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Chairman: Mr. Pierre FORTHOMME
(Belgium).

AGENDA ITEM 52

World Food Programme (*concluded*) (A/6003/Add.1, A/6149, A/6150; E/4015, E/4043, E/4060; A/C.2/L.819/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, L.839, L.840, L.841/Rev.1, L.844)

1. Mrs. WRIGHT (Denmark) explained that at the previous meeting she had voted in favour of the draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council (A/C.2/L.839), because of Denmark's constant desire to further the interests of the developing countries, its long-standing tradition as an agricultural nation, and the active part it had played both in the World Food Programme and in the adoption of Council resolution 1080 (XXXIX). Her Government planned, subject to parliamentary approval, to contribute \$7 million to the Programme and was keen to serve on the United Nations/FAO Intergovernmental Committee mentioned in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution.

2. Mr. M'BAYO (Sierra Leone) said that, unfortunately, he had been unable to be present during the vote on the draft resolution, but he would have voted for it because of its great importance for the developing countries.

3. Mr. REED (Norway) said that his delegation supported the extension of the World Food Programme and had consequently voted in favour of the draft resolution. With reference to operative paragraph 2, his delegation hoped that substantial cash contributions would be forthcoming so as to enable the Executive Director of the World Food Programme to meet transport costs and also to purchase needed food-stuffs on the open market. By using cash contributions rather than services, the Executive Director should be able to defray transport expenses on a competitive basis and avoid upsetting normal transport channels.

4. Sir Keith UNWIN (United Kingdom) explained that he had voted for the draft resolution regarding a programme of studies on multilateral food aid (A/C.2/

L.841/Rev.1) in the interests of unanimity but the doubts he had expressed (1012th meeting) had not been fully dispelled by the Argentine representative. He had voted in favour of the programme of studies on the strict understanding that they would not duplicate or prejudice other studies already being made and that full weight would be given to the issues identified by the FAO Committee on Commodity Problems and mentioned in the eighth preambular paragraph before any further decisions were taken.

AGENDA ITEM 46

Population growth and economic development: reports of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*)* (A/5803, A/6003, A/6101, A/6104 and Corr.1; E/3895/Rev.1 and Add.1-3; A/C.2/L.835 and Corr.1 and Add.1, L.842, L.843)

5. Mr. VIAUD (France) pointed out that a number of questions must be clarified before the General Assembly could adopt realistic decisions on the subject of population growth. For example, some representatives maintained that demographic growth acted as a brake on economic development, while others maintained that economic development was impeded by a lack of such growth. However, the studies which had recently been made and the discussions that had been held at the international level had clarified certain facts on which there was more or less general agreement. First, there was a definite link between economic development and demographic growth; secondly, the forecasts made of the total world population by the end of the century, which varied between 6,000 million and 7,000 million, were cause for grave concern; thirdly, there was a rapidly rising gap between food supplies and population; fourthly, the problem was acute in certain regions, especially Asia; and, finally, the health and educational standards of the developing countries must be improved before they could benefit from direct means of controlling their populations.

6. Obviously, there could be no single solution to all those problems. At first sight, it might be thought that an increase in assistance would be the answer. Yet a country like India, which had received substantial amounts of aid, had been unable to solve the problem. It was perhaps illusory to think that any increase in aid would be sufficient to offset the frightening rise in the population.

7. Nor could the problem be solved only by technical means. There were moral and human factors that could not be ignored. The subject was one on which individuals might hold strong views and on which Governments might hold different views. The advocates

*Resumed from the 1010th meeting.

of population control were not always scientific; its opponents relied on their consciences in dealing with a problem that required immediate action. Whatever views individuals might hold, governmental representatives must see what joint international action could be taken to help the developing countries. In so doing, they must realize that the subject involved demographic, educational, health and other aspects. The specialized agencies must co-ordinate their action to ensure that the aid provided to Governments requesting it was really effective. The World Health Organization was already trying to define what its sphere of action should be. It was no use providing direct aid without first helping the recipient countries achieve a certain level of education and culture, for which purpose UNESCO could be very useful.

8. The long-range programme of work outlined in the report of the Population Commission at its thirteenth session (E/4019), which had been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1084 (XXXIX), was extremely vague on certain points. That might be considered as an advantage for to be too precise might embarrass certain international organizations and merely cause further discord. He would therefore ask the representative of India, who had presented the draft resolution before the Committee (1010th meeting), whether the adoption of a further draft resolution by the General Assembly would enable the international organizations concerned to give the developing countries more practical help in population control than they were receiving at the moment. If the answer to that question was in the negative, perhaps it would be better to withdraw the draft resolution (A/C.2/L.835 and Corr.1 and Add.1).

