

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records


**THIRD COMMITTEE 842nd  
MEETING**

 Monday, 6 October 1958,  
at 10.45 a.m.

NEW YORK

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

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Calamari (Panama), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

## AGENDA ITEM 12

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

**GENERAL DEBATE (*concluded*)**

1. Mr. EL-AMIN (Sudan) said that all States, and especially the small and under-developed countries, must view with gratification the constant expansion of the services of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It was regrettable, however, that contributions to UNICEF funds were not keeping pace with the increasing number of requests for aid. Sudan was grateful for the supplies and equipment it had received from UNICEF for its new rural and urban health centres, and for the Fund's assistance in the malaria control campaign. However, his delegation felt bound to point out that millions of children and mothers in Africa were still not receiving assistance of any kind.

2. The Sudanese delegation welcomed the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its fourteenth session.<sup>1/</sup> The Government of Sudan would endeavour to mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by disseminating the Declaration as widely as possible. With regard to the status of women, the participation of Sudanese women in public life had increased considerably during the three years of his country's independence, and it was hoped that they would achieve full civil and political rights in the near future.

3. Sudan sincerely hoped that Afghanistan would succeed in the task it had undertaken in prohibiting the production of opium, and trusted that the harm done to its economic and social development would soon be overcome.

4. The Sudanese delegation welcomed the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa, which would enable the United Nations to contribute to the economic and social advancement of the African continent. While it was difficult to draw a dividing line between the economic and the social aspects of

such a Commission's work, and while the social aspects must not be underestimated, it would be a mistake to regard the Commission as a social organ, since there were other United Nations agencies which were primarily concerned with social matters, particularly in respect of the under-developed countries.

Mrs. Tsaldaris (Greece) took the Chair.

5. Miss FAROUK (Tunisia) said that her delegation wished to reserve its position on the Economic and Social Council's report (A/3848) as a whole because of the emphasis placed in the report on economic questions at the expense of social matters. Economic and social questions were interdependent and the Council should at all times give them equal importance.

6. Tunisia would continue to make its modest contribution to UNICEF; indeed, it would if possible increase it, as a token of its gratitude for the Fund's magnificent work in many parts of the world. In Tunisia, UNICEF was assisting in child nutrition, anti-tuberculosis and anti-trachoma programmes, and the Tunisian Government was co-operating actively and enthusiastically in the work, as both the Executive Director and the Regional Director of UNICEF had noted. As a result, real progress had been achieved in the brief space of two or three years. Significantly, that period coincided with the term of existence of Tunisia as an independent State. In that short time, maternity homes, dispensaries and other medical institutions had been established throughout the country. Every effort was being made to provide adequate medical, health and social services for mothers and children.

7. As Tunisia had discovered, independence was a great spur towards social progress; but it must be borne in mind that international aid was still needed if the children of the under-privileged areas of Africa and Asia were to enjoy the first of human rights—the right to life. In that connexion, she paid a tribute to those prosperous countries which were fully aware of their responsibilities towards the rest of the world.

8. With reference to the section of the report on the status of women, she said that in Tunisia, an Arab and Moslem country, the status of women in private law was governed by the recently promulgated Code of Personal Status, which fixed a minimum age for marriage, prohibited polygamy, required the consent of both parties to marriage, and placed the same restrictions on divorce for both spouses. Thus, while Tunisia respected its Islamic tradition, it was using its recently won autonomy to further democratic ideals. It was only logical that, having freed itself from the yoke of colonialism, it should seek to promote to the utmost the welfare of all its people,

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 8.

men and women alike. Tunisian women were free to enter the civil service and the various professions, and had the right to vote and to stand for office in municipal elections. The draft constitution currently under discussion contained an article on the right of women to elect and be elected.

9. Tunisia would celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it would do so with some sadness, since it could not but be conscious of the violations of human rights taking place on its very borders.

