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Chairman: Mr. G. F. DAVIDSON (Canada).

Programme of concerted practical action in the social field of the United Nations and the specialized agencies (A/2430, chapter IV, section I, A/2474, A/C.3/L.348) (*continued*)

[Item 66]*

1. Mr. HAUCK (France) pointed out that the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) had shown the disproportion between the great need to relieve want and miserable conditions throughout the world and the inadequacy of the resources available to international organizations to meet the need. The situation was deplorable, but depended on too many factors for it to be possible to increase the resources to the extent that most delegations would wish. Although all possibilities, such as that of the diversion of funds from armament programmes to social needs as a result of the relaxation of international tension, should be taken into consideration, the main stress should be laid on concerted practical action with the available resources.
2. Economic and Social Council resolution 496 (XVI) referred to some projects and spheres of action which it seemed to be especially necessary to explore. Those projects, which were enumerated in paragraph 8 of the resolution, had been agreed on by most delegations ever since the United Nations had begun to deal with social matters. The innovation in the resolution lay in the stress on certain guiding principles and on methods and techniques. The resolution should not be a declaration of wishes, but should give the kind of realistic guidance which governments might expect from the United Nations and the specialized agencies when formulating their requests for assistance.
3. The five main principles were contained in paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Economic and Social Council resolution. In the first place, it was important to bear in mind the interrelation between economic and social problems; it was impossible to carry out useful social work without corresponding economic action, just as it was difficult, if not dangerous, to promote economic development without concurrent social progress. It was essential to integrate social projects with national development plans; the United Nations had to draw

the attention of governments to that need and to the fact that the projects should yield early and permanent results and should reach a maximum number of people. Secondly, the projects had to be adapted to the needs of the countries concerned, and conditions in those countries had to be studied carefully, although the studies should never serve as a pretext for deferring action to meet urgent needs. In that connexion, the United Nations should help governments to establish statistical and research services. Thirdly, the assistance of national and international non-governmental organizations should be mobilized, as was stated in paragraphs 7 (e) and 9 (c), and their experience and skill should be used to the fullest extent in achieving practical results. Fourthly, the promotion and implementation of community development projects should be encouraged, with the help of all the organizations concerned, since results in that field could be achieved only by co-ordination. Lastly, the urgent need for trained personnel of all kinds, which was often the greatest obstacle to social development, should be remedied by extending training programmes and facilities.

4. By stressing those five general principles, the General Assembly would be carrying out the principal recommendation in the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*, that of providing guidance in the use of available resources in the most practical and concrete manner. The French delegation had therefore submitted an amendment (A/C.3/L.350) to the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348), proposing the inclusion of a paragraph relating to the principles defined in the Council's resolution.

5. Mr. REYES (Philippines) said that he had been surprised by the Egyptian representative's suggestion (493rd meeting) that the purpose of the draft resolution was to hinder a thorough consideration of the programme by the Committee.

6. Three courses were open to the Committee: it could approve the programme; it could reject it and ask the Economic and Social Council to submit a new one; or it could approve parts of the programme and either ask the Council to improve the others or amend them itself. The only thing that the Committee could not do was to refrain from examining the programme. All the logical courses of action entailed a careful study of Economic and Social Council resolution 496 (XVI). The joint draft resolution proposed the approval of the programme, on the understanding that it could be developed further, but there was no reason why any delegation should not propose the second or third course.

7. With regard to the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349), he did not consider that the question of the General Assembly's appreciation of the work carried out by the authors of the programme was very important and was sure that the Committee could agree on some wording which

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

would meet with general approval. The deletion of the words "as appropriate", proposed in point 3 of the amendment, was more serious. The programme submitted by the Economic and Social Council was by no means complete in itself; the possibilities of further action were not exhausted, even within the strict limits of the Council's resolution. For example, in the case of the consultations referred to in paragraph 10 of the resolution, joint action would be required of governments, of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies and, possibly, of the Technical Assistance Board.

8. Moreover, the words "as appropriate" did not leave it to the Economic and Social Council to report to the General Assembly on progress achieved whenever it saw fit to do so; the expression simply meant that the Council should report progress whenever it was achieved. There was every reason to expect, for example, that the report on national and international measures taken to improve social conditions throughout the world would be ready in 1954 and that the regional consultations mentioned in the Council's resolution would be held early in that year. Reports on such matters as progress in reorientation, further concentration of effort, extension of geographical coverage, improvement of methods and techniques and increase of governmental and popular co-operation could only be made "as appropriate".

