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**NEW YORK**

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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. KULAGA (Poland) said that his delegation would favour every effort to promote closer international economic co-operation, which would, it believed, not only strengthen the economic links between all countries but also help to solve the mounting economic problems of the world as a whole. Poland realized, of course, that the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance could go only a short way towards achieving those ends and that its resources were small compared to the immense needs of recipient countries. But it was the only international multilateral scheme designed to help the economically under-developed countries at present in existence. It was important therefore to use its potentialities to the best effect and above all to preserve its voluntary, multilateral character. Recently, however, there had been evidence of a change in the Programme's character which caused his delegation some anxiety. One example of what could only be a dangerous trend was Economic and Social Council resolution 623 B III (XXII) on currency utilization which, his delegation believed, threatened the voluntary character of the Programme. The resolution had evoked considerable criticism at the eleventh session and was the more to be regretted as there appeared to be no genuine currency utilization problem. His delegation also deplored the Programme authorities' rejection of the German Democratic Republic's offer of technical assistance for the under-developed countries. That was an unwise decision in view of the Programme's financial difficulties and in view of the high level of industrial development of that country, which would guarantee the quality of the assistance it gave. Council resolution 658 A II (XXIV), on the effective utilization of resources had struck yet another blow at the multilateral character of the Programme and was in conflict with its basic principles. His Government was aware that resources were limited and must therefore be used as economically as possible; it was also aware of the needs of the newly independent countries, but it did not think that any limitation should be placed

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on the right to benefit from technical assistance. Any attempt to exclude from the Programme any State wishing to lend or to receive assistance must necessarily hamper the development of international economic co-operation.

2. There was no need to labour the subject of the Programme's financial difficulties. His delegation felt that the proposal that technical assistance should be provided on a payment basis (Council resolution 658 B (XXIV)) was a useful one and should be studied by the Technical Assistance Board (TAB). Its implementation could be of great practical assistance to many countries and would strengthen the Programme's multilateral character.

3. Although not a beneficiary Poland was contributing to the Programme to the utmost of its ability: five Polish experts had been set abroad; courses for foreign specialists were being organized and technical equipment was being made available to many countries. Poland realized that its contribution was small but so also were the contributions of countries which could do much more in support of so worth-while an effort at economic co-operation between peoples.

4. Mr. QUINTERO (Panama) praised the Expanded Programme as one of the most noble and constructive efforts of the United Nations. He noted that there had been an increase in the volume and effectiveness of the services provided in 1956 and a proportional decrease in administrative costs. Nevertheless, despite the steady improvement achieved through the concentration of effort in particular fields of special importance, the better co-ordination of the Expanded Programme with other technical assistance programmes and the emphasis on quality rather than quantity, there were a number of difficulties, the most important being the failure of resources to keep pace with the mounting demand for assistance. The relative decline in resources was due in part to the increase in the membership of the United Nations and in the needs of most Members, but the fact that the major industrial Powers were not increasing, and in some cases were even decreasing their contributions, was also a factor. The increase in the contributions of many under-developed countries in recent years could not offset the levelling-off or decline in the contributions of the richer countries. The United States Government's decision to reduce its percentage contribution had been discouraging, but his delegation hoped that the United States would reconsider its decision and, indeed, increase its contribution, so as not to jeopardize the provision of economic and financial assistance to the under-developed countries. Various somewhat negative solutions to the financial problem had been suggested, including the curtailment of services, but his delegation believed that there ought rather to be an increase in the volume and in the quality of the services provided and that new ways should be sought for the financing of tech-

nical assistance. Some new formula might, for instance, be found for the payment of contributions. In making their pledges, the economically advanced countries might take into account the number and size of the countries economically dependent on them while the under-developed countries might base their contributions on the quantity of technical assistance they requested and received. In any case, his delegation was sure that the Organization would find some solution to that fundamental problem.

5. His delegation particularly applauded TAB's policy of putting quality before quantity. While greater quantity was certainly desirable, quality must come first, particularly in the matter of technical training and the award of fellowships. In the case of fellowships, there were certain dangers to be guarded against. Fellowships should not be granted to persons with insufficient previous training in the subjects in which they intended to specialize; the fellowship-holder should know the language of the country in which he was to study; fellowships should be granted on academic and scientific grounds only and for sufficient periods of time--it was more dangerous for a small country to have half-trained specialists and experts than to have none at all.

