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*Chairman:* Mr. Ismael THAJEB (Indonesia).

## AGENDA ITEM 76

Means of promoting agrarian reform (A/5481 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/C.2/L.734/Rev.2, A/C.2/L.741) (continued)

1. Mr. ENCINAS (Peru), introducing the revised text of the draft resolution on agrarian reform (A/C.2/L.734/Rev.2), said that the two sponsors of the original draft resolution had warmly welcomed the delegations of Brazil and the Philippines as co-sponsors and had appreciated their valuable contribution. The new text took account of the very interesting ideas put forward by several delegations during the debate and was a distinct improvement over the original draft. Accordingly, the sponsors hoped that it would be adopted unanimously.

2. Mr. RUSENOV (Bulgaria) noted with satisfaction that an increasing measure of agreement was being reached on the importance of agrarian reform to developing countries. The existence of an archaic and often quasi-feudal system was a major obstacle to progress, and the Peruvian representative had vividly described the difficulties faced by a developing country in which agrarian reform was incomplete. Undoubtedly, the solution of such problems would have very important consequences for a great many Member States. It was striking that all too often unduly large areas of land were in the hands of a small oligarchy of landowners, while the tenant farmers, who had to struggle to make ends meet, had to hand over up to 50 per cent of their total crops. The existing structures must therefore be radically changed, and the main concern should be to champion the cause of those who actually worked the land and not the interests of the large landowners; it was important to improve the lot of the small and landless farmers. Moreover, it was not enough merely to distribute land; it was also essential to provide farmers with increased means of production and markets.

3. The countries undertaking agrarian reform might profit by the experience gained by many other countries in that field. In that connexion, he recalled the significant results obtained by Bulgaria, especially as regards the creation of agricultural co-operatives, the mechanization of agriculture and the provision of credit facilities to enable farmers to acquire equipment, seeds and other essentials for rational farming.

4. A programme of agrarian reform should be based primarily on the resources of the countries concerned, which would be ill-advised to rely too much on foreign assistance, in particular for compensating landowners whose lands had been expropriated. In that regard, the experience of countries in which agrarian reform had been successfully carried out showed that, in order to protect the interests of the new landowners as taxpayers, such compensation should not be calculated at market prices.

5. The highly interesting debate which had taken place on agrarian reform had culminated in a draft resolution which should be adopted unanimously. The text submitted was an excellent synthesis of the points of view expressed; nevertheless, there was still room for some improvements along the lines indicated by the Romanian and Hungarian representatives.

6. Mr. PRIMELLES (Cuba) congratulated the sponsors of the draft resolution. The Peruvian representative had given a striking picture of the difficulties encountered by his country, and the Cuban delegation had been particularly struck by the fact that the occupation of the land by the peasant masses had given rise to incidents in which more than fifty lives had been lost. An agrarian reform worthy of the name should be effective, legal, democratic and peaceful. It should be carried out for the benefit of the majority of the people and should be supported by them. Lastly, the Government must be prepared to thwart the machinations of anyone who tried to sabotage it. Several delegations, including the Algerian delegation, had eloquently described the problems of countries in which there was land without people and people without land.

7. In Cuba, agrarian reform had passed through three main phases since the end of the 1950's. During the struggle against the dictatorship, the revolutionary authorities had already begun agrarian reform in the areas under their control by restoring the land to the farmers who worked it. Moreover, the army of liberation had given farmers every possible assistance, in particular in education and technical assistance. When the revolutionary authorities had come to power, 45 per cent of the land had been in the hands of the large landowners. Tenant farmers had cultivated approximately 30 per cent of the cultivable land and 12.7 per cent of the land had belonged to small landowners.

8. The Act of 17 May 1959 on the "latifundia" had limited individual landholdings to 400 hectares and had provided for the distribution to small farmers of plots of up to 67 hectares. The Government which had emerged from the revolution had given considerable assistance to farmers and had encouraged the formation of co-operatives. Under the new system, 40 per cent of the land was to constitute the socialist sector of agriculture while the remainder would continue to belong to the private sector. The lot of the farmer had

improved in all respects and production had increased in virtually all sectors; naturally the large landowners had been resentful and had attempted to sabotage the agrarian reform.

