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Chairman: Mr. Erik NETTEL (Austria).

AGENDA ITEM 49

World social situation: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/7203, chap. X, sect. A; A/7203/Add.1, chap. VI, sect. A; A/7248 and Corr.1, E/4590 and Corr.1, A/C.3/609, E/CN.5/417 and Corr.1, E/CN.5/417/Add.1 and Corr.1, E/CN.5/417/Add.2, E/CN.5/417/Summary)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mrs. OGATA (Japan) said that the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/417 and Corr.1, E/CN.5/417/Add.1 and Corr.1, E/CN.5/417/Add.2, E/CN.5/417/Summary) was a comprehensive document covering a wide range of problems on all aspects of social development and would prove of great benefit to all Governments, especially to the organs dealing with economic and social planning. The second part, which analysed the world social situation by geographical areas, would be useful for the regional development plans the United Nations was currently promoting. The question was how to make the best use of the report, and in that respect she agreed with the United States delegation that the conclusions and suggestions in the report should be converted into an action programme which would establish definite priorities in development and present them in such a way as to hasten their implementation.

2. One of the main themes of the report was the absolute need to integrate the social with the economic in over-all development planning; that was of particular importance to Asian countries, where deep economic poverty had hindered improvement in living conditions, with the result that development programmes had concentrated mainly on the economy. However, her country's experience indicated that such efforts, in the absence of similar attention to the social aspect, did not contribute to social development. As Japan's economic recovery after the devastation caused by the Second World War, which had of necessity been accorded high priority, had progressed, the deficiencies of social development programmes had become increasingly apparent. In order to remedy them, the Prime Minister had set

up in 1964 an advisory council on social development, and the current development plan was called "the economic and social development plan", whereas the previous plan had covered only economic development. The Government's objective in the social sphere was to ensure, firstly, that the fruits of progress should be enjoyed by all the people, and, secondly, that social welfare programmes should be so formulated as to be conducive to economic development.

3. Her delegation was pleased to note that the International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare had made a significant step forward in international co-operation in that field, and considered that the United Nations should take note of the Conference's work and incorporate it in its future programmes.

4. There was another aspect of social development, which was referred to but insufficiently elaborated in the report, namely, the question of human spiritual happiness. The Director of the Social Development Division had spoken in her statement at the 1606th meeting of the unrest among young people in some sixty countries, both developed and under-developed, whereas in the report it was stated that the incidence of juvenile delinquency tended to be higher in countries with a high degree of economic prosperity and technological advancement. Greater efforts should be made to ensure that all the people shared in the joy of common achievements, since the growing size of the psychologically marginal sectors of society, especially among the youth, was a cause for concern.

5. What was needed, therefore, was a programme that would integrate the economic, social and psychospiritual aspects of development.

6. Mr. LI (China) said that one of the major conclusions of the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation was that, although the developing countries had made considerable progress in health and education, the situation in other fields remained unsatisfactory. He therefore welcomed particularly the report of the Secretary-General (A/7248 and Corr.1), which formulated a number of suggestions for future courses of action.

7. On the question of population, he particularly endorsed the training programmes for technical personnel and the provision of advisory services in that field. Inasmuch as planning of economic and social development had to be based on reliable information concerning population size, structure and trends, the training of technical personnel in the demographic field was of the utmost importance to the developing countries.

8. With regard to health, he agreed that in developing countries the first priority should be a basic health

services structure so organized as to be within easy reach of the population. The experience of his country, in the Province of Taiwan, had shown that health centres could serve not only as local clinics, but also as media through which programmes of mass campaigns for disease control could be carried out.

9. On the question of food and nutrition, he was gratified to note that FAO had been engaged in the preparation of an Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development, which would serve as a guide for developing countries in carrying out agricultural development programmes. His delegation considered that on the chapter of the report on food and nutrition a reference should have been made to land reform, which had a direct bearing on the social progress of the rural population, especially in view of the fact that most of the developing countries were agricultural countries. In Taiwan, for instance, land reform programmes had been carried out together with programmes of rural reconstruction and community development, and that had resulted not only in increased food production but also in improved living conditions for the farmers. A sound rural development structure also contributed to the well-being of the population as a whole.

