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THIRD COMMITTEE
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Monday, 1 November 1976
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. von KYAW (Federal Republic of Germany)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 70: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 72: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 79: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 70: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/31/221; A/C.3/31/L.16) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Congo, Democratic Yemen, Ecuador, the German Democratic Republic and India had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.16.

AGENDA ITEM 72: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (E/CN.5/512/Rev.1) (ST/ESA/24); A/31/198; A/C.3/31/L.15) (continued)

2. The CHAIRMAN announced that Poland had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.15 and invited the representative of Belgium to introduce an amendment to it proposed by the delegation of India.

3. Mr. NOTHOMB (Belgium) said that India had agreed to join the 70 sponsors of the draft resolution if it could be strengthened by replacing all references to "the principles contained in the Declaration" with the words "the rights and principles laid down in the Declaration".

4. Draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.15, as amended, was adopted.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the adoption of the amendment automatically made India a sponsor of the draft resolution just adopted.

6. Miss RICHTER (Argentina), speaking in explanation of the vote, said that the definition of "disabled person" contained in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 3447 (XXX), which was referred to in the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.15, was a wholly appropriate one but had failed to take into account the requests to Governments contained in paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1921 (LVIII). The definition added nothing to the substance of the Declaration and might even result in discrimination if taken literally. Her delegation therefore hoped that Member States and international organizations would not feel limited by it in implementing the Declaration.

7. Mr. MOSAK (Director, Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies), replying to questions raised at previous meetings, assured the Committee of the very important place given in the Centre's programmes to the preparation of the 1974 Report on the World Social Situation and to other studies and reports on social policies. Although the task of preparing the Report had been assigned to the Centre at a critical time, almost half-way through the period scheduled for its preparation, the highest priority had been assigned to the work and additional staff had been transferred from other work for that purpose.

8. A major difficulty in preparing the report had been the absence of adequate country data, especially quantitative information. Some developed countries issued social reports containing invaluable source material, but in the case of many

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developing countries the data were scanty and difficult to obtain. While all the regional economic commissions had contributed material for the preparation of the relevant chapters of the Report, they often experienced the same difficulties in obtaining adequate and up-to-date data.

9. As to the use of governmental and other reliable sources in the preparation of the Report, he assured the Committee that the Secretariat made every effort to draw upon all available official material.

10. He recalled that the format of the report had been authorized under Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions of the Commission for Social Development. If, however, the Committee wished to change the format for the 1978 Report, it had the authority to recommend the desired changes to the General Assembly.

11. There was no question of any formal adoption of the report by the General Assembly. It was issued only as a background document to assist the Committee in its consideration of the item. To the extent that it contributed to the discussions, it had accomplished its purpose.

12. He gave his assurance that all the comments and suggestions made in the Committee would be given careful consideration by the Secretariat and would provide valuable guidelines for the preparation of the 1978 Report.

13. Miss GELBER (Canada) asked the Director to comment on the reference made at an earlier meeting by the representative of the Philippines to the relative importance which the Department of Economic and Social Affairs apparently attached to economic aspects as compared with social aspects.

14. Mr. MOSAK (Director, Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies) replied that the Department had given the very highest priority to work on the Report on the World Social Situation, for which purpose resources had been transferred from other very important work in the Centre. Indeed, the Assistant Director in charge of preparing the Report had been appointed by the Centre for work in the economic field and had been transferred from very urgent economic work in order to take charge of preparation of the Report, since the available resources had been insufficient. The Centre attached the same priority to the social area as did the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 79: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/10166; A/31/199; A/C.3/31/L.17)

15. The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Mosak, Director of the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies, to introduce the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/10166.

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16. Mr. MOSAK (Director, Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies) said that the report had been based entirely on information supplied by Governments to the Secretary-General. The international community had undertaken to supplement the individual and joint efforts of the developing countries through a number of action programmes, most notably the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade and the Programme of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. It was that undertaking which gave substance to the deliberations on development problems in such forums as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

17. It was obvious from the report that economic, social, political and administrative circumstances differed widely from country to country. Thus no single or unique framework of development or change could be considered applicable to all countries. In the final analysis it was up to each country to formulate its own national goals and strategies for social and economic change and to implement the required policy measures by mobilizing the energies and talents of all its people.

18. The social and economic changes taking place in the world were examined and reported on regularly in the United Nations; he drew the Committee's attention to the reports relating to the biennial review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the International Development Strategy, to the World Economic Survey and the Report on the World Social Situation, to the comparable review and appraisal documents and surveys prepared in the regional commissions and to the sectoral development reports prepared in the functional organizations of the United Nations system. Those reports and studies were based on an analysis of emerging trends and problems and sought to assist Governments in formulating policies concerning important issues of social and economic change.

19. Mrs. MAIR (Jamaica) said that the item under consideration was of special interest to her country, whose policies focused on the primary goal of effecting important social and economic changes aimed at ensuring social progress for all citizens. Jamaica had inherited a system in which an elitist minority working with foreign economic interests had, through its monopoly of privilege, imposed great inequality in the distribution of national resources among the population. Her country therefore aimed to establish an egalitarian system, a task which required radical changes such as had become possible only through independence. In fact, as paragraph 11 of the report indicated, most developing countries dated social progress from the attainment of national independence. There was overwhelming evidence that social progress in the developing countries had in fact been minimal before the attainment of national independence. It was important to emphasize the importance of the time-span involved in promoting social development, especially in the light of the diversionary and obstructionist claims made in some quarters that the developing countries had favoured economic issues at the expense of social and humanitarian ones. It was obvious that economic development was not an end in itself but rather a means of providing the resources required in order to implement humanitarian measures. The developing countries did not need statistical proof of the relationship between economic under-development and social misery. They knew very well how such a basic indicator as unemployment affected both individual and national well-being.