9. With regard to the expression "further practical measures" in paragraph 3 (b) of the draft resolution, he pointed out that the stress laid on the three techniques in paragraph 9 of the Council's resolution merely represented an immediate objective, which was subject to review on the basis of experience.

10. Paragraph 5 of the Council's resolution referred to the need of exploration "for broader sources indispensable for international financing of social and economic development". The Philippine delegation had been partly responsible for the inclusion of that paragraph in the resolution because it considered that national and international social action was pitifully inadequate in relation to the needs of the under-developed countries. Additional resources were indispensable, on both the national and the international level. Apart from the efforts to expand United Nations technical assistance activities, two international projects were being studied. They were the proposed international finance corporation, which would increase the amount of capital available for accelerating economic and social progress, and the special United Nations fund for economic development, which would make long-term, low-interest loans or grants-in-aid for social projects requiring a substantial outlay of capital. Those proposals might be adopted in 1954, or might be deferred. The decision, however, lay with the major contributors to the funds rather than with United Nations organs. The principle of the need for additional resources had been acknowledged, but practical measures could be taken only when conditions became more propitious.

11. On the national level, governments were responsible for obtaining additional resources and for apportioning their resources judiciously between their social and economic programmes in order to ensure balanced development. It seemed that at the current time the national level was the more propitious field for social action, as it was unlikely that technical assistance funds and international capital for the economic and social development of the under-developed countries would be increased substantially in the near future. The entire

United Nations technical assistance programme was undergoing a crisis; the same applied to certain bilateral assistance programmes. Statements by the Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board, a former president of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East showed that large-scale international financial assistance was at a low ebb. The specialized agencies operating in the social field had been obliged to curtail many of their activities and even such an admirable and successful programme of practical action as that of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund was being maintained with difficulty.

12. In the circumstances, his delegation did not think it wise to press for the immediate implementation of paragraph 5 of the Council's resolution, although it attached great importance to the question of additional resources and did not doubt that the majority of the Committee would support a resolution intended to obtain them. Such a proposal would be unrealistic, however, and the Committee would be better advised to endorse a programme for practical action within the framework of available resources. When the time became more propitious, his delegation would consult with those of Egypt and Iraq, and, possibly, of the United States of America, with a view to proposing implementation of those parts of the Council's resolution which would make possible a programme of action more commensurate with the immense needs brought to light by the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*.

13. Mr. CASTRILLO (Bolivia) said that there was efficient co-operation in varied social programmes requiring special techniques between his Government and, on the one hand, United Nations experts in social insurance and family allowances and, on the other, the United States Foreign Operations Administration. Co-ordination was always necessary between the technical assistance of the United Nations and the social and economic policies of countries receiving such assistance. Bolivia was eliminating the legacy of a feudal social structure inherited from colonial times.

14. He agreed with the Egyptian representative that the programme of concerted practical action set out in resolution 496 (XVI) of the Economic and Social Council was magnificent, but he also agreed with the Philippine representative that technical assistance was conditioned by financial possibilities. The programme, if adopted as it stood, would founder. Further consideration of its financial aspect was required.

15. Mrs. CALDWELL (Canada), supporting the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348), points 1 and 2 of the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349) and the French amendment (A/C.3/L.350), outlined the parts played respectively by the Social Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Secretary-General in conjunction with the Directors-General of the specialized agencies in preparing the programme of concerted practical action. The Canadian Government's views on the matter had been fully expressed by its representative at the fourteenth session of the Council and in the Social Commission in the spring of 1953. She hoped that Member States would take that first general opportunity to discuss the substance of the programme rather than merely the form of a draft resolution.

16. She disagreed with the United Kingdom view (493rd meeting) that the effect of the formulation of

such a programme would be to disperse the social efforts of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Experience had shown that such formulations had the effect of concentrating effort in clearly defined areas where results could be expected.

17. The effect of the Secretary-General's efforts to prepare the programme (E/CN.5/291) was to make it clear that the proper role of the United Nations in the social field was one of direction, stimulation, and co-ordination of the activities of the specialized agencies, non-governmental and private organizations and the United Nations Secretariat, which covered a wide range. Such co-ordination would help to ensure the best use of available resources.

18. The programme had been drawn up, and governments should give it time to prove itself over a period of time and refrain from tampering with particular aspects, from disturbing its smooth functioning by seeking to modify its principles, or from seeking priorities for items of particular concern to themselves. Self-restraint was indispensable to the achievement of practical results.

