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**NEW YORK**

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**Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).**

**AGENDA ITEM 12**

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters II, III, IV and V) (A/3613, A/3661, A/C.2/L.330, A/C.2/L.332, A/C.2/L.333, A/C.2/L.334 and Add.1 and 2, A/C.2/L.335) (continued)**

1. In response to a question from Mr. ARDALAN (Iran), Mr. de SEYNES, Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the question of inflation had been studied by the Secretariat and would be included in the relevant report of the Economic and Social Council.

2. Referring to the remarks made by Mr. Hagiwara (Japan), in the general debate, on a study of the economic effects of disarmament, he explained that the Secretary-General felt that it would be extremely difficult to carry out the study at this time and that he understood that Mr. Hagiwara, after a personal talk with the Secretary-General had agreed not to insist on his suggestion for the time being.

3. The CHAIRMAN announced that the sponsors of the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.2/L.335) had arranged to make copies of the agreement on the Organization for Trade Co-operation available to Committee members.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED CREATION OF A REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (A/C.2/L.334 and Add.1 and 2) (continued)**

4. Mr. STIBRAVY (United States of America) said that his delegation had considered the draft resolution in the light of his country's interest in and support of the aspirations of the African peoples. Although one of the most rapidly changing areas of the world Africa was still largely under-developed and needed technical and financial assistance to develop its vast resources. The United States, whose increasing interest in Africa's development, economic as well as political, had been highlighted by Vice-President Nixon's recent visit to a number of African countries, had directly and indirectly furnished substantial amounts of such assistance to many African countries and territories and as a member of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), was thoroughly aware of the ways in which an economic commission could help the countries of the region deal with their economic development problems. Accordingly, his

delegation warmly supported the proposal for the establishment of an economic commission for Africa.

5. At the same time, it was aware of the difficulties that had to be overcome but agreed with the representative of Ghana that those difficulties, although great, should not be assumed to be insurmountable. The Economic and Social Council had had ample experience in the establishment of regional functional commissions and could be trusted to carry out the General Assembly's wishes in the best and wisest manner possible and over such a period of time as was warranted by the situation.

6. Mr. COOPER (Liberia), speaking as a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, said that the political freedom of the African countries could not be fully realized in conditions of poverty, disease and instability. Economic emancipation was also needed, and an economic commission for Africa could, as was shown by the resounding success of the regional commissions already established, contribute greatly to the achievement of that goal. The establishment of an economic commission for Africa would fill a long felt want and would benefit not only the people of Africa but the world community as a whole. He was convinced that adoption of the joint draft resolution would be a major step towards the attainment of the lofty ideals of the United Nations.

7. Mr. SCHMIDT (Brazil) said that although doubtful of the usefulness of regional economic commissions, his delegation had become convinced by long experience of the valuable activities of the commissions, in particular of ECLA, that they had an important part to play in promoting the development of the regions concerned. It was only fair that Africa should also benefit from the assistance of such a commission whose work would be of advantage to the world as a whole and not merely to Africa alone. Studies of the problems that had to be overcome in Africa in achieving better living conditions would certainly prove useful to other regions with similar conditions.

8. The place of a regional economic commission could not be taken by limited regional bodies of the type referred to by some representatives and his delegation therefore wholeheartedly supported the request of the countries of the region for a commission on the lines of the three existing commissions whose effectiveness had been fully demonstrated. An African economic commission with a technical staff as highly qualified as that of the other regional commissions would be invaluable and would go far to fill the gap left by the abolition of the permanent functional commissions. He was confident that the European countries with interests in Africa, realizing the scope and importance of the proposed commission's programme, would support it as warmly as they had supported the programmes of ECLA and ECAFE.

9. As a sponsor of the joint draft resolution, Brazil believed that the proposed action would strengthen world peace by helping to remove the inequalities between nations and would be especially welcome at a time when international distrust and the armaments race were undermining the world economy. Brazil, far from fearing the potential competition of African producers, looked forward to the development of a growing African economy and trusted that the United Nations in general, and the European nations in particular, would support the proposal in the joint draft resolution as a means of promoting better standards of life in Africa.

10. Mr. CHAUVET (Haiti) was gratified that the overwhelming majority of the Committee supported the joint draft resolution.

