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Chairman: Mrs. Lina P. TSALDARIS (Greece).

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters VI and VII) (A/3848) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. SIMPSON (Liberia) said he welcomed the growth of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and associated himself with those speakers who had expressed the hope that more support would be forthcoming for the Fund. In Liberia, the welfare of the country's children was the particular concern of the Government, as also of the missionary organizations and the national public health service. In addition, the Liberian Government, mindful of the needs of children in other countries, had made a first annual contribution of \$5,000 to UNICEF for the current year and hoped to be able to increase its contribution in the future.

2. The woman of Liberia had not enjoyed political rights until 1945, but since then great strides had been made towards their full participation in national politics. Women were now active in political organizations and voted at elections and they were being encouraged to take part in all phases of the country's social and political life. They already played a dominant role in the field of fundamental education, and occupied important posts in higher education. Women were active in health work of different kinds, and in such professions as law and dentistry; and many were employed as civil servants.

3. The Liberian Government had prohibited the sale or distribution of narcotics or other dangerous drugs in Liberia. The prohibition was strictly enforced.

4. In the field of human rights, Liberia could be proud of its open-door policy, in accordance with which it had welcomed people of every race and creed to its territory. Discrimination had never been practised by Liberians. On the other hand, the Government had been obliged to take drastic action to prevent foreign firms operating in Liberia from discriminating against Liberians. Under a law recently enacted, racial segregation and discrimination in any form were criminal offences.

5. The Liberian delegation welcomed the recom-

mendation that 10 December 1958 should be observed as the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The tenth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations had been celebrated at San Francisco, and it was fitting that the Declaration also should be suitably honoured. Liberia was making plans to that end.

6. Miss FUJITA (Japan) said that UNICEF was achieving outstanding results. She welcomed the increasing closeness of the co-operation between UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Bureau of Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and expressed the hope that such co-operation would be even closer in the future.

7. Turning to the subject of international control of narcotic drugs, she congratulated the Afghan Government on its decision to prohibit the production of opium. She hoped that technical assistance would be furnished to help Afghanistan to cope with the problems which would inevitably result from that decision.

8. It was disappointing that there had not been a better response to the Economic and Social Council's request, in its resolution 624 B I (XXII), that States members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies should transmit periodic reports to the Secretary-General. Only thirty-four Governments had submitted reports for the first three-year period, from 1954 to 1956. She hoped that those which had not yet done so would send in their reports as soon as possible.

9. It was a depressing fact that, despite all that had been done by the United Nations and the specialized agencies, violations of human rights were still common. The United Nations would soon be observing the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by now greater progress should have been made with the draft International Covenants on Human Rights. Extensive preparations were being made for the celebration of the anniversary in Japan, where 10 December had been named Human Rights Day, and was preceded by Human Rights Week.

10. She noted with satisfaction that the Council had unanimously adopted a resolution (680 C I (XXVI)) requesting the specialized agencies concerned to give sympathetic consideration to any request for help submitted to them in connexion with assistance to working women, including working mothers, with family responsibilities, and to report to the Commission on the Status of Women on the services so rendered. Any measure to lighten the burden of working women with family responsibilities would be warmly welcomed in Japan.

11. In resolution 680 C II (XXVI), the Council had invited the Commission on the Status of Women to consider further the question of the age of retirement and right to pension. She expressed the hope that in

considering that question the Commission would take into account the views of Governments not represented in the Commission and any observations submitted by non-governmental organizations. The Commission on the Status of Women was to be commended for the excellent work it had done so far.

12. Several delegations had expressed regret that the Council's report (A/3848) stressed economic questions to the detriment of social questions. The two could not really be separated. For that reason she welcomed the plans of concerted action between different organizations mentioned in paragraphs 534 to 537 of the report. Such plans went beyond ordinary co-operation, and had already borne fruit in the programme of community development. At a seminar on regional planning in relation to urbanization and industrialization held in Tokyo in the summer of 1958 under the sponsorship of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, UNESCO and the Technical Assistance Administration, ways of solving the problems of urbanization and industrialization by concerted action had been explored. Activities aimed at dealing with those problems should be given high priority by the Council.