10. Mrs. KHADDURI (Iraq) said that the poor economic and social conditions prevailing in the underdeveloped countries and the desire of the peoples of those countries to improve their lot were among the root causes of the current international tension. The Children's Fund was to be warmly congratulated on its efforts to ameliorate those conditions. Her delegation earnestly hoped that the Fund would be able to carry on its activities on an even larger scale, and strongly endorsed the appeal made by the Chairman of the UNICEF Executive Board, at the Third Committee's 837th meeting, for an increase in contributions from Governments. Iraq had benefited substantially from UNICEF programmes in the fields of maternal and child welfare, disease control and milk conservation. The assistance provided by UNICEF during the floods of April 1954 in Baghdad had been greatly appreciated.

11. The new Government of Iraq was determined to break with the past and bring about a radical change in the economic and social conditions of the country. The Children's Fund could help greatly by making available technical assistance experts to work on projects in co-operation with the local authorities and by providing training facilities for Iraqi personnel.

12. Her delegation endorsed all the recommendations on human rights which had been submitted to the Economic and Social Council. It was a sad fact that although ten years had passed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, violations of the human rights enshrined in it, particularly those set forth in article 2, were still constantly occurring. Discrimination of all kinds was rife, and in many places political rights were non-existent. She hoped that the tenth anniversary of the Declaration would mark the beginning of a new era of freedom, equality and security.

13. She deplored the fact that there were still some States Members of the United Nations in which women had not achieved equal rights with men. In Iraq, women were now taking an active part in many professions, but they did not yet enjoy the same social status as men. Under the old régime, women had had no political rights at all, and had been relegated to the home. However, the women of Iraq had proved their ability on many occasions, and under the provisional Constitution, they enjoyed the same rights as men. She hoped that under the guidance of the United Nations women in all countries would achieve full equality with men.

14. Mr. NASH (New Zealand) remarked that the Economic and Social Council and the Third Committee were concerned with ultimate human values—with improving health and social conditions, promoting human rights, and strengthening the economic bases indispensable to the exercise of human freedoms and

the full development of the individual. Through those various aspects of its work, the Council was in fact contributing to the fuller development of human personality. The world was inhabited by some 2,500 million human beings, each one of whom, as an individual, had a right not only to live his life, but to live it to the full. The gap between living conditions in different areas of the world was still very great; while in some countries life expectancy was seventy years, in others it was but thirty years. That dreadful disparity was an indictment of all mankind. The goal of the United Nations must be to safeguard and improve the life of every single human being. It was the particular task of the Council, and of the Third Committee, to see that the General Assembly, in its concern with world politics, did not forget the individual.

15. The Children's Fund had set itself the task of improving living conditions at the very outset of life, during the formative years of childhood, and New Zealand, a small country with many demands upon its limited resources, made annual contributions to the Fund in the knowledge that they would be used to good advantage. New Zealand would contribute £75,000 to the Children's Fund in the current year. As conditions in the world had changed, the Fund's activities had altered accordingly, and from providing emergency food and clothing it had turned more and more to the organization of mass disease eradication programmes. Many children who would otherwise have succumbed to disease were thus being enabled to survive, and the world's population was rapidly increasing. In consequence, however, international responsibility was also increasing. Three-fifths of the people living in the world today had never had enough to eat; it was plain that the United Nations still had far to go before it achieved one of its basic goals.

16. With reference to the status of women, he observed that New Zealand had given women the right to vote in 1894; it was, to his knowledge, the first country to have done so. There were women in the legislature and in high government posts, and women suffered no form of discrimination. New Zealand was equally free from racial discrimination. Its Maori population enjoyed equal privileges with all other citizens, and was represented in Parliament on a proportional basis.

17. So far as the New Zealand Government was concerned, it was as important now as it had been in 1945 to secure respect for human rights and freedoms—recent events had confirmed that the consideration of means to secure those rights to all peoples should remain a matter of top priority. It was therefore proper that the Third Committee should devote a considerable proportion of its time to the drafting of the Covenants, a difficult task since the Committee was not codifying recognized principles but formulating standards from diverse concepts and systems of law. When the drafting was completed, it might be wise for the Committee to keep an open mind with regard to the possibility of appointing later an expert review committee to put the text into a form suitable for adoption.