10. In the view of his delegation, the International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare was of particular importance, and its recommendations (E/4590 and Corr.1, para. 66) should be followed up by the United Nations family, in planning the work programmes for the Second United Nations Development Decade, and by Governments. Periodic reports from Governments on the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference might be one of the measures for encouraging Governments to pay particular attention to programmes of social development.

11. Mrs. RADIC (Yugoslavia) said that, notwithstanding its shortcomings, the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation was immensely useful, especially in terms of facilitating better understanding of the main social trends of world magnitude and formulating future long-term action programmes at both national and international levels. The report showed that the social situation was far from satisfactory, and was in fact worsening, while the gap between developed and developing countries was widening. Obviously, the roots of many problems lay in production relationships and income distribution, but many others were the consequence of privileges and interests of certain groups of society which were increasingly acquiring a greater share of the created income. By focusing attention on the enormous disparities and contrasts in the world, and in some countries, the United Nations should encourage those processes and trends which not only helped in the removal of obstacles but also facilitated the attainment of goals proclaimed in the United Nations Charter.

12. During the period covered by the report, Yugoslavia had undertaken a series of economic and social measures aimed at strengthening the economy and increasing the national income by improved labour processes, higher productivity and the modernization and automation of economic and other activities. In

the current phase of economic and social development, all efforts were being concentrated on solving the problems of unemployment through the revival of the economy, improved working conditions and the reduction of working hours. The results attained so far in the economic reform were encouraging and clearly spoke in favour of the continuation of its implementation. The active participation of direct producers in all phases of development was a fundamental factor of development and endowed it with human content by making the people aware that through their own effort they could change their destiny.

13. Experience had shown that unless constant and higher economic growth was ensured there could be no social development and no solution to the problems outlined in the report. The interdependence of economic and social factors was becoming more and more accentuated and was acquiring a specific place in all national development plans.

14. The consideration of the report would serve no purpose if it did not lead to the formulation of new, more extensive and more complex programmes and actions at both national and international levels. What was needed was the projection and practical implementation of a large-scale programme in all vital areas of the economic and social fields, in which all countries would share their responsibilities. In establishing the programme targets for the Second United Nations Development Decade, the efforts of the Governments and agencies engaged in it should be directed not only towards uprooting the evils besetting the contemporary world, but also towards facilitating and expediting socio-economic progress and development.

15. Extraordinary technical, scientific and technological progress had created conditions in which it was possible to produce enormous material wealth in sufficient quantities to meet the requirements of mankind, but, if the developing countries were to benefit from that potential wealth, the efforts of the developed countries to help them to increase their pace of development must be accompanied by the complete elimination of existing trade barriers and the granting of favourable credit terms through bilateral and multilateral financing.

16. In conclusion, she said she would like the five-year work programme of the Commission for Social Development to give first place to the recommendations of the International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare.

17. Mr. KRAVETS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said he was gratified that the United Nations was giving greater attention and emphasis to social development problems, which were becoming increasingly serious, despite the increase in production that had been reported. The 1967 Report on the World Social Situation properly reflected the alarm and misgivings aroused by the fact that the rate of social progress varied widely from one country or region to another, and even from one segment of society to another within each country. Mere denunciations of the various social evils were not enough; it was essential to adopt the necessary measures to ensure their complete eradication. In that connexion, the experience of his own country was highly encouraging.

Fifty years previously, the Ukraine had been a semi-colonial nation subject to the domination of foreign monopolies, with an agricultural economy that was technically very backward and one of the lowest indexes of industrial production among the developed countries of Europe. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian people had been able to free themselves, by their own efforts, from the chains of ignorance and poverty, without any external aid and in the face of the desperate attempts of the imperialist Powers to frustrate the success of those efforts. The modern Ukrainian SSR, despite unspeakable sufferings during the Second World War, was now a highly industrialized country; its iron and steel production represented between 7 and 10 per cent of total world output, and its achievements in such industrial sectors as aviation, electronics and tractor production, and in many others, were highly satisfactory. Economic development, as demonstrated by the steady rise in the national income, went hand in hand with social progress, since all segments of society benefited equally from a wide range of social welfare services. The experience of his country thus represented an example of the progress that could be achieved through industrialization, the collectivization of agriculture, and cultural revolution.