6. Criticism had sometimes been voiced at the small number of experts sent to certain countries; Panama was among them. At present it had two experts sent by Technical Assistance Administration (TAA), one in the training of administrative personnel and the other in housing and town planning, a fishing expert from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and four experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), two in public health and two in nursing. In addition it was receiving help from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO in a programme being carried out jointly with the Government of Panama for the eradication of malaria. That, and a few fellowships, was all Panama was receiving by way of technical assistance. His Government was considering requesting further assistance but did not intend to do so without careful study, for which purpose it had set up a special body to consider all aspects of technical assistance and to co-ordinate United Nations technical assistance programmes with those of the Inter-American Co-operative Service.

7. Panama recognized that the quality of the service it had received had been very high, particularly in the matter of public administration, the expert in which subject had helped reorganize the Faculty of Public Administration and Commerce at the University of Panama. His Government regretted, however, that experts were assigned to countries for such short periods. In all too many cases, the work started was broken off abruptly when the expert was sent elsewhere.

8. With regard to the question of priorities, his country agreed that preference should be given to the countries with under-developed economies, but could not accept the view that special consideration ought to be given to States which had recently entered the United Nations. Priority should be given to the countries whose needs were greatest and to those which showed that they could make the best use of assistance. There was no point in sending experts to countries where their recommendations would not receive serious consideration.

9. Some scepticism had been expressed as to the Organization's real ability to help solve the grave problems confronting so many of its Members through the technical assistance programmes. But that was not the point. No one believed that \$30 million was sufficient for the solution of the problems of 75 under-developed countries with a total population of more than 1,150 million. Of course, even to begin attacking those problems, three or four times more that amount was needed. The virtue of the technical assistance programmes lay in the spirit which animated them. They were voluntary, universal, and free from political taint. Their greatest value was that they created a new outlook among the peoples, a desire to serve for service's sake. Every country ought, therefore, to do its utmost to ensure that the great work could be continued and expanded for the good of all peoples.

10. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) said that he had listened with great interest to the statements by the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA (471st meeting) and to the constructive suggestions made in the debate. He hoped that those suggestions would be taken into account by all concerned, including the specialized agencies which participated in the manifold assistance activities. In view of the encouraging expansion of assistance activities during the past year, and the growing demand for them, the poor financial outlook was disturbing. The Technical Assistance Committee's report on its November 1955 session (E/2810)<sup>1/</sup> suggested that as a result assistance might have to be spread very thin. He agreed with the view that help should be concentrated on the countries that most needed it, and that "the Burma Plan" method should be used more widely where appropriate. Recalling the assurances given by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom, the two largest contributing countries, he expressed the hope that all countries, especially the greater Powers, would make every effort to expand the scope of the Programme which offered disinterested, and thus the best possible, help. As one of the newly independent countries which had a long struggle against poverty ahead of them, his country fully appreciated the help it had received, and looked forward to even more effective assistance in the future. As a token of its feelings it had increased its contribution to the Programme for the following year. Sudan hoped that the long-awaited Economic Commission for Africa, once established, would co-operate closely with the technical assistance authorities in solving Africa's difficult development problems. The widest possible co-operation between all organizations and programmes--public and private--operating in the field was desirable because it resulted in greater efficiency. In that connexion, he drew attention to the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/C.2/L.333/Rev.1), which was presented under agenda item 12.<sup>2/</sup>

11. Turning to the statements made by the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA, he wished to suggest three points. First, although in the past most experts had come from Europe and North America, efforts should be made to recruit more experts from the recipient countries themselves, in view of the practical and psychological advantages of

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-Second Session, Annexes, agenda item 9.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., Twenty-Fourth Session, Supplement No. 8.

such a policy. Secondly, more tools and equipment--not necessarily of the expensive kind--should be provided for use in the field. Thirdly, in view of the successful experiment in outposting TAA personnel as was described in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.2/196), the policy of decentralization should be applied more widely. He fully agreed in that connexion with resolution 125 VII and 126 VII of the Economic Commission for Latin-America (ECLA).

12. In conclusion, he noted that in spite of its financial limitations the Programme had proved extremely useful to the countries concerned and was a promise of achievement to come.

13. Mr. ISA (Indonesia) said that the value of the United Nations programmes of technical assistance as a means of achieving international peace through economic co-operation was increasing with the growth in the number of participating countries, the improvement of procedures and the enlarged scope of the programmes. For that reason, his delegation believed that a bolder approach and larger programmes were necessary and had therefore co-sponsored Council resolution 659 (XXIV).

14. Commenting on various points raised during the discussion, he expressed the view that serious consideration should be given to the Mexican representative's suggestion (479th meeting) that Governments might offer more fellowships to supplement their financial contributions. He also agreed with the Secretary-General's suggestion, in his report, that the experimental outposting of TAA programme officers should be continued before a final decision was taken in the matter.