18. To be effective, it was essential that the Covenants should be adopted and widely ratified. States ratifying the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should be obliged to give immediate effect to its provisions.

The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also required precise formulation and there the procedures for implementation required particular attention. Even if the implementation was to be progressive in character, the texts should still portray clear standards with which the ratifying States would have to comply. In formulating the Covenants, the Committee was drafting a treaty, not a moral code. Regard must therefore be paid not only to the rights it was desired to secure for all peoples but also to the possibility of obtaining ratifications within a reasonable time. The Covenants were badly needed to ensure the "universal" respect for human rights spoken of in the Charter of the United Nations but they were of such importance as to require the greatest possible care and precision in drafting.

19. Referring to freedom of information, he said that New Zealand attached the greatest importance to the subject. He deplored the recent tendency to conceal information from the people for their own good; people's true good demanded that they should know as much as possible about the imperfect world they lived in.

20. The United Nations had been fortunate in the men it had chosen to hold the office of High Commissioner for Refugees. New Zealand would do its best to help the present High Commissioner in his efforts to protect and assist refugees.

21. He expressed deep appreciation of the work of the non-governmental organizations, which gave the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly very useful help.

22. His delegation was proud of the work of the Council, and wished it every success in the future. He hoped that with its aid men would build a better world in which every individual human being, whatever his race, colour or creed, would enjoy freedom and long life, would have access to the knowledge amassed by men through the ages, and, guided by wisdom and virtue, would learn at last to live at peace with his neighbours.

23. Mr. YAPOU (Israel) observed that the tenth anniversary of the State of Israel, which was being celebrated in 1958, had given his country an opportunity for taking stock of its progress in the fields discussed in the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3848). It had been clear from the early days of his country's existence that no appreciable expansion of its economic and other resources could be achieved without creating a broad network of social services aimed at raising the standard of living of the new immigrants, most of whom had previously lived in countries with low economic, social and cultural conditions. The task of enacting social legislation and setting up social services had been an enormous one. Israel had to overcome difficulties arising out of the refusal of its neighbours to maintain seemly and normal relations with it and their policy of blind obstruction to the development of suitable regional instrumentalities—of the United Nations and of specialized agencies—to carry out common projects which, by their very nature, must have a proper regional basis if they were to be effective.

24. The people of Israel had good reason to be specially aware of the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on

the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and was preparing to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the signing of those momentous instruments in a spirit of national achievement and international solidarity. Although, as the experience of the past decade had shown, the ideas and precepts of the Declaration had had a considerable influence on the whole world, much remained to be done, and human rights were still being violated. Moreover, the Declaration was only a first step towards achieving a new order of respect for human rights; Israel had therefore consistently urged the Third Committee to persist in its work on the draft International Covenants on Human Rights, particularly since their general purport and specific provisions accorded with the democratic régime and the system of the rule of law of its constitutional and judicial practice. Israel had accordingly supported the suggestion that at least as many meetings should be devoted to the draft Covenants at the current session as in 1957. Whether or not the drafts could be completed, the peoples of the world should be shown that the work was continuing, and in the year of the tenth anniversary of the Declaration substantial progress should be made.

25. With regard to the Genocide Convention, he drew attention to the 1951 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on reservations to the Convention, <sup>2/</sup> which stated that the first consequence of the conception of genocide as "a crime under international law" was that the principles underlying the Convention were principles recognized by civilized nations as binding on States, even without any conventional obligation. The second consequence was the universal character both of the condemnation of genocide and of the co-operation required "in order", in the words of the preamble to the Convention, "to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge". Fifty-eight nations had ratified the Convention since its signature in 1948; to the Jewish people, the outlawing and punishment of genocide by the international community was a great step towards the establishment of the rule of international law.