9. A second act by the revolutionary Government, that of 13 October 1963, had been promulgated to complete the work begun. Individual holdings were henceforth limited to 67 hectares and the landowners whose property had been expropriated received compensation payable in ten years. No compensation was given for uncultivated land which passed directly into the public domain. Henceforth, 70 per cent of the land belonged to the State and the co-operatives and 30 per cent was being worked by small landowners. In order to facilitate the transition to a fully socialized agriculture, the Government had taken steps to authorize small landowners to join the co-operatives if they so desired, but they were not compelled to do so.

10. The draft resolution before the Committee followed the same line as a number of resolutions which had been adopted since 1950 by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and, at the preceding session, it was at the initiative of the Second Committee that General Assembly resolution 1828 (XVII) had been adopted. The time had come for action. His delegation reserved its right to speak again later.

11. Mr. SAID (Yemen) expressed his delegation's gratitude to the representatives of Costa Rica and Peru for their draft resolution on agrarian reform. It was recognized that the agricultural sector, even in the developed countries, was the least responsive of all to improvements. That was due partly to psychological factors and partly to the fact that rural areas benefited least from technical progress. Moreover, the difficulties seemed to be still greater in the developing countries, where natural population growth was much higher in rural areas than in towns. That is why a twofold phenomenon could often be observed: a poverty-stricken rural economy existed side-by-side with a relatively wealthy urban economy, resting on a narrow industrial base, with little manpower assimilation by the industrial sector from the rural sector.

12. While equity and the demand for development necessitated land redistribution, the new structure must be viable. The crucial element in agricultural development was the provision of capital and of marketing and training facilities for farmers. Unless such facilities were provided, no real progress could be made. The international organizations could play an effective part in financing agricultural development, but their involvement at the stage of land distribution could not produce any useful results and might further complicate problems and even jeopardize the effectiveness of future action. At the preliminary stage, they should confine themselves to study and advice. That was the only reservation his delegation had to make with regard to the draft resolution.

13. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) believed that everyone, or nearly everyone, agreed that agrarian reform was one of the prerequisites for the economic, political and cultural development of the under-developed and the recently independent countries. Antiquated farming methods and outdated systems of land tenure were remains of feudalism and colonialism and constituted one of the main obstacles to the progress of peoples. Their survival in many developing countries in which there were

vast areas of arable land often forced those countries to import foodstuffs. That situation, instead of improving, was being further aggravated by a rapid increase in the population. It was therefore a matter of urgency for all those countries to take radical land reform measures which would enable them to improve the structure of their economy, create new markets, raise the level of living of their peoples and solve the problems of employment and over-population in the rural areas. The history of many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America showed that the completion of overall development programmes depended primarily on the success of agrarian reform and that, as recommended in Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII), agrarian reform must be instituted in the interest of landless, small and medium farmers. Many Governments had already taken measures to achieve that end and their experience showed that the primary objective of any agrarian reform should be to distribute to the tillers of the land the big estates which usually belong to foreign individuals or companies. Nevertheless, foreign owners were still exploiting vast areas in a large number of developing countries and in some cases even buying new land. Land was still being acquired by foreign individuals, companies or Governments on many pretexts and for different purposes, such as land speculation, the obtaining of lucrative concessions and the establishment of military bases or testing grounds.

14. The countries which had already carried out their agrarian reform in an efficient and democratic manner were trying to ensure a more rational utilization of the land by setting up, among other things, State farms, credit and marketing co-operatives and community development services. In that connexion, the State was playing a very valuable part in distributing fertilizers and seeds and establishing breeding centres. He stressed that in every case those reforms had been carried out without any financial aid from abroad and without special funds for compensating the owners of estates.

15. Many other countries, however, while recognizing the need for radical and democratic agrarian reform, had made too little and too slow progress in that direction. It could be said that in most cases the situation had not changed noticeably since the General Assembly had first taken up the question of agrarian reform and had adopted resolution 401 (V).