13. Another seminar, organized by the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association, and also held in Tokyo in August 1958, had provided the opportunity for a most fruitful discussion of common problems and the sharing of experience. She was convinced that more regional seminars should be planned or assisted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

14. Mr. WISE (United States of America) said that although the problems confronting the Committee were undoubtedly serious, he shared the optimism expressed by the Mexican representative at the preceding meeting. It was clear that a good beginning had been made and much voluntary progress achieved. Voluntary progress must not be confused with forced progress, which involved an element of coercion incompatible with real freedom. The United Nations itself had allotted only 10 per cent of its budget to social work and related activities in 1947. It was now devoting 28 per cent of its budget to the same activities. Moreover, whereas less than half of the funds available for all programmes of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in 1947 had been devoted to economic, social and related activities, in 1957 more than 70 per cent of the funds available, which were three times greater than in 1947, had been allocated to work in those fields.

15. The United Nations Children's Fund had done excellent work and the Executive Director and the Executive Board were to be warmly congratulated. He endorsed the Australian representative's opinion, expressed at the preceding meeting, that careful co-ordination of future programmes was essential if the children of the world were to receive the maximum benefit. He felt he could assure the Committee that the United States would continue to contribute generously to UNICEF. Although some concern had been expressed at the insistence of the United States on the "matching" principle, he felt that other Governments would make the effort required.

16. As the United States representative at the previous session had reported on racial integration in

the United States,^{1/} he wished to bring the picture up-to-date. A basic article of faith held by all United States citizens was that the importance of the individual could not be questioned. It was a violation of that principle if all individuals did not enjoy equal opportunities, as was the case where racial discrimination existed. In spite of the prominence given to it in the Press, the discrimination exercised in certain localities was not the rule in the United States. The problem had been squarely faced, and the United States Government, supported by the majority of state governments, had taken steps to end discrimination as rapidly as possible. The Supreme Court had brought its authority to bear against discrimination by its 1954 ruling, which had been further reinforced by its more recent decisions. Action was being taken against segregation by many American organizations, and immense progress had been made; but much still remained to be done.

17. The importance attached to the social aspects of economic development by the African States and by the Economic and Social Council in formulating the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Africa was most significant. It had been suggested at the twenty-sixth session of the Council^{2/} that the three other regional economic commissions should modify their terms of reference in order to bring them into line with those of the African commission. The United States had felt that that suggestion should be referred back to the three economic commissions for their consideration.

18. During the year under review considerable progress had been made in the social field, thanks to the co-operation of various international agencies; but although the United Nations could be proud of its past record, much remained to be done. He was happy to note that the Council had decided that a plenipotentiary conference should be convened to adopt the single convention on narcotic drugs. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had done excellent work in preparing the draft of that convention. He wished to congratulate the Government of Afghanistan on its decision to ban the production of opium.

19. The work of the United Nations in the field of human rights was expanding. It was therefore not surprising that at its fourteenth session the Commission on Human Rights had had an unusually heavy agenda, with the result that decisions on certain items had had to be postponed. The Commission might do well to consider the possibility of dividing up its agenda so that certain items were discussed only every second or third year. Two items which the Commission would consider at its fifteenth session should benefit greatly from a second discussion, namely, the study of freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and exile and the periodic reports on human rights for the first three-year period. A vast amount of information had been collected, and the Commission would have to consider how to reduce it to a usable form.

20. Considerable progress had been made towards improving the status of women. In that connexion, it

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twelfth Session, Third Committee, 768th meeting.

^{2/} See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-sixth Session, 1032nd meeting, para. 71.

was encouraging to note that seventy of the eighty-one States Members of the United Nations had granted full political rights to women, and another five were considering doing so. The views expressed in the Economic and Social Council on questions relating to the status of women had been sound and constructive. His delegation welcomed particularly the recommendation concerning working women with family responsibilities. The United States Government attached particular importance to that subject, and a number of state and federal laws had been enacted to improve working conditions for mothers and other women responsible for the care of families. In the field of the protection of the rights of married women, with particular reference to the minimum age for marriage, the information now being requested from Governments should provide a most helpful basis for further recommendations.

