

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.35/SR.114
16 May 1955
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Sixth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 25 April 1955, at 2.45 p.m.

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PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. SCOTT

New Zealand

Members:

Mr. LOOMES

Australia

Mr. FRAZAO

Brazil

U HLA AUNG

Burma

Mr. YANG

China

Mr. de CAMARET)

Mr. DULPHY)

France

Mr. ARENALES

Guatemala

Mr. JAIPAL

India

Mr. KHALIDY

Iraq

Mr. GRADER)

Mr. VIXSEBOXSE)

Netherlands

Mr. CALLE y CALLE

Peru

Mr. GIDDEN)

Mr. CHINN)

United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr. SEARS

United States of America

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. GAVIN

International Labour
Organisation

Miss BAÑOS

Food and Agriculture
Organization

Mr. METRAUX

United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural
Organization

Dr. INGALLS

World Health Organization

Secretariat:

Mr. COHEN

Under-Secretary for Trusteeship
and Information from Non-
Self-Governing Territories

Mr. BENSON

Secretary of the Committee

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (A/AC.35/L.188) (continued)

Mr. YANG (China) congratulated the Secretariat on the excellent document it had prepared on community development (A/AC.35/L.188).

At previous sessions, more particularly in 1952 and 1954, the Committee had laid stress on two principles. The first was that all aspects of the development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, relating to political, economic, social or educational questions, were interdependent. The second principle was that the success of community development in the Non-Self-Governing Territories depended to a very great extent on the collaboration and enthusiasm of the people, who must participate in the planning and execution of development programmes.

The Chinese delegation fully subscribed to those two principles and was convinced that neither of them could be applied without the other. It also considered that the Non-Self-Governing Territories would achieve the objectives set forth in Chapter XI of the Charter only to the extent to which those principles were applied. It therefore attached the greatest importance to community development, for it was in that field that the principles could most successfully be applied.

He thanked the United Kingdom representative for making the report of the Ashridge Conference available to the Committee. He also congratulated the Secretariat on the excellent document it had prepared for the tenth session of the Social Commission (E/CN.5/303) and thanked the representative of UNESCO for his comments on that document. He had listened with great interest to the explanations given by Miss Henderson, Director of the Bureau of Social Affairs, and to the statements made by members of the Committee.

The Chinese Government had a lively interest in community development. In the light of the experience it had gained in its own country it was able to concur in most of the arguments advanced in the Committee with a full knowledge of the subject. Although community development was included in the agenda for the first time, the Committee had already referred to the question in 1953, but only in connexion with education. As the Cambridge Conference of 1948 had stressed, community development was closely linked with education and did not constitute a branch of administration, but rather a new method of administration,

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designed to promote better living for the whole community. The most important contribution of the Cambridge Conference had been the stress it had laid upon the initiative of the community itself. The Chinese delegation considered that if that initiative was not forthcoming spontaneously, it must be the responsibility of the Administration to arouse it and to maintain the continuity of the movement.

Having pointed out that the methods used by France and other Powers in the South Pacific area were based on British methods, he asked what those Administering Powers which had not yet initiated community development programmes thought of the British methods, when and to what extent those Powers would promote such movements and whether information could be provided on the response of the people, the difficulties encountered, the results obtained and the techniques used to arouse the initiative of the peoples concerned.

It was very important to adapt community development to the existing administrative system. In that connexion, paragraphs 28 to 30 of document A/AC.35/L.188 deserved serious attention. It was to be hoped that the Sub-Committee would draw inspiration from paragraphs 18 to 34 of document E/CN.5/303 in drafting its report on social conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Community development had been defined in many different ways. The Chinese delegation considered that the main point was the existence of a close link between community development and local government, as might be observed in the Territories under British administration, where a kind of revolution in colonial administration was taking place. The question should be included in the agenda of every session of the Committee. It was therefore important to adjust the Standard Form so as to elicit from the Administering Powers information on all aspects of community development.

In conclusion, he asked the United Kingdom representative whether the Governments participating in the Ashridge Conference had approved all the decisions of that Conference and whether the useful work done in the northern part of the Gold Coast by Brother Aiden was making steady progress and was being carried out within the framework of the programme prepared for the country as a whole.

Mr. CHINN (United Kingdom) stated, in reply to the first question, that the Governments had been invited to submit their observations on the principal recommendations in the report of the Conference. No criticisms had been received, but not all the Governments had as yet replied.