18. He did not agree with the conclusion in the report that the population explosions was the main cause of the prevailing unsatisfactory social conditions, which were in fact due to such evils as wars, the armaments race, colonialism and the pernicious policy of apartheid.

19. Mrs. DE CATTAROSI (Uruguay) said that the world social situation was becoming tragic for the majority of mankind, and the existing conditions would continue so long as there was a failure to translate into action what so far had merely taken the form of principles, recommendations or reports. The social situation could never improve, as long as world trade was not conducted on an equitable basis, the armaments race continued, and the gap was maintained between those who were passing through the second industrial revolution and those who had not yet begun the first. Only through genuine international co-operation that would overcome selfish aims would it be possible to achieve the full use of the greatest wealth of nations, namely, human resources, and to replace birth control by family planning in the broadest sense of the term.

20. Mrs. DE BROMLEY (Honduras) said that many resolutions designed to promote justice, liberty and the well-being of man had been adopted, and innumerable means had been suggested for achieving those aims. Most Governments of developing countries had undertaken programmes in the fields of production, transport, education, and even family planning, with the aim of meeting the basic needs of their peoples. The developed nations had given extensive economic aid, although, because of their domestic problems, they had not responded to the desire of the poorer countries for more equitable world trade. Yet hunger and the most degrading poverty still existed, and the statistics showed that the gap between developed and developing countries, and between rich and poor, was steadily widening. Despite scientific and technological progress, which meant that the

bounties of the earth were sufficient for all mankind, the problems of economic and social development continued to multiply.

21. The present generation of leaders viewed with alarm, sadness and a certain guiltiness the discontent and frustration of the young, who had realized that those who preached the ideals of peace were leading them into war, that those who spoke to them of dignity, freedom and respect were oppressing their brethren or leaving them to die of hunger, and that those who announced lofty aims in fine phrases were keeping the world in the slough of despond.

22. Perhaps the answer lay in a complete change in mental attitudes. If each individual were convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that the solution of his neighbours' problems would redound to his own benefit, the now acquisitive society might renounce its selfish aims and realize that all human beings formed part of a single whole, and that if the majority of mankind was allowed to live in poverty the world could only be heading for disaster.

23. Miss KHUHRO (Pakistan) said she appreciated the fact that the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation did not attempt to play down the gravity of such problems as the population explosion, malnutrition and illiteracy. Pakistan was a developing country, and its major problem was the high rate of population growth, which aggravated unemployment and absorbed much of the increase in production achieved through economic development. To solve the problem, the Government had adopted a five-year family planning scheme, which despite initial resistance had already begun to change the conservative attitude of the people. At the same time, State medical facilities had been developed, and it was hoped that by 1985 basic medical care would have been provided for the entire population. Special attention was devoted to rural areas, through the establishment of health centres in the villages. At present there was one qualified doctor for every 6,500 inhabitants, in addition to the indigenous systems of medicine which catered for a large proportion of the population. In certain parts of Pakistan the calorie intake of the people was still below the standard recommended by FAO, but it was expected that that problem would disappear when the country became self-sufficient in food, in 1970.

24. The perennial, world-wide problem of housing was made all the more acute in Pakistan by the high rate of population growth, the increase in urban population, the inflow of refugees, the generally low-income level and the high cost of building. However, the Government had undertaken programmes of slum clearance and building of houses for low-income groups, research was being done on the effective utilization of locally available materials, and the private sector was expected to share the major burden of housing construction.

