

Third session

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

Report of the Joint Second and Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. J. THORN (New Zealand)

1. During the discussion in the Second Committee of chapter II of the report of the Economic and Social Council, the resolutions contained in documents A/C.2/127 and A/C.2/128 concerning economic development and migration were submitted by the delegations of Ecuador and Colombia, and of Peru, respectively. At the 64th meeting of the Committee, the question was raised whether these resolutions should be considered in the Second Committee, and it was decided that the question of allocation should be referred by the Chairman of the Second Committee to the President of the General Assembly and the General Committee (A/BUR/103). The General Committee, at its 48th meeting, recommended that the above-mentioned resolutions should be allocated to the Joint Second and Third Committee. This decision was communicated by the President of the General Assembly to the Chairmen of the Second and Third Committees on 4 November 1948 (A/C.2&3/81).
2. The Joint Second and Third Committee discussed, at its 36th, 37th and 38th meetings on 6, 8 and 9 November 1948, the draft resolutions contained in A/C.2/127 and A/C.2/128, together with related amendments and motions, namely, the revised draft resolution by Peru (A/C.2/128/Rev.1); amendments by the Byelorussian SSR to the draft resolution of Ecuador and Colombia (A/C.2&3/82); amendments by Iraq and Lebanon to the draft resolution by Ecuador and Colombia (A/C.2&3/85); amendment by France to the draft resolution of Peru (A/C.2&3/83); and the draft resolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.2&3/84).
3. The joint draft resolution of Ecuador and Colombia (A/C.2/127) stated that a co-ordinated policy of economic development of less developed areas, together with systematic emigration from certain over-populated countries of Europe towards those regions, would contribute to the increase of production as well as to the raising of the general standards of living. The operative part recommended that the Economic and Social Council should initiate surveys of undeveloped or under-developed regions with a view to
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evaluating possibilities of their development in such a way as to provide a solution for over-population in other countries; that technical assistance should be made available to Governments for the preparation of programmes; and also expressed the hope that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development would give special consideration to loans for the development of regions suitable for both development and immigration.

The amendments moved by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (A/C.2&3/82) proposed the redrafting of the resolution as one relating generally to economic development by the omission of special references to migration.

The amendments to this proposal moved by Iraq and Lebanon (A/C.2&3/85) required that migration should be treated as a world-wide problem and not be concerned only with the over-populated areas of "Europe" (this amendment was formally accepted by the sponsors of the resolution); that the resolution should state that migration should be voluntary; and that the proposed resolution should not interfere with the right of refugees to go back to their home countries or with the safeguarding of their interests.

4. The operative part of his proposal as amended by the representative of Peru (A/C.2/128/Rev.1) recommended that the Economic and Social Council should supplement the measures it had already taken to secure co-ordinated international action in the field of migration by formulating, in consultation with the specialized agencies concerned, a programme of action designed to promote the economic development of under-developed and sparsely populated countries which would provide conditions favourable for immigration and thereby relieve the congestion of over-populated countries.

An amendment (A/C.2&3/83) was proposed by the representative of France to this resolution requesting the International Labour Organization to continue and intensify its efforts, in concert with the United Nations and the countries concerned, with a view to promoting the economic development of under-developed countries which would provide conditions favourable for immigration.

5. The supporters of the two original draft resolutions based their arguments on the situation that there existed, on the one hand, countries with under-developed resources which required additional manpower as well as capital for their development, and, on the other, countries which were over-populated where there was substantial unemployment, and where the existing resources were insufficient to reach or maintain adequate living standards. Well-planned and well-directed programmes of migration could

benefit both types of country. Further, by means of these programmes the world's supplies of food and of many raw materials could be increased, and international trade encouraged. In working out these plans it was essential to safeguard the interests of the migrants themselves. The value of the studies made on various aspects of migration by the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary organs, and the specialized agencies concerned, was recognized; the situation however required that there should be a greater centralization and direction of effort, so that migration programmes could make a larger contribution to the remedy of economic ills from which large parts of the world were suffering.

6. In the discussion, two main positions developed. On the one hand, some members of the Committee felt that a resolution on this question by the General Assembly was not required. Other members, while in favour of various modifications of the resolutions proposed, were prepared in principle to support a revised resolution.

7. The members who felt that no resolution was necessary brought forward two main arguments. First, the Economic and Social Council had produced, in its resolution 156 (VII), a well-co-ordinated plan of studies and of allocation of functions between the various international organizations concerned. Further action by the United Nations was not practicable or desirable at the present time, until the results of those studies were available. Secondly, some members questioned the validity of the assumptions relating to over-population. As regards Europe in particular, which had been specially mentioned in the proposal of Ecuador and Colombia, some already developed countries were suffering from a lack of manpower; in other cases unemployment was due mainly to destruction of industrial and other resources in the war. Additional capital resources applied to industry or agriculture might be the solution rather than emigration.