26. Turning to the section of the Council's report on UNICEF, he observed that now that the Fund had become a major international instrument for the care of children it needed to apply dynamic and independent policies; ways and means should therefore be sought to free it from financial limitations. A determined effort should be made to reverse the trend towards a decline in the rate of growth of the Fund's income. In that connexion, it would be useful if the Committee could have fuller information on the extent to which initial UNICEF investment had led to the establishment of fully operative services at the local or national level; such information would provide countries with the assurance that progress would continue when UNICEF aid was withdrawn.

27. Two statements made by the Chairman of the UNICEF Executive Board pointed towards greater achievement. The first was that the opportunities for effective use of UNICEF aid were growing every year, as a result of experience and of more comprehensive government planning. The second was that co-ordination between UNICEF and other agencies

<sup>2/</sup> International Court of Justice, Reservations to the Convention on Genocide, Advisory Opinion: I.C.J. Reports 1951, p. 15.

was constantly being strengthened; an FAO/UNICEF Joint Policy Committee had been set up, procedures for closer collaboration with the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs and with the World Health Organization had been established, and ways of working more closely with non-governmental organizations were being sought.

28. Israel was grateful for the assistance it had received from UNICEF. The milk conservation programme that had been put into effect with UNICEF aid had been a complete success, and the Fund was now helping in the establishment of a chain of rural health centres and of three units for the care of premature infants. The latter project included special courses for doctors, medical students, children's nurses and mothers; and a study of local causes of premature birth had been undertaken. The Children's Fund had also given valuable assistance in connexion with the national child and youth welfare system, which was based on the family and a suitable social milieu and provided a wide variety of facilities for a school population of approximately 550,000. Full co-ordination of national efforts with those of UNICEF was the best way to achieve real progress towards the common goal.

29. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) expressed his country's gratitude for UNICEF aid and its appreciation of the Fund's impressive achievements. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the appeal which had been made by the Chairman of the UNICEF executive Board (837th meeting) for increased contributions, and would be prepared to co-sponsor a draft resolution to that effect. The Children's Fund had given Greece particularly valuable assistance with its nutrition programmes since the end of the Second World War, and in 1957 had provided supplies for the rehabilitation of crippled children. It would be desirable to extend the latter type of aid to Cyprus, where it was badly needed. Aside from the practical benefits of UNICEF activities, their moral significance was incalculable, representing as they did the concern of the United Nations for the rising generation throughout the world.

30. The tenth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a momentous event, which should be duly observed by all countries. However, it should also be marked by a stock-taking of the achievements and failures of the United Nations in ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. On the credit side, there was the prominent place given to human rights in the Charter and the fact that the United Nations had paid consistent attention to the subject, which had been ignored by the League of Nations. The signing of the Declaration, too, had been a great step forward; it was a particularly happy coincidence that the President of the General Assembly at its thirteenth session was a man who had played such a prominent part in the framing of that instrument. But the Declaration was generally acknowledged to be merely a first step towards the practical achievement of respect for human rights, and the record of the United Nations in the decade of the Declaration's existence could only be described as one of failure. While the Council of Europe had already adopted binding provisions on human rights and was putting them into effect, the United Nations was still awaiting the completion of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights. The

Committee's experience over four years had shown, however, that progress could be made only very slowly; an average of four articles a year had been adopted, and according to even the most optimistic estimates it would take at least ten years to complete consideration of the draft Covenants. Thus, the Declaration was the only United Nations instrument on human rights in existence, and despite the moral effect that might have been expected of it, gross violations of human rights, hardly differing from those that had occurred before the establishment of the United Nations, were being perpetrated throughout the world. The sharp contrast between the protection of human rights in metropolitan States and their violation in dependent territories such as Cyprus, where methods similar to those of the Nazis were being applied, was particularly disquieting. The Third Committee could not stand by apathetically and merely suggest expediting the work on the draft Covenants; such an attitude was likely to shake the confidence of the world in the efficiency of the United Nations and indeed even in its sincerity of purpose. At the initiative of the Greek delegation, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 1041 (XI) on interim measures to be taken with respect of violations of human rights; and unless steps were taken at the current session to ensure the completion of the draft Covenants within a reasonable period, the Greek delegation would be obliged to reintroduce its proposals for such measures.