16. Although the need for agrarian reform had been emphasized in many documents, reports and studies published by the United Nations, as well as in the discussions of the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-fourth session and of the General Assembly at its seventeenth session, the progress achieved had not been commensurate with the intentions declared. It was, however, essential that the consideration of the matter by the General Assembly and the resolutions and recommendations adopted should serve to expedite and not to impede the process of change that was needed in the agricultural sector of the developing countries. If the situation was allowed to continue, the United Nations and not the forces really opposing such change within the countries concerned would ultimately be blamed for the failure of certain attempts at agrarian reform. That was why the greatest prudence was essential. Above all, a further financial burden should not be laid on the United Nations merely to assist certain Governments in compensating the landowners whose holdings were expropriated. It should be made

clear once and for all that agrarian reform was exclusively a matter of internal policy which the peoples and Governments of the countries concerned must solve by whatever methods they considered best.

17. The United Nations could and should help in instituting democratic and peaceful agrarian reform based on the principle that the land must belong to those who cultivated it, but its action should be concentrated on technical assistance and advisory services. It was, however, true to say that agrarian reform was not being given its proper place in the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, including FAO. In resolution 1526 (XV), the General Assembly had implicitly acknowledged that state of affairs.

18. It was quite clear that the United Nations could, without needing additional appropriations, give its attention to collecting and distributing systematically the fullest possible information on the progress achieved by various countries in agrarian reform. For that purpose, it should organize regional and inter-regional conferences and seminars and also intensify the activities of the regional economic commissions in that field. Both at the thirty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Council and during the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, the USSR delegation had proposed a conference of government representatives, economists and specialists from the Asian, African and Latin American countries, which would study agrarian reform and analyse the methods used and results obtained hitherto. That conference could be organized under the auspices of the regional economic commissions and the Economic and Social Council, and his delegation believed that it could give prominence to certain positive achievements and thus enable the United Nations to help the Governments and institutions of those countries which were carrying out agrarian reform or intending to do so.

19. It was evident that the United Nations could play a much more active role in that connexion than it had done so far. Between 1952 and 1962, the Secretariat had issued seventy-five different publications dealing with community development, whereas there were only four reports on agrarian reform. In the five years from 1958 to 1962, twenty-eight documents had been published on community development and only one on agrarian reform. The Secretariat must make a serious effort to carry out a careful study of the measures taken by the countries which had achieved efficient and democratic agrarian reform and furnish all the countries concerned with information on the subject. It might even be worth-while to set up a special service without increasing the Secretariat staff for that purpose. At present, only one staff member in the United Nations was dealing with that subject. FAO could also play a valuable part, since it had been specially established to assist under-developed countries in agriculture.

20. Finally, he thought that the new draft resolution submitted by the four Powers was a definite improvement over the previous one and merited careful examination. His delegation intended to propose certain informal amendments and therefore requested that the present draft should not be voted upon prematurely.

21. Mr. SANTOS (Brazil) said that the purpose of the draft resolution which Brazil was co-sponsoring, was to express clearly a number of ideas on agrarian reform and international action in that field. Brazil, where a comprehensive agrarian reform programme

was in preparation, was acutely aware of the close relationship between agricultural and industrial development. The broad objectives of that programme were to increase the supply of agricultural goods for the internal market, which was expanding under the impact of industrialization, to increase the per caput income of the rural population so as to enlarge the market for industrial production, to increase the participation of the agricultural sector in the formation of the gross national product and to increase agricultural productivity in order to lower production and marketing costs. The governmental bodies concerned with agrarian reform were well aware that those objectives could not be attained by the redistribution of land alone, although that was the essential feature of agrarian reform. The redistribution of land must be based on sound knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the rural areas. First of all, it would be necessary to carry out a survey of the economic and social conditions actually prevailing in the agrarian sector, draw up satisfactory land maps and make a complete inventory of land and water resources. That was where technical assistance, both bilateral and through the United Nations, played a vital role.

