there were no difficulties which called for changes in the fundamental principles of technical assistance. Resolution 623 B II (XXII) was therefore ill-advised. Some representatives of countries whose contributions had been temporarily unused had pointed out that their contributions had since been assigned, and that demand for them had exceeded the amount they had contributed. For example, whereas the Czechoslovak contribution had not been used in 1954 because Czechoslovakia's technical assistance potential had not been sufficiently well known, all its subsequent contributions had been exhausted. Although in 1956 Romania had contributed 100,000 lei which had been pledged in 1955, it had received no information about the projects for which assistance had been granted or about its requests for specialists. Consequently Romania had so far found it difficult to make suggestions concerning the utilization of its contribution.

15. The decisive factor, so far as the utilization of funds was concerned, was not that the contributions were paid in convertible or non-convertible currency. Other factors, such as a more thorough knowledge of the potentialities of each country, better distribution by TAB of national contributions with a view to their utilization by the specialized agencies, and timely information concerning approved projects, were much more important.

16. He failed to see the need for Economic and Social Council resolution 623 B III (XXII), which was contrary to certain fundamental principles of the technical assistance programme and might have detrimental effects on that programme. Firstly, some participating States which at present made large contributions might tend to reduce their contributions in view of para-

graph 3. Secondly, some Governments might have serious misgivings, because if their contributions were not utilized they would be faced with the problem of obtaining foreign currency. The resolution was also contrary to one of the fundamental principles of the technical assistance programme, set forth in Council resolution 222 (IX), namely that States were entirely free to participate in the Programme in the way they considered best. That principle was one of the main reasons why the Programme was so popular: in practice most States preferred to contribute in their national currencies, which they used to provide services, fellowships or equipment. His delegation was therefore opposed to Council resolution 623 B III (XXII).

17. He then submitted the joint Czechoslovak and Romanian draft resolution (A/C.2/L.283).

18. Mr. O'NAGHTEN (Cuba) extended a warm welcome to the new members of the Committee. His welcome was addressed particularly to Spain, a country which had given to one-quarter of the States represented on the Committee their race, religion, culture and language; and to Ireland, a young State in contemporary history, but renowned for its importance as the repository of European civilization after the fall of the Roman Empire, as well as for its evangelical and educational work throughout the centuries that followed. The contribution which the new members would make with regard to the item under discussion would be particularly useful. Their presence in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and TAC would enable them to participate directly in studying and formulating policy with regard to the technical assistance programmes and would largely offset the drawback that certain countries, while contributors or recipients under the Expanded Programme, were unable to give others the benefit of their knowledge and experience.

19. His delegation had always followed with close attention the progress of the technical assistance programmes, since technical assistance was the first—and sometimes the most difficult—step in carrying out an integrated and effective programme of economic development.

20. He congratulated TAB on its excellent work. The success of the programmes was self-explanatory. The Expanded Programme had passed beyond the experimental stage and was now a positive factor in the planning and execution of economic development schemes of a large number of countries.

21. It was gratifying that the administrative costs of the regular programme had continued to decrease. The regular programme of technical assistance in public administration caused him some anxiety. In spite of the fact that the budgets of the United Nations and of the Expanded Programme had increased each year, the allocation for the public administration programme in 1957 would be the same as for the past six years, but it would be required to act on the requests of nineteen additional new Member States. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's request for an increase in the allocation for technical assistance in public administration (A/C.2/189 and Add.1).

22. Mr. SARWAR (Afghanistan), after stressing the important role played by the United Nations technical assistance programmes in the economic and social development of the less advanced countries, said that technical assistance formed an integral part of Afghanistan's economic development plans and had been rendered in such fields as economic planning, statistical

services, geological surveys, community development, handicrafts, agriculture and public health.

23. Although considerable success had been achieved with the limited resources available, the assistance given so far to the under-developed countries was only a fraction of what was actually needed, as stated in the report of the Economic and Social Council and the TAB report entitled *A Forward Look* (E/2885-E/TAC/49). The programmes should be extended still further and contributions, especially from the more advanced countries, increased far above their present level.

24. Technical assistance had to be flexible enough to adapt itself to different environments and to meet changing needs; for that reason the system of country programming had been instituted. It was gratifying that contributions had increased, and the fact that the Working Capital and Reserve Fund had reached the prescribed level of \$12 million was a further sign of vitality. The problem of convertibility still hampered the smooth working of the programmes, but the recommendations on that subject embodied in Council resolution 623 (XXII) should provide an effective solution.