8. Attention was drawn to the following considerations by members who were prepared to support a modified form of resolution:

(1) The problems were unusually complex, were both of an economic and social character, and required for their solution in the international as in the national field, the co-operation of many different organs. They should thus be attacked at many different points, and the action of the Economic and Social Council in co-ordinating the different approaches and interests of the international organizations concerned was an essential primary step. The roles of the Council, of its functional Commissions, particularly the Social, the Population, and the Economic and Employment Commissions, of the regional economic

commissions, and of the specialized agencies, particularly the International Labour Organisation and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, were reviewed in this connexion, and the Committee heard a statement by the Director-General of the International Labour Office on the work of his organization. Approval was expressed of the agreement concluded between the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the International Labour Office regarding the allocation of functions between the ILO and the United Nations in the field of migration. A number of members of the Committee expressed agreement with the allocation of functions indicated in Economic and Social Council resolution 156 (VII).

(ii) Members stressed that, while studies of the problems as a whole, and particularly in relation to other pressing international problems, and the formulation of consequential measures such as those for the protection of migrant labour, were questions for the international organizations, the planning and execution of substantive migration schemes were properly tasks for the Governments concerned. The responsibilities to the migrants, both of the countries from which they came and of the receiving countries, were emphasized. Several members pointed out that they did not envisage the proposals as extending to the international financing of migration movements.

(iii) It was pointed out that the problems were not wholly or mainly concerned, as regards migration, with over-population in Europe, but had arisen or might arise in many parts of the world. On the other hand, a member pointed out that migration did not direct itself exclusively towards under-developed countries but to more developed though sparsely populated countries as well, and that an adequate study of migration should take that aspect into account.

(iv) Several members urged that there should be no discrimination by receiving countries against immigrants on account of race, language, nationality, religion, or economic status in their country of origin. However, it was also urged that it was necessary to assure the protection of the parent countries against loss of manpower resources necessary to their economies and that likewise the receiving countries should not have to accept immigrants against their will.

(v) Reference was made to the forthcoming session of the Permanent
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Migration Committee of the International Labour Organisation (January 1949) which will consider a proposed Model Agreement for migration, and to the 32nd session of the International Labour Conference (June 1949) which will consider the revision of the 1939 convention concerning the recruitment, placing and conditions of labour of migrants for employment, and of the ancillary recommendations. One member urged that the international conventions for the protection of migrant workers were not sufficiently comprehensive, and suggested that a multilateral treaty on this and similar questions concerned with migration was desirable. The view was expressed that the trades unions of the parent and of the receiving countries should be given an active role in defence of the rights of the migrating workers.

(vi) Several members referred to the desirability of keeping separate the problem of displaced persons, which was an aftermath of the Second World War, from the general and long-term problem of migration.

(vii) One member doubted whether the part of the Peruvian draft resolution relating to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development was appropriate in view of the terms of the agreement between the United Nations and the Bank. It was, however, pointed out that the resolution was not drafted as a formal recommendation, and was moreover in general terms; other members expressed the view that it was in order.

9. At the close of the general debate, the Committee considered three previous questions, which the Chair ruled should be put in the following order:

(i) A draft resolution moved by the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and New Zealand (A/C.2&3/84) according to which the Committee deemed it inexpedient to decide on fresh recommendations on the question of migration before the studies called for by the Economic and Social Council had been considered by that body, and invited the Rapporteur to give expression to this view in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

(ii) A draft resolution moved by the representative of India, incorporating the substance of a Chinese proposal, according to which the General Assembly would deem it inexpedient to decide on fresh recommendations on the question of migration before the studies called for by the Economic and Social Council had been considered, and would transmit to the Council the draft resolutions and amendments, together with the records of the discussion, for consideration when

it took up the linked subjects of economic development and migration.

(iii) A proposal by the representative of the Argentine that a drafting sub-committee should be appointed to frame a consolidated draft resolution, together with a United Kingdom amendment to this proposal that the drafting sub-committee should take the Peruvian draft resolution as the basis of its work.

Proposal (i) was defeated on a roll-call vote, by 19 votes against 17 in favour with 4 abstentions.

Proposal (ii) was carried, on a roll-call vote, by 29 votes in favour to 4 against, with 6 abstentions.

10. The Joint Second and Third Committee accordingly recommends the following draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING EXAMINED the draft resolutions proposed by Peru, and by Ecuador and Colombia* on migration problems,

NOTING that the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 156 (VII) adopted on 10 August 1948 at its seventh session, invited its commissions to make a comprehensive study of migration problems,

DECIDES to transmit to the Economic and Social Council the above draft resolutions and amendments proposed thereto, together with the records of the debate in the third regular session of the General Assembly, for consideration when the linked subjects of economic development and migration are taken up for discussion by the Council.

* A/C.2/128, A/C.2/128/Rev.1, A/C.2/127.