25. As in other developing countries, education in Pakistan was not yet universal, and the problem in that field was both quantitative and qualitative. Education must be extended to every child in the country, in order to implement the constitutional right to free primary education, and at the same time a sufficient number of professional people must be trained. More

and more importance was being attached to the vocational and technical training needed by an industrial and developed society. Education was fundamental to all social and economic development, since only an educated people would be aware of their rights and capable of achieving better conditions for themselves; Pakistan was striving to make the best use of its human resources, so that every member of society could make a useful contribution to the development process. Another grave problem faced by Pakistan in the educational field was the "brain drain", which deprived it of the trained professionals it desperately needed. Although she believed that the problem was aggravated by the immigration incentives offered by some developed countries to persons with special qualifications, she recognized that the best solution lay in creating conditions conducive to keeping such professionals in their own country.

26. The low unemployment figures for Pakistan did not reflect the true state of affairs, because there was a high degree of underemployment in agriculture, traditional manufacturing, trade and services. The problem had so far been contained and it was expected that in the near future the increase in employment opportunities would outstrip the growth of the labour force. A National Manpower Council, headed by the Minister of Labour, was studying the problem posed by the surplus of unskilled labour and the scarcity of skilled labour.

27. By its Constitution, Pakistan was a welfare State and the national and local development machinery was geared to the provision of social welfare services. Pakistan's social problems were many and varied; some had existed for centuries, others were the result of rapid economic development and the disruption of traditional systems. While it was true that all the social evils afflicting the country had not yet been eradicated, it was also true that the first steps had been taken down the long and arduous road to their solution.

28. Like most developing countries, Pakistan was aware of the importance of economic and social progress and was trying to attain that goal through planning. With the limited means at its disposal, it had achieved considerable success, which had strengthened its determination to bring the fruits of modern technology to the masses and to improve social conditions in the country through its own efforts and with the assistance of friendly nations.

29. Mr. VAN ROSSEN (Netherlands) echoed the widespread concern about the slow pace of social progress in the developing countries and the growing discrepancy between per capita income in those nations and in the economically advanced countries, despite national and international efforts. His delegation was glad to note that, in addition to being a useful compilation of data, the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation specifically indicated what structural and institutional changes were necessary in the developed and developing countries. It also welcomed the additional report of the Secretary-General (A/7248 and Corr.1), which considerably enhanced the value of the main report for the promotion of practical programmes.

30. Taken together, the conclusions and suggestions in the Secretary-General's report merited further elaboration, particularly as regards the possibility of abandoning the traditional sectoral approach and defining social situations in terms of the diverging levels of progress found in various countries or regions whose development showed similarities. The sectorial approach not only fragmented social development policy but created conflicts between the various social and economic sectors and hampered the establishment of a broad and integrated development policy.

31. His delegation welcomed the activities of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, particularly those relating to the quantification of the determining factors of economic and social development, which would be especially helpful for the establishment and evaluation of national and international development policy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.

32. Lastly, it was to be hoped that, when a strategy was drawn up for the Decade, due account would be taken of social requirements and consideration would be given to the advisability of defining the social aspects of development with greater precision before they were incorporated in an over-all strategy. In that context the relevant tasks of both the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council were brought to mind. At its next session, the Commission for Social Development would perhaps want to consider the establishment of practical guidelines for a social development policy, on the basis of the draft Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

33. Miss GICHURU (Kenya) noted with satisfaction that some progress had been made in several areas of social development but was concerned that the situation still remained unsatisfactory, particularly as regards the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries. It was not enough to point out that the gap was continually widening; the causes of that phenomenon should be sought. In her opinion, economic development could not be separated from social progress. Although foreign investments in the developing countries had in some cases helped to raise the standards of living of the indigenous people, the profits reaped by the investors were much greater. The Social Development Division, in consultation with the Economic and Social Council, should study how the profits derived from those investments could be used to improve the social situation in the developing countries.

34. The first prerequisite of social development was the involvement of the people in all of its aspects. In the developing countries, that meant that the Government should establish programmes to awaken among the population an interest in helping themselves. The present social situation in the developing countries was to a great extent the result of their colonial history.