22. The success of any agrarian reform depended on the assistance furnished by the Government to the new farmers. It was widely recognized that many agrarian reforms had failed because the farmers lacked the resources necessary for working their land. Sufficient agricultural capital must be put at their disposal, that is, in addition to the land itself and to the acquired knowledge of the potential of the soil, supplies and equipment for current farm operations, buildings and various infrastructural facilities, as was stated in the third report entitled *Progress in Land Reform* (E/3603/Rev.1). All those items, which were the constituent elements of "agrarian reform", were covered by the expression "agricultural development", the term used in the four-Power draft resolution. It was that aspect that the sponsors of the draft had in mind when they invited the Member States and all the international bodies concerned to give adequate consideration to requests for financial assistance made by developing countries within their land programmes. He noted that all those aspects had already been ably explained by the representative of Peru. He only hoped, therefore, that the Committee would unanimously adopt the four-Power draft resolution.

23. Mr. AYARI (Tunisia) thanked the sponsors of the draft resolution for the spirit of co-operation they had shown. The new text of operative paragraph 3 now met the concern of the Tunisian delegation. However, the wording of the paragraph was still somewhat ambiguous. In order to make it clear that the financial aid in question would be provided solely to developing countries which had undertaken a land reform programme, he proposed to add in paragraph 3, after the words "agricultural development", the words "in the developing countries", with the consequent deletion of the phrase "made by developing countries", and, at the end of the paragraph in the French text, to replace the words "surtout par ceux" by the words "surtout de ceux". Furthermore, at the end of paragraph 5 of the French version, the words "notamment par l'émission d'obligations" should be replaced by the words "y compris par l'émission de bons d'Etat".

24. With regard to the Secretary-General's note (A/C.2/L.741) concerning the financial implications of the draft resolution, he was surprised that that draft could entail any appreciable extra costs. The United

Nations, FAO and possibly the International Bank already had adequate means available to carry out the study and research envisaged in the draft resolution. Only a few countries would request information on tax and budgetary methods which might be used in the execution of land reform measures. FAO already possessed considerable material on the subject and so did the International Bank. Existing resources and facilities should be availed of before any additional expenditures were contemplated. He accordingly proposed the addition, at the beginning of paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, after the words "Requests the Secretary-General" of the phrase ", in co-operation with FAO and the specialized agencies concerned,".

25. He asked the representatives of FAO and the Bank to explain whether, in their opinion, the implementation of the draft resolution would entail additional expenditure and whether those agencies would not be in a position to give the United Nations some assistance in that field, using existing services.

26. Mr. LACHMANN (Secretariat) pointed out, in reply to the question raised by the representative of Tunisia, that the note concerning the financial implications contained an analysis which led to the conclusion that the studies requested in the draft resolution would not require any additional appropriations and that the resolution would not therefore have any financial implications, although it might call for some rearrangement of the contents of the forthcoming progress report on land reform. The Secretariat was, moreover, aware that it could count on valuable assistance from the specialized agencies. Furthermore, a distinction might be drawn between the studies and the requests for technical assistance. It was obvious that only a few countries would ask for technical assistance and the requests received would be met within the limitations of the technical assistance programmes. The studies requested in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution, however, would have to be made quite apart from any request for technical assistance, in connexion with the preparation of the report required under General Assembly resolution 1526 (XV). As he had already stated, no additional appropriation would be requested for that purpose.

27. Mr. ORR (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) recalled that both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly had recognized FAO as the specialized agency concerned with land reform. With regard to the question raised by the representative of Tunisia, he could say outright that FAO would make a full contribution to the studies mentioned in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution. According to the information at his disposal, he thought that such assistance could be furnished without any additional financial implications. As in the case of the United Nations, some changes might have to be made in the order of priority of programmes. Paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, the text of which had been revised, referred to studies which apparently would not be made unless requested by the developing countries. FAO might not be able to undertake them within its existing resources, but they could probably be financed as projects under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance or through the Special Fund.