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(Mrs. Mair, Jamaica)

20. The report under consideration had made insufficient use of comparative data on social planning in countries before and after the attainment of independence. Much of the information in the report was already obsolete and did not reflect the current pace of development of certain developing countries. In particular, the report had failed to reflect her own country's recent significant achievements aimed at establishing a democratic socialist system through such means as community councils, a comprehensive policy of worker participation at all levels of industrial activity, extension of the vote to 18-year-olds, student participation in the management of all educational institutions and further involvement of youth in the governmental process.

21. The developing countries had often been reproached for denoting insufficient attention in their development programmes to individual rights. It must be understood, however, that the colonial régimes had left behind a legacy of injustice that affected whole groups of people, such as women, children and the so-called subject races, which made it imperative for the developing countries, upon achieving independence, to give priority to group rights. Although the United Kingdom, which had colonized Jamaica, had undertaken an extensive programme of social advancement immediately after the Second World War, Jamaica had had to wait until it achieved independence before it could enact legislation to eliminate discrimination, to expand educational and economic opportunities and to institute social welfare programmes designed to remedy injustices against women and children.

22. One significant point which emerged very clearly from the section of the report which dealt with changes in production and employment was the adverse effect produced on employment, income distribution, wage levels and balanced economic productivity in the developing countries by foreign domination of the economy. That causal relationship was the reason for national policies designed to gain greater national ownership and control of vital resources and activities in the developing countries.

23. In conclusion, she said that the report was useful but that a more critical, comparative analysis would unquestionably add to its value. Such an analysis should focus on the fundamental fact of social under-development confronting newly independent countries, on the internal and external constraints placed on such countries in their efforts to acquire the necessary economic resources for national social advancement and on the relative pace of progress in that direction, depending on the degree of authority exercised by more or less centrally planned governmental action.

24. Mr. POEQJIOETOMO (Indonesia), outlining his country's experiences in national and social development, said that the new administration of President Suharto had inherited the mismanaged affairs left by the previous Government, especially in the economic sector. The new governmental policy was aimed at establishing an economic system that would guarantee the preservation of a democratic economy and at creating a just and prosperous society guided by the five principles of the Pantja Sila philosophy, namely, belief in God, a just and civilized society, territorial unity, democracy, and social justice for all the people of Indonesia.

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(Mr. Poedjioetomo, Indonesia)

25. That policy had originated at a people's congress in 1966 which had been aimed at controlling inflation, providing sufficient food and clothing and rehabilitating the economic infrastructure through the stimulation of exports. To reach those targets, the Government had sought to reduce controls over the economy and limit the bureaucracy, thereby promoting maximum growth while retaining governmental guidance.

26. In its development efforts, the Government had sought to arrest economic deterioration and create a sound basis for economic growth through the control of inflation.

27. In the first five-year plan, begun in 1969, the Government had given priority to agricultural development, in which the majority of the population were engaged. The plan had raised agricultural earnings, thereby increasing national income. The Government had developed a broad-based strategy which was expected to open up growth possibilities in other sectors, including education and housing.

28. The development of education was hindered by many problems, such as the lack of suitable curricula, overcrowded institutions of basic and secondary education and inadequate school facilities. The Government had therefore integrated educational and cultural development policy with the first five-year plan through the improvement of curricula and teaching methods in elementary education and the establishment of pilot projects for general and technical secondary schools. During the first five-year plan, 6,000 elementary schools had been built, each subdistrict being provided with at least one elementary school and each province with at least 50 schools.

29. The Government had instituted a programme of promoting public interest in national cultures and providing job opportunities for young people in the cultural field.

30. With regard to housing and the drinking-water supply, the Government had sought to provide information on village and city planning to stimulate the building of decent houses in a healthy environment and had greatly increased the supply of drinking water in many urban areas.

31. Responsibility for the implementation of social welfare programmes was entrusted to the Department of Social Affairs. The Government had adopted the principle of involving the public in such programmes. Efforts had been made to rehabilitate the mentally, spiritually, and socially disadvantaged by providing them with the necessary training to play a useful role in society and in development. The Government had introduced many programmes designed to promote self-reliance among communities, encouraging them to help solve their own social problems and to increase their development efforts.

32. The second five-year plan, covering the period 1974-1979, built on the considerable achievements of the first plan in the field of economic recovery, restoration of the infrastructure, expansion of the private sector, mobilization of public and private finance and strengthening of the balance of payments. The second

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(Mr. Poedjioetomo, Indonesia)

plan sought to raise the living standards of the people and further strengthen the foundations for the next stage of national development. It laid down guidelines that would bring about an expansion of employment opportunities, a rising level of earnings and a more equitable distribution of income, a more even distribution of development throughout the country, greater economic and social integration of the various regions into an effective national entity and an enhancement of the quality of life.

33. The plan included specific objectives for the provision of food and clothing, the provision of housing, the strengthening of infrastructure, the expansion of social welfare facilities and the creation of employment opportunities. It aimed to create broader and more equitable opportunities for the entire population of Indonesia, both collectively and individually.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.