9. If the Indian representative considered that the adoption of a further text by the General Assembly was essential, then the limits of the action that could be taken by the United Nations family of organizations must be clearly defined. First, as the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs had pointed out at its 955th meeting, it was for Governments themselves to request assistance in population control; the United Nations could not possibly take sides on such an issue. Secondly, there did not yet seem to be agreement within the international community that international organizations should participate directly in the provision of contraceptive devices to the developing countries.

10. As the debate in the World Health Assembly had made clear, there was a question of responsibility. If specialists in fertility control were to be sent to the developing countries, they must explain not only the advantages of contraceptive procedures but also their disadvantages. And no one could deny that some contraceptive measures were not entirely safe. In other words, if a draft resolution on the subject was to be adopted, the role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies must be carefully defined.

11. For that reason, his delegation had submitted certain amendments (A/C.2/L.843) to the draft resolution. The first two amendments merely drew attention to resolution WHA 18.49, adopted by the World Health

Assembly on 21 May 1965.^{1/} The others concerned procedure. The responsibility for consulting the specialized agencies on the role which the United Nations and its related organizations could play in the comparative study of population problems and economic and social problems should be given to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the Secretary-General. The Council must examine the results of the second World Population Conference held at Belgrade in September 1965, as well as the decisions of WHO, and all the other relevant activities of the United Nations family, and then try to adopt a co-ordinated policy.

12. Mr. O HEIDEAIN (Ireland) said that, in discussing population growth, the fact that there were vast under-populated areas which needed only the injection of sufficient capital, labour and technology to make them prosperous was often overlooked. The diversion of part of the limited resources of the United Nations to projects relating to any form of artificial birth control would not only degrade human dignity, but also result in real economic loss, since it would reduce the resources available for productive purposes. Ireland's opposition to artificial birth control was based on economic as well as ethical grounds. The ultimate solution to regional food supply difficulties was to be found in the fuller development of human and economic resources and the ethical objections to such measures as campaigns for systematic abortion would make it indefensible for Member States which were opposed to them to agree that any part of their contributions to the United Nations should be used for such purposes. Moreover, there was no evidence that birth control was an effective means of checking population growth permanently. It should also be borne in mind that commercial interests would be able to use sponsorship of artificial birth control programmes by the United Nations in order to open up new markets, in developing countries, for their chemical and mechanical contraceptives. The contraceptive traders, in his view, would be the sole beneficiaries.

13. The draft resolution made more than one reference to the proceedings of the second World Population Conference. That Conference, of which he, as a participant, happened to have first-hand knowledge, was a non-governmental meeting of scientific experts and accordingly had adopted no resolutions or recommendations. The Committee's official knowledge of its deliberations was limited to the Secretary-General's brief seven-page report (A/6101). It would therefore be premature for the Committee to commend the Conference and its deliberations until it had had an opportunity to assess the value of highly technical deliberations on a wide range of population problems, following the examination of the question by the Population Commission and the Economic and Social Council. It was for that reason that his delegation had proposed the second, third and fourth amendments (A/C.2/L.842). The first amendment was, in the opinion of his delegation, necessitated by the fact that the reference to General Assembly resolution

^{1/} Official Records of the World Health Organization, No. 143, Eighteen World Health Assembly, part I (Geneva, September 1965), p. 35.

1838 (XVII) gave no indication that, in the plenary meeting which had preceded its adoption (1197th meeting), the Assembly had discussed the question of birth control, and as a result, a clause authorizing the granting of technical assistance for national population projects and programmes had been rejected. The revised wording of operative paragraph 3 (a) proposed in his delegation's final amendment would, in effect, request the Secretary-General to base future population activities connected with family planning on a programme approved unanimously by the World Health Assembly's resolution WHA18.49, rather than on the recommendations by the Population Commission in the report on its thirteenth session (E/4019). Operational activities in the field of family planning would be excluded.

14. The amendments proposed by the representative of France (A/C.2/L.843) would, if accepted by the sponsors of the draft resolution, be useful towards making the draft acceptable to his and other delegations.

15. Sir Keith UNWIN (United Kingdom) observed that there had in recent years been a remarkable change in world opinion and in the attitude of Governments and of the United Nations towards the problems of population control. Recent advances had included the adoption by the Population Commission of a draft resolution which proposed, *inter alia*, long-term technical assistance programmes of family planning (E/4019, chap. XII), the unanimous adoption of World Health Assembly resolution WHA18.49—which authorized advisory services on the health aspects of human reproduction—and the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1084 (XXXIX), which also proposed the provision of advisory services and training facilities at the request of Governments. It would be some time before the results of the World Population Conference could be assessed, but there was no doubt that a majority of the participants took it for granted that some form of family planning policy was essential.