25. Recruitment was another difficulty. Measures taken to offer a career service to specialists employed in executing the programmes should be accelerated. Technical assistance would never achieve its early promise unless the best international civil servants could be recruited.

26. Lack of logistic support could also prove a serious impediment to technical assistance projects. Many countries simply did not have the resources to provide missions with basic facilities. The whole question was in need of review.

27. Greater attention should be paid to the problem of evaluating technical assistance programmes. That might involve an increase in administrative costs to start with, but savings would be effected in the long run. Objective techniques of evaluation should be developed to ensure that the best possible use was made of the limited resources available.

28. Co-ordination was another problem. In that respect, great advances had been made by all agencies, regional commissions and central services concerned, but there was still room for improvement.

29. Regional projects could do much more for rapid and balanced development than programmes confined to a single country, and could often help to iron out differences between individual States. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) had played a prominent role in the elaboration of such projects.

30. At present the amount of technical assistance given to each country tended to be fixed by the amount of assistance provided during the previous year. Such inflexibility made technical assistance programmes less responsive to development potential than they might otherwise be. It would be wiser to concentrate resources on those areas where the need was greatest and where results would be most remarkable.

31. His delegation was not unduly perturbed by the shortcomings of the technical assistance programmes. It was confident that those programmes would eventually attain their maximum efficiency for countries that needed them most.

32. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union had always taken a positive attitude to the United Nations programmes of technical assistance. On 17 October 1956, at the Sev-

enth United Nations Technical Assistance Conference, it had stated its readiness to contribute a further sum of 4 million roubles for the year 1957 towards the Expanded Programme. The successful development of the under-developed countries had been impeded by their lack of trained technicians, which was often a result of their colonial heritage. For example, during their eighty-year-old domination of Egypt the colonialists had persistently refused to allow Egyptians to be trained as canal pilots. The Indian and Afghanistan representatives had stressed the need for training technicians, and in particular had recommended the establishment of actual training centres in under-developed countries. A very good example of such a centre was the higher institute of technology at Bombay. The Soviet Union had set aside 200 fellowships for providing specialist training for students from the under-developed countries and was prepared to increase considerably the number of specialists assigned to work in under-developed countries under the technical assistance programmes. It was also prepared to offer its experience in the peaceful uses of atomic energy to the under-developed countries, and in January 1955 the Council of Ministers of the USSR had adopted a resolution concerning scientific, technical and industrial assistance by the Soviet Union to other countries for the advancement of research on peaceful uses of atomic energy. At a meeting of the tenth session of ECAFE the previous year, the Soviet representative had expressed his country's willingness to receive Fellows and students in the Soviet Union who would follow university courses. They would receive free tuition, grants for books, free medical service, housing, etc.

33. His delegation noted with satisfaction the increase in the scope of the technical assistance programmes and the larger total of contributions, but nevertheless felt bound to draw attention to certain shortcomings. The most noteworthy was the fact that the principle of universality underlying the programmes had been violated. The German Democratic Republic had offered the sum of 400,000 German marks—\$180,000—as a contribution towards the Expanded Programme, and had expressed its willingness to provide experts and equipment and to welcome trainees from the under-developed countries. However, the Secretary-General had refused to accept that contribution and had not invited the German Democratic Republic to the Technical Assistance Pledging Conference in October 1956, although he had invited such States as Monaco and the Vatican. The Secretary-General's action was a flagrant example of favouritism to the Federal Republic of Germany and of discrimination against the German Democratic Republic.

34. A further drawback in the United Nations technical assistance programmes was their heavy administrative costs. Out of a total budget of approximately \$30 million for 1957, administrative costs of the Expanded Programme would amount to \$1,755,400, the operational services would cost \$2,258,200 and TAB secretariat \$1,825,100: a total of \$5,838,700. In other words, overhead costs amounted to 18.2 per cent of total resources. It would be recalled that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended that overhead expenditure should not amount to more than 12 per cent of available resources.

35. Another principle underlying the technical assistance programmes—that of voluntary participation—had been undermined by the Economic and Social Council's adoption at its twenty-second session of the resolution on currency utilization (623 B III (XXII)).