35. Kenya had known the pride and dignity of self-help, through which it had achieved substantial progress in the spheres of education, health, transport and general improvement of living standards.

The Government had supplemented the people's initiative with technical advice and financial aid.

36. Nevertheless, the developing countries were hampered by their scarce resources and needed substantial assistance from the developed nations. Her delegation therefore supported the suggestion of the Director of the Social Development Division that the developed countries should give as aid a larger percentage of the resources which they were currently wasting on destructive armaments. Although the suggestions would be difficult to put into practice, it was undoubtedly possible for the developed nations to make a little extra effort.

37. With regard to the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation, she noted that ignorance was the main cause of most of the problems of the developing countries and that proper education and information would improve the situation. The progress made with regard to health conditions was regrettably slow and Governments should play a greater role in the provision of medical facilities. She agreed with the suggestion made in paragraph 38 of the additional report of the Secretary-General (A/7248 and Corr.1) concerning foreign-exchange-earning crops, which could lead the developed countries to encourage primary and secondary industries in the developing countries. The report of the Economic and Social Council showed that there was a greater movement of capital from the developing countries to the developed countries, mainly because the former imported manufactured goods. In that connexion, the granting of special conditions and rates for the machinery needed for the processing of raw materials in the developing countries could encourage their industrialization.

38. On the subject of housing, she did not agree with the suggestion in paragraph 47 of the Secretary-General's report that the cultural characteristics of the population should be taken into account. That might be used as an excuse for providing inferior housing for certain groups of inhabitants, which would perpetuate social divisions. On the other hand, her delegation agreed with the passages concerning education and social welfare services and supported the suggestion that the report of the International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare (E/4590 and Corr.1) should be included as an additional item on the agenda of the next session of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly.

39. U TIN AYE (Burma) considered the suggestions made in the Secretary-General's report useful in determining the nature of the social problems facing the modern world and also in indicating the nature of the remedies that might be available. It was obvious that, in many areas of social development, international co-operation and an exchange of experience would be invaluable. It was also obvious that, despite all the efforts that had been made, the existing gap between the developed countries and the developing countries was rapidly widening which indicated that social development would rest on very insecure foundations unless it was supported by economic progress. His delegation therefore was in general agreement with the constructive views and suggestions expressed during the discussion, and considered that an appropriate balance should

be achieved, at every stage of development, between economic growth and social development.

40. His country had concentrated its efforts on economic programmes oriented towards social progress. In his delegation's opinion, economic plans must be supplemented by programmes safeguarding and promoting the health, education and general welfare of all sectors of the population. Man of course, was the most important factor for any development programme; therefore, his material and spiritual welfare must have national priority.

41. His Government had employed a large percentage of its resources and energies for the benefit of the inhabitants of the rural areas, who constituted 85 per cent of the country's total population. In particular, it had established guaranteed price levels for agricultural produce to ensure the peasants a fair return; in addition, the availability of loans for the purchase of farm equipment had been extended and consumer goods at fair prices were being supplied to them through village co-operatives. The introduction of modern agricultural methods had also been stepped up, and more dams and irrigation systems had been constructed. In industry, the more efficient operation of enterprises had been sought through worker participation in management. Education programmes had been expanded to serve all levels of the population, and the public health system had also been reorganized to cover the whole country, including the more remote areas. The fact that in 1967-1968 alone the Government had allocated 22.5 per cent of the national budget to education and social welfare showed the scope of social activities in Burma.

42. Although Burma's social programmes emphasized self-reliance and self-help, the United Nations and the specialized agencies had provided invaluable support for those programmes.

43. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the present exchange of views would prove both useful and enlightening in terms of the problem that nations with different socio-economic systems faced, each in its own way, and that the Committee's deliberations would contribute to the achievement of social progress and development.