28. Mr. VELARDE DORADO (Bolivia) said that his delegation welcomed the fact that the question of land reform had been raised direct in the Committee.

29. It had long been recognized that land reform was a part of economic and social development. Bolivia had instituted land reform eleven years previously. The measures taken by the Revolutionary Government had sometimes been subjected to criticism because their importance had not always been recognized. At the preceding session (862nd meeting), in presenting the draft resolution which had become General Assembly resolution 1828 (XVII), he had mentioned the satisfaction with which his Government had noted that the number of countries giving priority to land reform in their development had greatly increased and that the importance of agriculture in the United Nations Development Decade had been acknowledged. That resolution had drawn the attention of Governments to the importance of implementing land reform, in conjunction with adequate measures of community development. The resolution also had the merit of calling upon the Economic and Social Council and the subsidiary organs of the United Nations to devote their attention to the relationship between land reform and co-operation, urbanization and industrialization, and to the fiscal and financial aspects of land reform.

30. In connexion with land reform, his delegation was not thinking solely of measures to change the system of land tenure. In its opinion, true land reform also included the establishment of agencies to provide essential services, in such fields as credit, popular education and research. Community development programmes were a basic factor in the mobilization of effort and the integration of large sectors of the population into the economic, political, social and cultural life of the nation. His delegation also believed that the population and the Government must unite their efforts in order to achieve genuine community development. However, any land reform must be directed towards the transformation of the industrial sector, because the imbalance between that sector and the agricultural sector lay at the very root of the crises of under-development. He thought that the sponsors of the draft resolution had made that phenomenon quite clear.

31. Financing was certainly one of the problems which had to be taken into account when formulating a land reform policy, but the most pressing need was a will to change. In Bolivia, a revolution had been required to bring about that transformation and put an end to the feudal régime. Until the revolution, the distribution and utilization of land had been carried out under a system which prevented the development of the country. Bolivia had been like a large mining camp, as the governing clique had wanted it, while two thirds of the population were working the land with primitive tools. The 1950 census had clearly brought out the characteristics of the system of rural land ownership. It had revealed, for instance, that a single landowner possessed an estate equal in area to Belgium and the Netherlands together. Only 2 per cent of the land in the country as a whole had been under cultivation, and on the large estates, only 0.5 per cent. Those facts had convinced the Bolivian Government of the need to alter the structure of land tenure and, by handing over the land to those who worked on it, to put an end to over four centuries of oppression of the Bolivian peasant. Land reform had been adapted to the political realities of the country and had been put into effect without foreign interference. Moreover, as the peasants participated in the Government, it had been achieved without bloodshed. The legal

phase of the redistribution of land was practically complete.

32. Despite the economic difficulties facing Bolivia, its imports of agricultural machinery had greatly increased. Moreover, it was manufacturing locally many tools which had hitherto been unknown in the country. Thanks to the awareness and the efforts of the farmers, the country was beginning to be self-supporting in a wide range of essential commodities. Finally, land reform had proved an effective instrument for the eradication of illiteracy and the advancement of the population and had made the Bolivian peasant a true citizen of his country.

33. Mr. GHEBEH (Syria) congratulated the sponsors of the draft resolution on agrarian reform. His country attached great importance to that question, for much of its population lived by agriculture. In 1958, Syria had launched a vast land reform programme. The land reform legislation had been amended some months before in order to reduce the maximum size of holdings and to exempt the beneficiaries of the land redistribution from payment, other than one quarter of the land's value, which was paid into co-operative societies of which they were members.