19. Mr. YANCY (Liberia) expressed his satisfaction with regard to chapter IV, section I, of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2430) and its resolution 496 (XVI), and the note by the Secretary-General (A/2474). Together, they fully met the requirements of General Assembly resolution 535 (VI) of 2 February 1952 and of Economic and Social Council resolution 434 A (XIV) of 28 July 1952. The report and the resolution showed the need for such a programme of concerted—and the word "concerted" should be stressed—practical action. Liberia was one, but not the only, country whose own resources were inadequate.

20. The programme was capable of being implemented, as paragraphs 7 and 9 of the operative part of resolution 496 (XVI) showed, and the provisions of paragraphs 10 and 11, in placing the emphasis on requests from governments, would make it possible to take a step forward in international relations. His Government had had recourse two years previously to the expert advice of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and as a result ten schools were now in operation in one area; 10 per cent of the national budget was devoted to education; and, with the co-operation of UNESCO and other specialized agencies, excellent results could be expected within a reasonable time.

21. The joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) was designed to put the programme into action and he would vote for it, but not for the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349).

22. Mr. HUIZI AGUIAR (Venezuela) said that he would support the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) and might also support the amendment submitted by France (A/C.3/L.350), but not the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349).

23. Replying to the Polish representative's comments (493rd meeting), he said that, while it was possible that only 1.5 per cent of the population of Venezuela benefited from compulsory social insurance, his country's social services were constantly increasing in scope, and all statistics had to be seen in the context of general progress. Of the current budget, 49.1 per cent was devoted to public works, education, health, social assistance, agriculture and stock-farming, and labour. There had been a reduction in the mortality and infant mortality rates in recent years and progress had been made in combating diseases, malaria, in particular, having

been extirpated. His Government was not complacent about the progress made and it was better that way for that spurred it on to further progress. Perfection of the social services was still far off.

24. The armaments race carried on by the major Powers, to which the Polish representative had referred, had no effect on the economic and social progress of Venezuela. That did not mean, however, that Venezuela, like all States including the major Powers assuredly, would not be glad to see the resources and efforts spent on armaments diverted to more constructive purposes for mankind. He would shortly be able to supply the Polish representative, if the latter so desired, with information showing the economic and social progress achieved in Venezuela in the last few years.

25. Miss JOHNSEN (Denmark) supported the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) and the amendment submitted by France (A/C.3/L.350), the effect of which was to make the draft resolution more realistic, but did not support the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349).

26. In reply to the Polish representative's comments on the lack of social security in capitalist countries, she pointed out that basic social security legislation had been in operation in Denmark for twenty years. Extensive social services were enjoyed by the Danish people, a high proportion of the national income was devoted to social expenditure, and there was a high proportion of beneficiaries of the various schemes. It was plain from the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.5/291, chap. 8), that Denmark was not the only capitalist country enjoying a highly developed social security system.

27. Mr. MORALES (Argentina) said that the United Nations was responsible under the Charter for carrying out a social policy to achieve better living conditions, particularly in the under-developed countries. At first its endeavours had lacked co-ordination and an adequate definition of the purposes to be achieved, but the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) had revived a sense of urgency and the General Assembly had asked the Economic and Social Council to prepare a programme of concerted practical action in the social field. The great basic social problems could not and should not be solved by international action. They were each country's own responsibility, and international action, laudable though it was, should always be regarded as merely supplementing a country's own efforts. In social affairs, even more than in economic, a country's idiosyncrasies should be scrupulously respected.

28. The distinction to be drawn between national and international fields of social activity was mainly a question of resources. The report by the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/291) on which Council resolution 496 (XVI) had been based concentrated on the improvement of existing activities without going into the question of finding additional resources. It recommended the greatest possible concentration on the basic programmes; but, praiseworthy though those programmes were, they would not go far towards solving the great social problems. His delegation had come to the conclusion, shared by others, that increased resources were urgently needed to cope with social problems, but that action should be limited to advising on programmes to be carried out by the governments themselves rather than be extended to an attempt to apply social policies. The

latter course would require more resources than the United Nations would ever be likely to be able to spare for the purpose. A second, and more important, conclusion was that a sense of urgency should inspire all plans for the economic development of under-developed countries and for the balanced expansion of world economy to permit all countries fair access to the resources needed. If that occurred, countries would be able to carry out their own social policies, and would require international aid only for the actual planning of the policies. The interrelation between economic and social problems should be duly stressed, but the economic should take precedence. Only thus would it be possible to obtain the resources required for social policies for the common weal.