15. On the subject of local costs borne by recipients, he felt that such costs should be included in evaluations of the financial contributions of the donors.

16. Before assessing the implications of the proposal to provide technical assistance on a payment basis, as set forth in Council resolution 658 B (XXIV), his delegation would prefer to await the report by TAC. His delegation felt that the decision taken by the Council in resolution 658 II (XXIV) regarding the Expanded Programme in Europe should be considered as temporary. In granting assistance, there should be no discrimination between regions; the requirements of the individual countries should be the criterion.

17. He believed that TAC's decision to increase the total resources allotted to regional and interregional projects from 10 per cent to 12 per cent might be subject to review (E/3041 par. 51-55).<sup>3/</sup> As his delegation had stated at the last TAC meeting, it favoured the 10 per cent limitation because many claims on country programmes remained unsatisfied due to limited resources and because country programmes were still at an early stage of development. Another consideration was that more adequate means were needed for assessing local costs and counterpart expenditures which had to be borne by Governments participating in the regional projects.

18. Since the relatively large number of continuing projects now being carried out under the Expanded Programme had limited the undertaking of new projects, his delegation looked forward to TAB's future study of that problem.

19. Turning to technical assistance programmes in Indonesia, he stressed his country's ever-increasing need for such aid. One example of TAA's achievements there was the development of the leather industry under the guidance of the Yugoslav expert who had arrived in 1952. The success of the project was largely due to the fact that the expert had been able to take an active part in the implementation of his plans over a number of years. Further progress had been ensured when four additional experts had been sent in 1955 for another year. Valuable work had also been done by an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) mission working in co-operation with the Government agency concerned and technical assistance received under the Colombo Plan. Constructive contributions had been made by other specialized agencies, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), which had helped to make the Solo Rehabilitation Centre at Surakarta an outstanding success. The difficulties encountered when the technical assistance programme was initiated in Indonesia had been overcome to a large degree and the programme was now operating satisfactorily.

20. The future outlook was sombre, however, because of the possibility of decreased financial resources. A reduction in technical assistance activities might not only have economic repercussions but also unfavourable psychological effects. In that connexion he looked forward to hearing the concrete proposals previously mentioned by the United States representative in the 481st meeting.

21. Mrs. GINOR (Israel) said that there was general agreement that technical assistance helped to promote economic development as well as international understanding. The exchange of outlooks resulting from the contact between the developed and under-developed countries under the Programme was beneficial to all concerned. The under-developed countries had to acquire from the advanced countries, along with technical skills, the mental attitude of making rational and consistent use of technical advances. The experts of advanced countries, on the other hand, in order to be able to teach effectively, had to try to understand local conditions and attitudes and in the process learn to appreciate the frequently high cultural values of the under-developed countries. The revival of cultural values was all the more important at a time when material progress was stressed at the expense of spiritual growth and when increased efficiency of production left men with more leisure hours.

22. As for the problem of the Programme's limited funds, she suggested that additional funds might perhaps be secured from voluntary organizations and private foundations concerned with the betterment of human existence. To that end, greater publicity would have to be given to the Programme's activities. Another possibility was to approach international finance institutions. While it was better that some technical aid should be continued on a payment basis, as some had suggested, than stopped altogether, paid assistance could not give countries the encouraging feeling that they were being helped by the family of nations.

23. If technical assistance was ineffective without capital investment, conversely, capital investment could only be productive if the necessary skills were also available. Hence, if more ambitious programmes of capital investment in under-developed countries

<sup>3/</sup> Ibid. Twenty-Fourth Session, Annexes, agenda item 9.

were carried out under the proposed Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED), or if the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development increased its loans to under-developed countries, technical assistance would be more urgently needed than ever, and in that case, those institutions might have to set aside funds for such assistance if the funds could not be obtained from other sources.

24. Meanwhile, the best possible use should be made of the limited funds available. Referring to her country's experience with the Programme, she noted that country programming, which made it possible to co-ordinate all development activities in a given country, had produced excellent results. The practice of setting target figures for the various specialized agencies, on the other hand, did not work well and a different method of distributing funds between the various agencies should be worked out. Similarly, greater co-ordination between regular United Nations technical assistance activities and activities of the Expanded Programme should be ensured, possibly by having the regular programme planned by the central co-ordinating agency. Where a participating agency was unable to use certain funds owing, for example, to the cancellation of a given project, it should assign those funds to another country project rather than return them to its central fund, as was now being done.