16. His Government fully supported all those advances and had announced its readiness to provide and finance expert services in family planning in countries which had decided to promote such planning and to provide and bear the cost of training in the United Kingdom for personnel from overseas. There had been an extremely encouraging response to that offer. Moreover, the United Kingdom's interest in the relationship between population and economic development had led to that subject being given special attention at the current year's session of the Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan.

17. His Government wished to encourage the new trend within the United Nations in favour of operational activities and his delegation accordingly supported the draft resolution. Although the decision to proceed had been taken, there still remained the need to mobilize the necessary resources. Many countries had no population problem and there were divergent views among Member States on how it should be tackled, but he appealed to all countries not to endeavour to prevent those countries which desired and needed assistance in population control from obtaining it from the United Nations. The proposed increase for 1966 in the staff of the population

division was welcome and he asked what the resultant changes in its staff and resources would be.

18. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs) replied that in 1966 the Population Branch would have twenty-one professional staff, as against twenty-two requested by the Secretary-General, while total annual expenditure on United Nations operational activities financed from all sources would be approximately \$400,000; those figures related to all population questions among which the question of family planning occupied only minor importance.

19. Mr. NOURI (Iraq) said that although his country's rate of population growth was not as high in relation to its size and resources as that of many other developing countries, his delegation believed that in many of those countries rapid population growth impeded economic and social development and that there was a need for more intensive national and international action to deal with the matter. The replies of the Governments of developing countries to the Secretary-General's inquiry (E/3895/Rev.1 and Add.1-3) showed that those countries were greatly concerned about current and future rates of population increase, as a factor which aggravated the problems of malnutrition, low productivity levels, housing, unemployment and health. Other demographic factors mentioned in the replies included the structure and geographical distribution of the population and of the labour force and potential effects on land reform programmes. There was clearly no single policy which could take into account such a wide range of national characteristics and requirements, and his delegation therefore shared the view of the Population Commission (E/4019, para. 18) that it was for each Government to decide its own policy and devise measures appropriate to its specific requirements. His delegation agreed with the conclusion of the second World Population Conference, that there was a need for further research on the interrelationship between human resources and economic growth and for fuller information on such matters as the availability of professional and skilled manpower, unemployment and under-employment.

20. In many developing countries family planning might considerably accelerate economic and social development and it was therefore essential that those countries which had made family planning a part of national policy should be able to pool their knowledge and experience through the competent international institutions. His delegation therefore endorsed the long-term programme of work outlined in resolution 1084 (XXXIX) of the Economic and Social Council. As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution under consideration, he hoped it would receive the full support of the Committee.

21. Mr. LUBBERS (Netherlands) said that the draft resolution should recognize the fact that the World Population Conference had been in a sense private, and not inter-governmental. The present wording of the end of operative paragraph 2 was therefore too strong and should be amended to read: "to take into account, in their activities in the field of population, the deliberations of the World Population Conference". With that change, his delegation would

vote for the draft resolution. For the reasons already given by the United Kingdom representative, he did not support the Irish amendments (A/C.2/L.842). Further, he saw no need to incorporate the French amendments (A/C.2/L.843). However, the draft resolution might appropriately contain a reference to resolution WHA18.49 of the World Health Assembly, and the relevant parts of the French amendment might be inserted in the preamble.

22. Mr. TEMBOURY (Spain) said that the results of the inquiry carried out under operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1838 (XVII) and the deliberations of the second World Population Conference, made it difficult to evaluate the problem before the Committee. Some countries had said in their replies to the inquiry of the Secretary-General that they had no population problem. Others had shown concern at the rise in their population, but had stressed the difficulty of raising the level of living of the people, to which economic development was the only solution, a point with which his delegation fully agreed. The inquiry also indicated what studies of the interaction of economic, social and population changes were required. It was to a better understanding of such problems that the United Nations must address itself. Many factors remained unknown and it was not until the necessary studies were complete that a decision on appropriate action could be taken.

23. At the present stage he was unable to evaluate the results of the World Population Conference. A brief non-technical summary was to be published in early 1966, but to appraise the Conference's work properly, the full technical texts should be published. Moreover, the Conference had been a meeting of scientists, not of representatives of States, so that Governments could not endorse the results without detailed examination.

24. The fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution was unnecessary. Operative paragraph 1 referred to deliberations of the World Population Conference which were unknown to delegations. Governments must be able to study them carefully before inviting the Economic and Social Council, the regional economic commissions and the specialized agencies to take them into account as provided for in operative paragraph 2. Operative paragraph 3 caused him the greatest concern. The studies already embarked upon must first be completed, which meant that the recommendations of the Population Commission in the report of its thirteenth session (E/4019) were not conclusive. It was for the General Assembly to decide on new fields of activity; meanwhile, technical assistance should be confined to fields authorized by the General Assembly.