44. Mrs. KEITA (Mali) noted with concern that, despite the efforts of the international community, the world social situation had not improved and the results of the first United Nations Development Decade were very far from satisfactory. Considering that the world population was increasing at an unprecedented rate, particularly in the less developed areas, it was essential that the United Nations and the specialized agencies should concentrate on activities intended to accelerate economic and social development throughout the world and, particularly, in those areas.

45. Although social development rested on economic foundations, its main objective was to achieve optimum conditions for the development of the human personality. The balance between the economic and social sectors of development was therefore of the greatest importance, and in that connexion, his delegation stressed the necessity of planning. Account should also be taken of the achievements of some countries

in the mobilization of their material and human resources, and of any other constructive initiative tending to promote the social progress of peoples.

46. In Africa, social development must originate in its own history and tradition, its values and its actual existence in space and time. Africa must reject a definition of progress which had as its primary objective an increase of the continent's tangible wealth and which did not take duly into account the complete development of peoples.

47. Referring to the specific achievements of various countries of the Third World, she said that, for example, the systematic eradication of illiteracy helped in great measure to raise the level of community participation in productive activities and in social programmes. Regarding literacy programmes, she expressed her satisfaction at the fact that UNESCO had chosen Mali for the implementation of its experimental programme of fundamental education. One of the great advances made was the creation of alphabets for four of the country's principal languages. In the educational sector, Mali favoured teaching adapted to the national needs and realities and designed to train in the shortest possible time the leaders needed by the nation. Undeniable progress had been made in the establishment of a modern public health infrastructure and in the training of skilled personnel.

48. At the stage in which African countries such as Mali were, social programmes that contributed directly to their economic development undoubtedly had priority. The assistance which those countries had a right to expect from the United Nations would undoubtedly promote their total development.

49. Mr. HANDL (Czechoslovakia) was gratified that the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation for the first time included a special chapter concerning social development in the socialist countries of eastern Europe, which contained a great deal of information on the progress they had made and on their methods of solving the problems confronting them. The chapter stressed two most important trends: the maintenance of full employment and the reduction of differences in the levels of living of the various sectors.

50. In general, the report once again revealed the sombre reality of the contemporary world. It revealed that in that changing world, characterized by the rapid advance of science and technology and by a powerful movement for the political, economic and social emancipation of formerly dependent peoples, there were considerable disproportions in the economic and social levels of different countries. The report also showed that in the developing countries social progress had been slow, and that the gap between their per capita income and that of the economically advanced countries had widened. Nor

had progress been satisfactory in many other sectors such as employment, food production, nutrition, etc. That situation, together with other negative phenomena such as the population explosion, rapid urbanization and general deterioration of the environment, constituted problems of the utmost importance and were matters of concern for humanity in general and for the United Nations in particular.

51. In his opinion, it was impossible to make a universally valid prescription for all the social problems of the modern world. It was essential to avoid simplification and to adopt a differentiated approach not only to individual areas of the world but also to individual groups of countries.

52. However, the experience gained during the first United Nations Development Decade had made it clear that the process of economic development, industrialization, and scientific and technological progress could not be successfully carried out in an anachronistic economic and social structure. Account must be taken of the interdependence of economic and social factors of development, and the important role which social conditions played in the over-all development process, particularly as far as the social structure of society was concerned.

53. It would therefore, seem, that the corner-stone of social progress was a proper concept of development, in which economic and social programmes supported and strengthened each other. His delegation considered that in such an integrated approach to social development primary attention must be paid to social reforms, institutional changes and social programmes which not only helped to raise the level of living of the people but which at the same time created favourable conditions for economic development. The United Nations should devote the utmost attention to that aspect of social development, studying both positive and negative experiences in the planning and implementation of social development policies and helping to adapt those experiences to the needs of a changing world. It would also be very useful if the next Report on the World Social Situation concentrated on the evaluation of changes in social structures during the first Development Decade, and the relationship between those changes and economic development. It would be desirable, in his view, to study primarily those social transformations which substantially influenced modern development. The evaluation of the main trends in social reforms and institutional changes, and of their influence on economic development, might serve as a basis for social policy recommendations in connexion with the next long-term development programme of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.