31. He expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in advancing the status of women. In Greece, women had been granted political rights in 1952, and in 1953 his Government had ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women. The Chairman of the Third Committee at the Assembly's current session had been the first woman in Greece to be appointed to a Cabinet post, and women were playing an increasingly important part in the public life of the country.

32. In conclusion, he considered that the report of the Economic and Social Council represented an encouraging picture, particularly since it showed a growing awareness of the need for moral progress if mankind was to avoid self-annihilation as a result of its scientific advances.

33. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) welcomed the fact that the Third Committee had decided to take up the report of the Council (A/3848) at the beginning of its session, so as to have ample time for its consideration. There had recently been a tendency in the United Nations to emphasize economic questions at the expense of social questions. One of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations was to promote the progress of the peoples; but that would not be possible if the interdependence of economic and social factors was ignored. The same importance should be attached to both. At its recent session, the Council had given more attention to economic than to social questions because some of the bodies dealing with the latter had not met during the year under review. If that had been the result of the decision that some of the subsidiary bodies should hold only biennial meetings, she hoped that that decision would soon be reversed.

34. She paid a tribute to the work of UNICEF and congratulated the Fund on its achievements during the

past year. The malaria eradication programme was of particular importance in Latin America, where malaria had in the past seriously affected the people's capacity for work. In combating malaria, UNICEF would therefore have helped to strengthen the economy of the countries in question. She welcomed the increasingly close co-operation between UNICEF and the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs.

35. The United Nations was to be congratulated on its untiring efforts to solve international narcotics problems. In that connexion, she wished to point out that the Dominican Republic had ratified all the narcotics treaties currently in force.

36. The question of the status of women was very near to her heart. Much progress had been made since the first session of the General Assembly, and it could now be said that there were very few countries in which women did not enjoy full political rights. However, much remained to be done before women could come to occupy the place to which they were entitled in a civilized society. Despite all their theoretical gains, women still did not participate in public life to the same extent as men; even in the United Nations their share of the responsible posts was relatively small. So long as women had not attained full equality of rights with men, there would be work for the Commission on the Status of Women to do. It was deplorable that ancient prejudices and customs should still prevent women from enjoying their rights. Thus, she had been shocked to hear at a recent meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board that in parts of Africa women were still regarded as mere chattels. The Children's Fund should extend its sphere of action so as to reach not only those unfortunate women but also the men who kept them in subjection. The United Nations could do a great deal to assist the process of enlightenment by organizing seminars under the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights.

37. Mr. MAHEU (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), replying to questions

put by the USSR and United Kingdom representatives at the preceding meeting, said that UNESCO had already acted to give effect to Economic and Social Council resolution 695 (XXVI), concerning a survey of international relations and exchanges in the fields of education, science and culture.

38. First, the Director-General of UNESCO had submitted to the Executive Board a report and proposals for the inclusion of the survey in the draft programme and budget of the organization for 1959-1960. He had proposed a plan of work under which UNESCO would not only survey the actual state of cultural relations and exchanges in the fields of education, science and culture but also prepare recommendations, with the help of an expert committee, for separate and joint action by Governments in the future. In that connexion, the committee would examine the advisability and possibility of drafting an international instrument to cover such relations and exchanges. The United Nations and the appropriate specialized agencies would at every stage be closely associated with the work, for which a sum of \$20,000 would be requested from the General Conference.

39. Secondly, at its September 1958 session the UNESCO Executive Board had considered the Director-General's report and approved his plan of work, which would now be submitted to the General Conference in November 1958. The Executive Board had recommended that Governments should be asked not only to provide information on their own activities in that connexion and indicate their views on the subject, but also to give their opinion on the role of the non-governmental organizations in the field in question. In view of the importance of the task and the amount of work involved, the Executive Board had felt that UNESCO would not be able to submit the survey and recommendations to the Economic and Social Council before its thirtieth session, to be held in July 1960.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.