34. Land reform had two purposes. The first was a social one: to reduce inequality between citizens and raise the level of living of farmers. The second purpose was economic: to increase farm productivity. An increase in farm income made for an expansion of the market for industry and released for the latter part of the manpower previously employed in agriculture. There was thus a close interdependence between land reform and general economic development. However, not all measures adopted for social ends necessarily served the other goal, that of economic development. If the measures affecting the two were not taken in a co-ordinated manner, the result could be real frustration, and sometimes disaster. In the first place, the small homesteads created by land reform could discourage the mechanization which was essential for increased labour productivity, particularly in sparsely populated areas. Secondly, the new owners might not achieve a satisfactory output for want of capital and equipment, and sometimes of experience. Thirdly, marketing difficulties could hinder production. Fourthly, the small owners could not improve their output without the co-operation of the large owners. Fifthly, much of the arable land remained unused because the small farmers did not have sufficient funds. Lastly, even where land redistribution had the effect of increasing the farmers' income, capital formation might suffer, for while expropriation reduced the big landowners' propensity to save, an increase in the poor farmer's income increased his consumption rather than his savings.

35. However, land redistribution was necessary, not only for the sake of justice and equity, but also in order to solve certain economic problems such as absenteeism, the insecurity of tenant-farmers and collective property. Land reform must therefore be accompanied by other measures relating to land tenure, organization, production methods, financing and marketing.

36. The complexity of land reform problems was such that international co-operation was needed in order to solve them. The General Assembly had recognized the problem, and its concern was reflected in various resolutions, to which was now added the draft resolution before the Committee.

37. As the representatives of Pakistan and Algeria had observed, it was impossible to establish a universal framework for land reform because social and political conditions varied from one country to another. In that connexion, he considered that the land reform in one country described at a previous meeting could not serve as an example to the developing countries since its characteristics were not to be found in those countries. The country concerned possessed a mixed system of private holdings and collective farms, where the workers were mainly immigrants and young people receiving foreign financial assistance. If certain well-informed sources were to be believed, that experiment did not appear to be conclusive, for those young people, often discontented with their situation tended to leave the country.

38. As far as the draft resolution was concerned, his delegation shared the views of the delegations of Tunisia, Pakistan, Algeria and other countries, which had to a certain extent been incorporated in the second revised text of the draft, and, in particular, the observations which had been made concerning the financing of land acquisition. That problem was by its very nature a national one.

39. He believed that in paragraph 3 of the revised draft the words "within their land reform programmes" should appear after the words "made by the developing countries". With that reservation, his delegation was glad to support the draft resolution in its new form.

40. Mr. PEAL (Liberia) said that his country, like the whole of West Africa, was not affected by the land problem. For the countries of that area, the problem was to find methods of increasing the resources which could be derived from the land, such as improved farming techniques, subsidies to tenant-farmers and better marketing systems. In that connexion, he indicated that his Government had undertaken a vast programme of agricultural development.

41. However, his delegation was not unaware of the fact that land reform was a grave problem for many Member States whose economic development would be hampered so long as that question remained unresolved. He had listened with interest to the various statements which had been made, and his delegation was ready to pursue the matter despite its lack of experience.

42. When countries brought particular problems to the United Nations, it was presumably because they thought the solution went beyond their means and were appealing to international co-operation. His delegation believed, however, that in certain cases, the countries concerned should themselves take more positive steps before international assistance could be of use. However, the United Nations and the specialized agencies were now giving their full attention to questions which were not yet ripe for their consideration. However, his delegation did not wish to introduce a discordant note; it would support any step which was acceptable to the Committee as a whole and was ready to take part in action at the international level.

43. Mr. EL BANNA (United Arab Republic) thanked the sponsors of the draft resolution for having incorporated in their text the ideas expressed by his delegation, particularly with regard to the financing of land reform and its international repercussions. In the view of his delegation, the financing of land reform was the sovereign responsibility of the nations concerned. That fact had already been recognized, but

it should be mentioned in the draft resolution under discussion.

44. His delegation would also like to see the draft resolution include the idea which had been put forward by the USSR delegation that Governments should institute appropriate land reforms in the interest of landless, small and medium farmers. That idea appeared in Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII), and he believed that a reference to it would strengthen the cause of land reform.

45. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) said that he believed the observations of the Tunisian and Syrian representatives were the result of a misunderstanding. To clear it up, the word "made" should be placed after the words "agricultural development" in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, as was the case in the Spanish text.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.