21. The Co-ordination Committee was to be congratulated on having achieved, after many years of work, the kind of co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies which had been envisaged by the drafters of Articles 63 and 64 of the Charter. The decision to appraise the programmes of the United Nations and the specialized agencies every five years was most judicious and would give the agencies concerned and their member Governments a clearer perspective of their tasks and a better appreciation of priorities. He expressed the hope that in the preparation of the appraisals, due attention would be given to the social aspects of economic development.

22. Mr. MAHMUD (Ceylon) said that UNICEF was an embodiment of United Nations principles. It had done most effective work in Ceylon, where, wisely, the emphasis had been laid on the improvement of existing services rather than the establishment of new ones. Great progress had been made towards the eradication of malaria in Ceylon and the Government planned to carry out, with the help of UNICEF, an intensified spraying programme over the next three years in order to eradicate the disease completely.

23. Malnutrition was the direct or indirect cause of many diseases in the countries of Asia and Africa. In Ceylon, more than 400,000 mothers and children had received milk under a UNICEF-aided programme. The Children's Fund had helped to set up new milk plants and to expand the existing government dairy at Colombo. It had also done notable work in the field of tuberculosis prevention. However, it would be ironical indeed if the children snatched from the jaws of death by UNICEF were saved merely to be flung into a holocaust. It was the fervent hope of the people of Ceylon that war would be averted.

24. It was encouraging that contributions to UNICEF had shown a steady increase; but the Fund's commitments had also increased. It was therefore imperative that Governments should increase their contributions if UNICEF was to carry out its important tasks.

25. In Ceylon the production of narcotics was prohibited except for medical purposes. His Government welcomed the change of policy in Afghanistan with regard to the production of opium; the Afghan Government was to be heartily congratulated on its decision.

26. The Commission on the Status of Women was to be commended for its efforts to further the political

rights of women and the participation of women in public life. In Ceylon, which had had universal suffrage since 1931, women had proved themselves as anxious as men to exercise their political rights and as competent to do so.

27. His delegation felt very strongly that speedy consideration should be given to the draft International Covenants on Human Rights, the completion of which would be the most fitting observance of the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

28. Mr. ELMANDJRA (Morocco) regretted that in its report (A/3848) the Economic and Social Council had not throughout, in discussing economic problems, also considered their social aspects.

29. Commenting on the work of UNICEF, he remarked that the Fund accomplished so much because it was unhampered by political controversies. Morocco was grateful to UNICEF for its valuable assistance, and his delegation welcomed the increasing co-operation achieved between UNICEF and some of the specialized agencies.

30. In connexion with the forthcoming tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he said that the new State of Morocco had made the promotion of human rights a basic principle of its domestic and international policy.

31. Turning to the subject of international co-operation in the fields of science, culture and education, he remarked that in January Morocco had been host to a regional conference of the Arab members of UNESCO, to which representatives from Mediterranean countries had also been invited. On that occasion, the King of Morocco had emphasized that culture was essential to men not only in order to raise their intellectual standards, but also to enable them to understand each other and to live in peace. As a consequence of the conference, the Moroccan Government was setting up an inter-Arab co-ordination centre for education, science and culture, which would operate within the framework of UNESCO. The centre would serve as a link between UNESCO and the national committees in the Arab States, and would co-ordinate the efforts of the Arab countries to solve various educational problems, build up a library of essential Arabic documents, and translate UNESCO publications and distribute them to the Arab world.

32. Since achieving its independence, Morocco had made notable progress in health, education and social welfare. Its experience, like that of other young countries, showed that the attainment of independence served as a spur to general progress.

33. Mr. ZAMORA ELIZONDO (Costa Rica) said that his country took a keen interest in many of the problems dealt with in the Council's report (A/3848). He was glad to say that Costa Rican women enjoyed full political and civil rights. Persons of different races and religions lived peacefully in his country without being subjected to any discrimination, a happy state of affairs which was a product not only of legislation, but of the national tradition of tolerance and equality.

34. The work of UNICEF had received general praise; but not more than it deserved. To prevent suffering, disease and malnutrition among children meant, in the last analysis, to pave the way for peace,

which was the supreme purpose the United Nations. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the new approaches worked out by UNICEF and the increasing co-operation it was achieving with the specialized agencies.