11. The proposed action would promote economic and social progress in Africa and extend to that continent benefits already enjoyed by other parts of the world. Reviewing the steps in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council that had led to the formulation of the joint draft resolution, he noted that his delegation had originally brought the question before the Assembly in 1950. In 1951 the Philippine delegation had proposed in the Economic and Social Council the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to study the question of an African regional commission (E/L.183).<sup>1/</sup> Paradoxically, the Powers responsible for the welfare of African territories, which should have welcomed any action likely to promote it, had opposed the proposal, whereas the under-developed countries, which might have had reason to fear competition from an expanding African economy, had supported it. Subsequent studies by the Secretariat, including those contained in documents E/2738<sup>2/</sup>, E/2816<sup>3/</sup> and E/2832<sup>4/</sup>, had shown increasingly clearly that an African economic commission in which all African countries would have a voice was urgently needed. It was obviously unjust to allow the metropolitan Powers to speak for the African territories. The matter had been fully debated and the time had come to take action.

12. Mr. ISMAIL (Federation of Malaya) joined other representatives in urging unanimous acceptance of the draft resolution, against which no serious arguments had been raised. For the development of Africa's vast resources the joint efforts of the African countries and of the rest of the world were needed, and those efforts could best be co-ordinated through a regional commission. As a member of ECAFE, his country had first-hand knowledge of the advantages of such an organization. The difficulties of establishing a regional commission for Africa would be no greater than those experienced in the case of ECLA and ECAFE, and could be left to the Economic and Social Council to solve. In the meantime, it was the duty of the General Assembly to accept the principle of establishing a regional commission for Africa.

13. Mr. ABDEL-GHANI (Egypt) said that his delegation had joined in sponsoring the joint draft resolution

in the belief that an economic commission for Africa would greatly contribute to the process of economic development now taking place in that continent.

14. Such a commission could maintain and strengthen the economic relations of African States and territories with each other and with the rest of the world; promote independent and concerted action to deal with the economic problems of the newly emerging States; carry out research on economic and technological problems and African developments; undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of economic, technological and statistical information; provide advisory services to the Governments of independent countries and Non-Self-Governing Territories and help them in solving their economic problems; assist the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in dealing with African economic problems by providing data for reports prepared by the United Nations Secretariat; and co-ordinate the activities of the African countries with those of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the technical assistance machinery, and appropriate inter-African organs.

15. Commenting on the Belgian representative's remarks at the preceding meeting, he said that the question of the commission's membership was outside the scope of the draft resolution. Nevertheless, although the details of the commission's work, including its membership, were left to the discretion of the Economic and Social Council, it was worth noting that in the case of the three existing regional commissions, whose powers and composition had been defined by the Council in accordance with the rules of procedure, membership was based on two principles: membership in the United Nations, and significant economic relationship with the area. The same principles should apply to the proposed commission for Africa, since it would be absurd if the Committee tried to narrow that commission's scope while endeavouring to enlarge that of the other regional commissions. He could not agree that the work of the economic commission for Africa should be limited to Africa south of the Sahara. Recommendation 15 (E/1986)<sup>5/</sup> of the Group of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to examine measures for the economic development of under-developed countries, had stated that in order to assist the Governments and peoples of Africa to analyse and keep under continuous survey the development problems of that continent, the United Nations should establish an economic commission for Africa. Furthermore, the Common Market Treaty establishing the European Economic Community was not restricted to territories in a certain part of Africa. The relationship between the African peoples and countries was too close to be disregarded; they had all experienced foreign domination and the proposed economic commission for Africa should assist them to rehabilitate themselves economically and socially.

16. Mr. CALINGASAN (Philippines) said that his delegation had joined in sponsoring the joint draft resolution in view of recommendation 15 of the Group of Experts which stated that in order to assist the Governments and peoples of Africa to analyse and keep under continuous survey the development problems of that continent, the United Nations should establish an Economic Commission for Africa. With the prospect of

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 2.

<sup>2/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.:1955.II.C.3.

<sup>3/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-First Session, Annexes, agenda item 5.

<sup>4/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5/</sup> United Nations publication Sales No.:1951.II.B.2, p. 95.

the emergence to independence and membership in the United Nations of more African States, steps should now be taken to put the recommendation into effect.