25. He considered the amendments proposed by Ireland (A/C.2/L.842) and France (A/C.2/L.843) fully acceptable. They would provide time for further study on the basis of which a decision could be taken later in full knowledge of the facts. His delegation fully supported the words of Pope Paul VI to the General Assembly (1347th plenary meeting) that the task of the United Nations was to ensure that there was enough bread on the tables of mankind and not to encourage artificial birth control in order to diminish the number of guests at the banquet of life.

Accordingly, it held that multilateral action should be confined to studies. Countries requiring technical assistance in population matters should obtain it bilaterally.

26. Mr. KUDRIAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he understood the concern of many countries at the rate of growth of their populations, but United Nations efforts should not be devoted to the artificial reduction of the birth rate in the developing countries, including sterilization measures. Nor were the world's natural resources almost exhausted. The fact was that the colonial era had left the newly liberated countries with a sad legacy: backward economies, hunger, poverty, mass illiteracy and widespread epidemics. They were undecided as to what course their development efforts should take, and many of the social and economic solutions proposed were designed to mislead them. Examples of that were the various versions of the Malthusian theory with its false tenet that all social afflictions were the result of a law of nature according to which the human race increased faster than the food supply. Contemporary supporters of Malthusianism, attributing the living conditions in former colonies to surplus population, preferred not to explain why the economic and social afflictions were similar both in densely populated India and in sparsely populated Africa.

27. Hence, they advocated birth control as the main means of overcoming the economic problems of the newly liberated countries. The truth was that natural population trends depended on social and economic conditions and not the reverse. The history of the industrial countries showed that the birth rate fell with cultural and economic development. What was needed was to establish a rate of development much faster than the rate of population growth. The example of the Soviet Union showed that the developing countries could achieve that aim. In its early years it had been at the economic level of many present-day developing countries, with an excessive rural population, inadequate food and fuel, poor transport, idle factories, and a very low cultural level. It had embarked upon industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture, a cultural campaign and the training of skilled cadres. The productivity of labour had risen sharply, thus providing the capital for the further expansion of production. Between 1913 and 1963, national income had increased more than twenty-seven times and per capita income more than nineteen times; the increase was continuing and the proportion devoted to consumption was rising. There had also been a cultural revolution. Women enjoyed equal rights with men and, in 1964, had formed 49 per cent of the labour force. The rapid industrialization had been accompanied by migration to the towns, with a consequent expansion in the urban population. Housing had been constructed on a massive scale and, in the period 1954-1963, 108 million people had moved to new quarters. At the same time, the population had risen by 70 million since 1913 to more than 230 million. Meanwhile, the birth rate had fallen from 4.7 per cent to 2.1 per cent, although there had been no propaganda for birth control, and benefits had been provided for large families. The social and economic factors

responsible for the fall in the birth rate were: industrialization and the increase in urban population through migration from the country; the rise in the cultural level; the granting of equal rights for women, and the larger number of women gainfully employed.

28. Productive workers could not be superfluous in a well-organized society, and the Soviet republics in central Asia had shown that a high birth rate need not hamper economic and cultural development. After the socialist revolution, their development had been rapid. The need to provide for the well-being of their greatly increased population was one of the chief motives for the continued growth in production. With the benefits of modern knowledge, the developing countries should find the process easier than the Soviet Union.

29. While his country valued the results of the second World Population Conference, it considered that the best way for the United Nations to counter the problem of population growth in the developing countries was to contribute as much as possible to their economic progress. The implementation of the main recommendations and principles approved by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development would be a major step in that direction.

30. He supported the draft resolution as a whole, but opposed operative paragraph 3 (a) on the ground that technical assistance should not be extended to include birth control projects, which was a matter for States themselves to decide. He considered that the Netherlands amendment to operative paragraph 2 was an improvement. Any strengthening of population

activities should be financed through the reallocation of resources, and not through an increase in the United Nations budget. He could not support the Irish amendments.

31. Mr. PISANI MASSAMORMILE (Italy) said that reference to resolution WHA 18.49 was enough to show how controversial the question of population control was even from the medical viewpoint. As the tenth preambular paragraph stated, "scientific knowledge with regard to the biology of human reproduction and the medical aspects of fertility control was insufficient". Again, the resolution requested the Director-General to develop further the studies on the medical aspects of sterility and fertility control methods. Present medical knowledge of the subject was thus inadequate. Understandably, therefore, some Governments had difficulties with the draft resolution; if they had serious reservations on technical assistance in population control, they could hardly support its financing from funds to which they were obliged to contribute. He hoped that the limited resources available would be applied to other projects which required urgent United Nations action, not those which aroused objections and reservations, and could not support the draft resolution. Moreover, he did not see how the General Assembly could express a view on the results of the World Population Conference, call it a success and recommend its results to United Nations bodies before its official records had even been issued. He appealed to the sponsors of the draft resolution to incorporate the Irish and French amendments in a revised version.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.