35. Like most social phenomena, disease and malnutrition had complex causes. They were not due to poverty alone; in many Latin American countries, they were fully as much the result of ignorance, bad habits and prejudice against easily available and nutritive foods. As Costa Rica had discovered in actual practice, child care and nutrition programmes must be accompanied by education. Many common diseases could be prevented by teaching people to feed themselves and their children properly and making them familiar with the rudiments of hygiene.

36. Mr. SUDJAHRI (Indonesia) observed that the discussion of the Council's report (A/3848) afforded an invaluable opportunity for a constructive exchange of views on the Council's many activities aimed at eliminating the world's economic and social evils.

37. Notwithstanding the progress the Council and its subsidiary organs had achieved, the gap between the advanced and the less developed countries was steadily growing, and prospects of reducing it were not encouraging. Despite increased production, levels of living in the less developed countries had remained virtually unaltered, owing to the rise in population. The Council must expand its activities to the utmost in order to meet that challenge.

38. His Government wished to express its heartfelt gratitude to UNICEF for its aid over the past years. Besides providing direct material benefits, UNICEF had greatly assisted the Indonesian Government in the development of integrated national and rural health services, community development programmes and other projects of permanent value. In return, his Government had contributed to UNICEF annually since 1950 and had matched UNICEF allocations for projects in Indonesia three times over.

39. Although UNICEF would have larger resources in 1958 than in 1957, it was plain that even greater efforts must be made to meet the increasing needs of Governments. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the Fund's current policies and the increasing attention it was giving to training and education programmes. The Fund's policy of co-operation with the specialized agencies and the Bureau of Social Affairs of the Secretariat was especially praiseworthy. The low per caput cost of aid was an indication in itself of the efficiency of the Fund's operations.

40. Turning to the subject of narcotic drugs, he noted with satisfaction the recent improvement in the operation of the international control system, a testimony to the effectiveness of the 1925 and 1931 conventions, to which Indonesia had recently become a party. Indonesia had also acceded to the Convention of 1936 for the Suppression of the Illicit Traffic in Dangerous Drugs, and to the 1953 Protocol.

41. It was, however, a matter of great concern that the problem of eliminating illicit traffic in narcotic drugs still defied international efforts. As could be seen from the most recent report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, ^{3/} illicit traffic in opium, opiates and cannabis

was still very active. International machinery to combat the traffic must therefore be strengthened, and he welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 688 (XXVI), which would permit the provision of technical assistance to increase the efficiency of narcotics control by Governments. He paid a tribute to the Afghan Government for its courageous decision to prohibit the production of opium, and urged that the utmost consideration should be given to any request by that Government for international assistance in dealing with any difficulties that might result.

42. Ten years had passed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although it was easy to point to violations of human rights in the world, considerable progress in the promotion of human rights had been made during the past ten years both within and without the framework of the United Nations. The increasing international awareness of the sacredness of human rights manifested itself both in co-operative international efforts and in the strength of the reaction by the rest of the world to violations of human rights by individual countries. Nevertheless, since the exercise of human rights was in practice governed by political realities, the United Nations, in promoting the observance of those rights, must simultaneously seek to create the necessary atmosphere of peace, security and international understanding.

43. He paid a tribute to the unswerving efforts of the Commission on the Status of Women to achieve for women equal status with men. Great progress had already been made, but it should not be forgotten that legal recognition of women's rights was only the first step towards their realization. In his own country, women had full political rights. There was no discrimination against women as regards either education or work; many Indonesian women were active in professional life, while two had held cabinet posts in the Indonesian Government.

44. He noted with appreciation the valuable contribution the non-governmental organizations had made to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, and expressed confidence that they would continue to be similarly helpful in the future.

Organization of work (A/C.3/L.665) (continued)

45. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee of the Canadian proposal that thirty-five meetings should be devoted to consideration of agenda item 32 (Draft International Covenants on Human Rights).

46. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) said that since item 33 (Recommendations concerning international respect for the right of peoples and nations to self-determination) had already been considered at the preceding session and could probably be completed at the current session, the fifteen meetings allotted to that item and item 35 (Freedom of information: report of the Secretary-General on consultations concerning the draft Convention on Freedom of Information) together should be used primarily to complete item 33. Any meetings left over might be devoted to item 35. He made a formal proposal to that effect.

47. Mr. ALDUNATE (Chile) thought that the forthcoming tenth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration should be regarded as an occasion for intensifying the Committee's efforts to complete the draft Covenants; it should be borne in mind that

^{3/} Ibid., Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 9.

the Committee had completed only sixteen articles in four years. It could best commemorate the anniversary by following the Saudi Arabian representative's suggestion and setting up a small committee, on which all the regions and legal systems of the world would be represented, to consider how the work could be accelerated.

48. Mrs. ALI SOLYMAN (Afghanistan) felt that at least thirty-eight meetings should be devoted to the draft International Covenants on Human Rights; that had been the number allotted to the subject at the preceding session. The fifteen meetings suggested for items 33 and 35 together should be devoted to an article-by-article discussion of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information (item 35). If that was agreed upon, her delegation would not press its proposals (836th meeting) concerning the order of the Committee's work.

49. Miss MacENTEE (Ireland) supported the Greek proposal, and the Indonesian proposal (836th meeting) that item 33 should be given adequate time for consideration and should be taken reasonably early in the session. Her delegation regarded the principle of the self-determination of peoples as the key principle of the United Nations Charter, intimately connected with the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. While it understood the feelings of delegations which wished to complete the draft Covenants, it felt that speed was not the main consideration. The Irish delegation had been impressed by the high degree of understanding shown by eighty-one delegations on the radical issues involved in the draft Covenants; it believed that the same understanding should be shown when any delegations expressed strong views concerning the urgency of a given issue.

50. As regards freedom of information, she suggested that it might be profitable to take the item after the discussion of the articles of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concerning freedom of conscience and freedom of opinion (E/2573), annex I B, articles 18 and 19).

51. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) agreed with the Irish representative that speed should not be the main consideration in dealing with the draft Covenants. Moreover, his delegation and some others would in fact welcome postponing the adoption of the drafts; that would give them time to try to persuade the General Assembly to reverse the decision it had taken at its sixth session (resolution 543 (VI)) to split the draft Covenant into two. He was sure that the Committee would not be able to complete its consideration of the

draft Covenants at the current session; accordingly, it might be wise to allot only thirty meetings to that item and to use the remaining five for another subject. His delegation was second to none in its support of the right to self-determination, and he well understood the attitude of the Irish, Greek and Indonesian representatives; however, the draft Convention on Freedom of Information should be neglected no longer. The draft already existed; only two of its articles presented stumbling-blocks. He therefore proposed formally that thirty meetings should be devoted to item 32 and ten each to item 33 and item 35.

52. Mr. SAMY (United Arab Republic) associated himself with the views of the Irish and Indonesian representatives and with the Greek proposal. Fifteen meetings was the least number that could be devoted to so important a subject as the right to self-determination, particularly since, although ten years had passed since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, many peoples were still suffering under the colonial yoke.

53. Mr. AVRAMOV (Bulgaria) supported the Ukrainian representative's proposal that item 71 (The organization of an international public health and medical research year) should be considered third or fourth. The item was not a controversial one, and could be disposed of rapidly; moreover, it was highly desirable that the Director-General of WHO and the Chairman of the Ukrainian delegation should be present at the discussion. He also agreed with representatives who had urged that more meetings should be devoted to the recommendations on the right to self-determination.

54. Mr. MASSOUD-ANSARI (Iran) said he could not agree that less than the proposed thirty-five meetings could be allocated to the draft International Covenants on Human Rights; indeed, in view of the forthcoming tenth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration, it would be better to devote more time than usual to the subject.

55. With regard to the division of time between items 33 and 35, he considered that in view of the interest the General Assembly had recently shown in the whole subject of information, special stress should be laid on the draft Convention (item 35). The right to self-determination had been discussed at length by the Assembly, and was already incorporated in the draft Covenants; it would be reasonable therefore to give it lower priority than item 35.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.