25. A new important field in which no technical assistance was as yet available to under-developed countries was that of the economic application of atomic energy. Council resolution 653 (XXIV) invited Governments to make use of the Programme's facilities in that connexion. It was apparent from the Annual Report of TAB (E/2965 and E/TAC/REP/103) that the problems of under-developed countries in that respect had not yet been adequately explored. Most of the reactors developed so far were suited to the needs of the countries that built them, and it would be most desirable if a small-scale reactor using small quantities of water and otherwise suited to the requirements of the under-developed countries could be designed. In that connexion, a number of problems affecting those countries, such as prices of atomic fuel, conditions of fuel supply, etc., would have to be explored. It might therefore be useful to have a second study made of the economic application of atomic energy, with special reference to the needs of under-developed countries.

26. One of the most important features of the Programme was what was known as its "multiplier effect". The achievements of the Israel Institute of Productivity in stimulating, with the help of experts provided under the Programme, many branches of Israel's economy were typical of that effect. The achievements were described in the July 1957 number of the *International Labour Review* (published by the International Labour Office) and in the *Technical Assistance Newsletter* of 15 October 1957.

27. Israel had for the most part been a recipient country and it deeply appreciated the expert assistance it had received. What pleased it most, however, was the fact that it was now able to send out experts and receive fellows and thus share with others the knowledge it had acquired. Its experience in adapting the methods of advanced countries to its own conditions might be useful to countries in a similar position. Israel had also served as the centre for a number of international pilot projects including experimental

work in the development of eucalyptus trees and of windbreak-trees, the results of which would be applied throughout the semi-arid world.

28. Experts could give much more valuable help after they came to know a country, and she wished to pay a tribute in that regard to Mr. Schaaf, the former Resident Representative in Israel who had done much to acquaint visiting experts with local conditions.

29. It was not easy to recruit personnel on an international basis; yet in Israel's experience, the selection had been excellent. As the Programme continued and enough local technicians were trained to cope with routine problems, the need for high calibre experts for over-all planning would grow. In the circumstances it was most regrettable that the conditions of service offered by the Programme were insufficient to attract high level experts. She hoped that the decision of the eleventh session of the General Assembly (resolution 1095 (XI)) would help to overcome some of the difficulties encountered and that a more flexible system of service conditions allowing for special cases of high-ranking experts might be worked out.

30. In conclusion, she paid a tribute to the Executive Chairman of TAB, the Director-General of TAA and all who had had a part in making the Programme a success.

31. Mr. ARAGON (Guatemala) said that the technical assistance programmes were becoming a truly international co-operative effort, as was shown by the fact that recipient countries had provided 25 per cent of the experts recruited in 1956. In 1956 Guatemala had received twenty-five experts and furnished four, and had benefited greatly from the resulting interchange of knowledge. TAB should explore further the possibilities of the technical assistance that recipient countries could provide, since in many cases the experience of under-developed countries was more useful to other countries in need of assistance than that of the highly developed countries.

32. In providing technical assistance, it was essential that the technical capacity of the recipient countries should be increased. Nationals of the country concerned should be trained so that they could continue projects after the departure of the foreign expert. In that connexion, it was gratifying that, according to the Executive Chairman of TAB, several countries had already taken over projects initiated by international experts. His delegation had noted TAC's concern that the large number of continuing projects absorbed foreign experts needed for service elsewhere. However the training of national personnel, while necessarily a slow and difficult process, was so important to the success of the programme that there could be no question of half measures.

33. Guatemala was trying to improve the technical skills of its people through the United Nations technical assistance programme and through bilateral programmes and facilities offered by international financial institutions and foreign private companies. A concerted effort was being made by the Government, the national banking system, the Institute of Social Security, the University, and private insurance companies. In 1955 a National Economic Planning Council had been established to co-ordinate activities: advise the Government on making technical assistance requests to international agencies and foreign Govern-

ments, report to the Government on the aid received, and co-ordinate the awarding of national and international fellowships for training in economic development projects. The Council had done much to promote unity of action in carrying out technical assistance projects and in planning annual programmes, thus anticipating the recommendation in Council resolution 659 A (XXIV).

34. His Government believed that United Nations technical assistance had played an important part in the economic integration of Central America. In 1956 assistance had been granted to the Committee on Economic Co-operation in Central America for projects

in such fields as technological research, public administration, transport, customs and tariff regulations, industry and agriculture. One Central American official had received a fellowship to study economic co-ordination procedures in Europe. The TAB regional representative had helped the Committee to co-ordinate technical assistance programmes in the Central American countries.

35. In conclusion, he endorsed the Secretary-General's constructive proposal on the outposting of certain TAA programme officers.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.