The resolution had originally been introduced by the Governments of the United States and Canada, and had sought to ensure that any amount greater than the equivalent of \$500,000 should be contributed in convertible currencies. Despite the opposition of several delegations the resolution had been adopted. However, at the Technical Assistance Conference in October 1956, fifty-six countries had pledged contributions in their national currencies and forty different currencies had been offered. It was contrary to the whole idea of voluntary contributions to stipulate that contributions should be made in dollars.

36. For that reason, the Soviet Union welcomed the draft resolution proposed by Czechoslovakia and Romania which was designed to delete the unacceptable paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 from the resolution in question and to request the Council to re-examine the problem of currency utilization in accordance with the principles set out in Council resolution 222 A (IX). It hoped other delegations would also give the joint draft resolution their support.

37. Mr. ISIK (Turkey) said that, while the discussions on technical assistance in the United Nations had not been spectacular, the technical assistance services rendered to a large number of countries had been substantial. The members of the Committee should remember that they represented more than the interests of their own countries. That did not mean that they should eschew references to technical assistance activities in their own countries; on the contrary, those references might help to promote a more universal outlook.

38. So far as technical assistance was concerned, needs far surpassed the modest resources available. Ways and means would therefore have to be found to increase those resources and to utilize them as ingeniously as possible.

39. The increase in voluntary contributions was a welcome trend. It was very important that contributions should be made regularly, because that had a direct effect on the efficient implementation of the annual programme. He paid a tribute to the spirit of international solidarity shown in particular by countries which received no direct technical assistance but which contributed to technical assistance funds with no ulterior political motives. Nevertheless the increase in voluntary contributions was still not sufficient. The possibility of making a larger allocation for technical assistance from the United Nations budget should be considered. His delegation therefore supported the request that additional funds should be made available for technical assistance in public administration by increasing the budget of the regular programme. A similar increase in the United Nations budget for other forms of technical assistance, especially in the field of industrialization, might also be considered. He congratulated the persons responsible for administering the funds on their excellent work and on their efforts to reduce administrative costs.

40. The actual form which technical assistance should take—experts, Fellows or equipment—could not be generally determined in advance. What was important was the quality of the work done. The form of techni-

cal assistance should be determined separately in each specific case. The recruitment of experts often involved delicate problems. They required much more than mere technical qualifications, and the administrators of the programmes, in spite of their great experience, still seemed to have some difficulties in getting the right men. It was gratifying to learn that they did not intend to recruit experts solely from the industrialized countries. It was to be hoped that governments would not keep too jealous a hold on their own experts, but would release them for work in regions where their services were more urgently required.

41. Technical assistance in the form of fellowships was of inestimable value and should be employed on the widest possible scale. Fellows acquired not only a specialized training but also a knowledge of other countries which greatly contributed towards international understanding. Language difficulties were often a barrier and that question might usefully receive further study. It was likewise important not to overlook technical assistance in the form of equipment.

42. The system of allocations was not perfect but on the whole seemed to be objective and to work well in practice.

43. Finally the thanks of his delegation were due to Mr. Owen, Mr. Keenleyside and their assistants, as well as to the specialized agencies, for the excellent work which they had done.

44. Mr. OWEN (Executive Chairman, Technical Assistance Board) pointed out to the representative of the Soviet Union that the terms for convening the pledging conference were laid down in Economic and Social Council resolution 222 (IX), which requested the Secretary-General "to invite to the said Conference, with the right to vote, all Members of the United Nations and all other Governments members of any specialized agency participating in the programme". The Federal Republic of Germany was a member of seven of the eight participating agencies, while the German Democratic Republic was a member of none. Monaco was a member of three of the participating organizations and the Vatican a member of one.

45. Mr. CHAUVET (Haiti) questioned the Soviet representative's statement that the Soviet Union had always supported the technical assistance programmes of the United Nations.

46. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked Mr. Owen for his explanation, but still felt that artificial obstacles were being put in the way of increasing the number of countries contributing to the Programme, including the German Democratic Republic.

47. In reply to the representative of Haiti, he pointed out that since the inception of the United Nations the Soviet Union had always contributed to the United Nations budget, part of which was devoted to regular technical assistance programmes. From 1953 onwards it had participated actively in the Expanded Programme. He drew attention to the fact that all that had been said by the representative of Haiti had already appeared in *The New York Times* in January 1956.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.