29. The Argentine delegation had sponsored the relevant resolutions adopted by the Social Commission and the Economic and Social Council and would accordingly support the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) and the French amendment thereto (A/C.3/L.350). It would support point 2 of the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/349) but would abstain on point 1. That vote should not, however, be construed as a lack of appreciation of the valuable work done by the Council and the Social Commission and especially by the Secretary-General, the departments of the United Nations concerned and the specialized agencies.

30. Mr. MENESES PALLARES (Ecuador), replying to the Polish representative's comments at the 493rd meeting, said that the social security system of Ecuador, while not perfect, had been described by International Labour Organisation experts as one of the best in the Americas. It was being developed still further.

31. Some delegations appeared to have misunderstood the purport of the joint draft resolution. Its sole intent had been to stress the merits of resolution 496 (XVI) of the Economic and Social Council. The Social Commission and the Council, composed of technical experts, had discussed every aspect of that resolution exhaustively, and the members of the Third Committee, who were laymen by comparison, should be chary of undoing their work. The draft resolution was not rigid; indeed, in paragraph 3 the Council was requested to consider further practical measures. The French amendment (A/C.3/L.350) laid stress on practical action and could certainly be accepted.

32. Mrs. TSALDARIS (Greece) observed that her Government had already sent in its suggestions and recommendations (E/CN.5/291/Add.2)—which were the fruit of recent experience—on the programme of concerted practical action in the social field. That programme was an important development in the social history of the post-war period. Council resolutions 451 (XIV) and 496 (XVI), particularly paragraphs 8 and 9 of the latter and the priorities listed in those paragraphs, should be borne in mind in applying it.

33. As an example of the services to which special attention should be given she cited the projects for rural areas which were carried out jointly in Greece by the Government, UNICEF and the World Health Organization and which were financed by the Government. The Greek Parliament had recently adopted an act on medical assistance and an act on the training and professional status of midwives, which would complete the existing legislation on hospital and public

health nursing. Her country had always paid special attention to the training of skilled personnel and to scholarships granted by the United Nations. Social centres and community development projects had been extended in Greece. She referred to a system of child hostels set up in the provinces by the Fund of Her Majesty the Queen of the Hellenes. The care which the children received in those hostels developed their community spirit. Similar activity had been displayed by the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly in rural education, and the Ministry of Social Welfare had developed a system known as "welfare through employment", under which persons who had evacuated their villages were rehabilitated by employment on public works. The subsidies which the State had been obliged to provide for the maintenance of those distressed families were being turned into constructive and productive work. That form of community development project might well be taken as a model.

34. Housing was still a great problem in Greece, owing to the influx of refugees in 1922 and the destruction caused by war and by the recent earthquakes. Education, although compulsory and free, was suffering from the lack of adequate school buildings.

35. She had some misgivings about the adequate financing of the programme of concerted practical action. Fresh sources of funds should be sought. She would vote for the joint draft resolution and the French amendment thereto and against the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

36. Miss DRIESSEN (Belgium) said that the Belgian delegation would continue its support of Council resolution 496 (XVI). It was glad to see that the Council had paid more attention than usual to social matters. The resolution was not intended as a panacea, but had been the result of much hard work. Its flexibility and even lack of precision on some points were in its favour, because priorities varied a great deal from country to country. International social policy should not be rigid with respect to priorities except, perhaps, in such matters as improvement of health and nutrition. In putting the programme into effect, the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies should make full use of the non-governmental organizations concerned. Although attention should be concentrated mainly on the under-developed countries, the gaps at some points in the systems of the more developed countries should not be overlooked. Further attention might be given to co-ordination, not only between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, but also with national, bilateral and inter-governmental programmes. Care should be taken not to hurt the susceptibilities of certain communities unnecessarily in carrying out the programme.

37. She would vote for the joint draft resolution and the French amendment thereto. She could not support the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia: it would be making too much of an issue to delete an expression of thanks once it had been embodied in a resolution. As a member of the Council, the Belgian delegation would obviously not urge that that body should be thanked, but the Secretariat did undoubtedly deserve thanks. The Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.351) would merely make the French amendment confused; it looked like an attempt to distort the Council's work by limiting the scope of the draft resolution to that of paragraph 6 of Council resolution 496 (XVI).

38. Mr. MAYO (United States of America) said that he would accept the French amendment (A/C.3/L.350) to the joint draft resolution.

39. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the sponsors of the draft resolution and the representatives who had submitted amendments should meet informally to attempt to draft a compromise text.

It was so agreed.

40. At the suggestion of Mr. HAUCK (France) and Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia), the CHAIRMAN agreed to preside over the informal meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.