17. The under-developed countries in Asia and Latin America had seen the great usefulness of the work of regional commissions to their economies. His delegation believed that it was not only fair and just but also a duty to give Africa the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of the system.

18. Mr. ELKOHEN (Morocco) said that the existing regional commissions were among the most useful subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council and were, as the Council's reports showed, doing excellent work in such varied fields as agriculture, technology, industry, electric power, flood control and town planning.

19. Africa was at a disadvantage because it had no regional commission. That vast continent with an area of 11,500,000 square miles and a population of over 200 million inhabitants represented a great source of untapped wealth. Its human and economic potential offered considerable opportunities for the industries and capital of other continents; Africa was both a supplier and a customer, a market and a creator of employment and wealth. A regional economic commission was needed to co-ordinate research and policies so that the continent's resources could be used for the good of the African peoples and of the world as a whole. The twenty-nine Power draft resolution therefore merited the Committee's unanimous support.

20. His Government would be deeply honoured if Tangiers were chosen as the headquarters of the proposed commission. In view of its excellent communications and other facilities, Tangiers had many advantages to offer such a body.

21. Mr. FLERE (Yugoslavia) said that it was anomalous that no economic commission had been set up for Africa, the more so because the existing commissions had concentrated their efforts on development problems, which were of primary importance to that continent. The commissions satisfied some of the vital requirements of the modern world and enabled the under-developed countries to join forces at the regional level, thus making it easier for them to overcome the disadvantages inherited from the past.

22. Africa's intense desire to accelerate the rate of its economic development had already produced results and an irreversible trend had been started. The United Nations should help that continent through a regional economic Commission, which would enable Africa to play a new role in the international community. His delegation had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution in the belief that the economic commission for Africa would further the process of economic development which was the necessary counterpart of political emancipation.

23. Mr. ULLRICH (Czechoslovakia) observed that the Czechoslovak delegation had already expressed satisfaction with the activities and achievements of the regional economic commissions. It wished to associate itself with the many delegations from all parts of the world which had spoken in favour of the setting up of a new economic commission for Africa and fully supported the draft resolution. It was convinced that, once established, such a commission would justify the hopes

of all the African people who would look to it for help in their struggle for emancipation and a better life. Czechoslovakia, for its part, wished to assure Africans that it would continue to give them all friendly assistance towards the attainment of full independence. In that connexion, he had been particularly interested in the remarks of the representatives of Sudan and Ghana, two African members of the Committee, at the 468th meeting.

24. The draft resolution should commend itself to all members of the Committee since it spoke the language of the Charter in seeking help for the promotion of the economic and social progress and development of the under-developed areas. It was a fact that although 70 per cent of African soil remained under foreign rule, the role of Africa in international affairs had substantially changed. The African nations had entered the international scene at the Asian - African Conference at Bandung, and had shown that they constituted an important factor which would have an influence in future years. Already there were nine African States Members of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and their number was bound to increase. The newly-independent nations would be confronted with many difficult tasks, the heritage and consequence of their past servitude. Yet their continent was rich in natural resources with immense potentialities for agriculture, industry and foreign trade. One of their great tasks was to mobilize those resources in pursuit of the goal of a better life. It was natural, therefore, that they should today be attaching great importance to economic co-operation. Such co-operation was best given them through a regional economic commission. The possibility had long been under consideration by the United Nations; it was high time to take the decisive step and set up the commission; his delegation would do its best to help in the achievement of that objective.

25. Mr. RAJAPATIRANA (Ceylon) said that the three regional economic commissions in Europe, Latin America and the Far East had won the lively interest and support of Member States in their areas. There was ample evidence that they had been of great value to those countries and had fully justified their existence. There would therefore seem to be no good reason for delay in setting up a similar commission in Africa. The under-developed countries of Africa were now awakening to a new sense of life, politically and economically. The present, therefore, was the moment at which the United Nations should help them find a rallying-point for their ideas and a pool of experience and knowledge from which they could draw. In fact most delegations appeared to share that view; there had, however, been one speaker who had cast doubts on the advisability of adopting the resolution and his main objection had been the differences between the northern and southern parts of Africa. But such differences were to be found everywhere, in Europe, the Far East and Latin America. That problem therefore was purely an imaginary one. It would be better to tackle the real ones. That certain real problems did exist was not denied, but when the Committee, and after it the General Assembly, approved the draft resolution, the Secretariat could begin studying the problems and, thereafter, the Economic and Social Council could seek solutions to them in consultation with countries in the region. He hoped that the commission would be established in the very near future.

26. Mr. GARCIA ARIAS (Argentina) said that there

was little he could add to the arguments already put forward in favour of the establishment of an economic commission for Africa. He was convinced that it would fill a long felt want in a region whose economic situation called for the sympathy of all nations. He did not ask whether it would be possible to set up a commission in Africa. He was sure that it would be set up in response to the present draft resolution which, he hoped, would win the support of a very large majority of the Committee's members.

27. Mr. GUERRA (Chile) fully supported the joint draft resolution. Their experience of ECLA had convinced the Latin American countries that a similar commission ought to be set up in Africa. They owed to ECLA the first complete studies of their resources and needs; through it they had, as it were, rediscovered South America economically and socially and had thereafter been able to make great strides forward. They were certain that the countries of Africa could derive similar benefit from a regional commission which would assist them to survey the resources of their continent and to occupy their rightful place, economically, among the free nations.

28. Mr. ARAGON (Guatemala) also supported the joint draft resolution. His delegation favoured the setting up of a regional economic commission in Africa, not only because it would be useful in promoting the economic and social development of the African continent but also because it would help in the attainment of the goals of the Trusteeship System as laid down in the Charter. As a member of the Trusteeship Council his delegation particularly supported the present draft resolution. It was convinced that the existence of such a commission would have a beneficial effect on the development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The independent nations, too, would undoubtedly benefit very greatly.

29. Mr. JABRI (Syria) said that his delegation had agreed to co-sponsor the joint draft resolution because it had observed that the existing economic commissions had been instrumental in helping many countries, both developed and under-developed, to attain economic stability and it had become convinced that they should be established in all regions. In Africa there would be much for such a commission to do: Africa was a huge continent with immense untapped resources; the African countries newly emerging from subordination to independence needed help in exploiting those resources. Syria, near Africa geographically, was certain that it would benefit in trade and in other ways from the progress Africa would make with the help of an economic commission. Such progress would undoubtedly contribute also to the economic prosperity of the world at large. His delegation could not but hope that after the establishment of an economic commission in Europe others would be set up elsewhere including Syria's own region, the Middle East.

30. Mr. HAGIWARA (Japan) remarked that even before becoming a Member of the United Nations, Japan had participated in the work of ECAFE and had become convinced of the usefulness of the regional commissions. Africa, rich as it was in unexploited natural resources, assuredly merited a commission of its own. The idea had long been discussed in the Economic and Social Council without, however, any positive conclusion being reached. Nevertheless, many of the arguments once used were no longer valid. The list of sponsors of the joint draft resolution showed the widespread support for the establishment of a commission in Africa. The number of independent States in Africa was constantly increasing. The contrasts between different parts of the region could not be cited as an obstacle, for the differences in the Far East had been far greater. Indeed, the example of ECAFE had shown the value of collaboration between very varying countries. There would, of course, be many difficulties, practical, technical, financial and other, but it was for the Economic and Social Council to solve them and he was sure that it was perfectly capable of doing so. For that reason, his delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution.

31. Mr. ARDALAN (Iran) felt that the draft resolution was too straightforward to require much explanation by its sponsors. His delegation had been glad to put its name to it because as early as 1951 the Group of Experts, in its report on the subject, had recommended the establishment of a commission for Africa and because the success of the other regional commissions had confirmed its belief that every consideration should be given to the early establishment of a commission for Africa. He therefore hoped that the draft resolution would win the unanimous support of the Committee and that the necessary steps would be taken to establish the commission at an early date and subsequently perhaps to establish other commissions elsewhere as, for instance, in the Middle East.

32. Mr. DIPP GOMEZ (Dominican Republic) said that his delegation was aware of the great help given to Governments by the existing regional economic commissions, and was convinced that Africa would benefit by the existence of such a commission in the region; it would therefore vote for the joint draft resolution. The creation of a regional economic commission for Africa would be helpful not only to African countries, in the drafting of their development programmes, but also the world at large in providing more and better information about the region's potentialities and fostering a better understanding of the conditions prevailing in the newly emergent countries of Africa.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.