With regard to the second question, he pointed out that the northern part of the Gold Coast was particularly backward and had not been developed until after the other areas. The Administration had, however, put in an excellent team, consisting of the Reverend Lloyd Shirer, an American Protestant, and Brother Aiden, a British Catholic. By its very composition, the team in itself provided a good example of co-operation and social spirit. Its work had been outstanding: it had trained African staff and as a result of the progress made, the north would soon reach the same stage as the southern part of the Territory. Brother Aiden had recently retired from the service.

Mr. YANG (China) thanked the United Kingdom representative for his explanations.

Mr. de CAMARET (France) said that Mr. Dulphy, Director of the Social Affairs Service of the Ministry for Overseas France, would make a statement on community development in the French Territories in Africa south of the Sahara.

Mr. DULPHY (France) explained that he would deal only with the social aspects of the problem and would describe in turn the development of the traditional overseas societies, their adjustment to the modern world, and the various forms of community development.

Before the arrival of the Europeans, African societies had had a material and moral civilization which, though static, was perfectly adapted to their way of life, and a closed, self-sustaining family and village economy. The arrival of the Europeans had aroused a desire for development in those societies through the play of such social factors as education and the opening of means of communication, which permitted exchanges of ideas and migration, and of such economic factors as the development of market crops and trade, and the appearance of new needs, economic incentives and a flexible currency. As a result,

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Between the traditional social organization and the requirements of modern life an imbalance had appeared which had brought about the break-up of the customary social structure, the collapse of established authority in all its aspects and the dissolution of family ties. There was a growing trend towards the individualization of property and persons, further accentuated in some areas, and especially in the towns, by the decline of polygamy, either under religious influence or as the result of economic difficulties. Those changes had created barriers between the various social groups, between the older and younger generations, between the masses and the élite and between country- and town-dwellers. The overseas peoples had thus lost their traditional social order, but nothing had yet supervened to replace it, as spiritual adjustment had not kept pace with material adjustment to technical progress.

With regard to the conditions under which that adjustment could be made, it must be admitted that France, for all its good will, had perhaps not always acted in such a way as to induce the indigenous communities to reorganize themselves on a new basis. Because of the poverty of the overseas territories, France had given lavish direct technical and financial assistance, which too often had encouraged the peoples to rely entirely on the Administration. In its firm resolve to encourage attempts at self-adjustment, France had been guided by a number of basic principles. Firstly, it had chosen a middle way between the tribal structure and modern systems, by synthesizing whatever was good in the traditional principles and usages with the principles and methods of contemporary civilization. It was essential, however, to avoid imposing on the indigenous peoples methods which, though effective in the metropolitan territory, were unsuited to their psychological and social training, even if the indigenous inhabitants thought that they were being unfairly treated by not being given exactly the same social institutions as the inhabitants of the metropolitan territory.

Secondly, France wanted the indigenous inhabitants to bring about their own development chiefly by themselves. It therefore sought to arouse in them a sense of responsibility and a drive towards personal effort, and to impart to them a few very simple ideas which would enable them to improve their conditions in such matters as health and hygiene, housing, nutrition, cultivation and

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stockbreeding methods, domestic economy and maternity and child welfare. That was the purpose of social education. Thirdly, it was realized in the metropolitan country that success would require the co-operation of progressive private organizations. Finally, personnel specializing in the human sciences would have to be trained, and that was the purpose of the courses in overseas social sciences given at the Ecole nationale de la France d'outre-mer, the specialist diploma awarded to women overseas assistants, the schools for African and Malagasy auxiliaries, and the fundamental and cultural education courses at Dakar.

Mr. Dulphy went on to review projects undertaken with a view to organizing rural communities, namely fundamental education, modernized indigenous rural communities, resettlement villages, rural colonization areas (the Valley of the Niger), provident societies, the co-operative movement and study groups.

In the French territories fundamental education, for which a sum of 200 million francs was provided in the new four-year plan, was conceived as a genuine programme of social and community training, aimed at the development of communities simultaneously along economic, social and civic lines. Fundamental education, however, could not replace education in the proper sense of the term, and in particular it could not replace classical education; it furnished only rudimentary instruction which served to stimulate new ideas. Besides, scholastic education followed a uniform curriculum intended primarily for young people, whereas the programme of fundamental education varied according to the mixed audience for which it was intended and demanded the communities' active participation. It was not conducted by generally-qualified instructors, but by technicians specializing in different subjects although trained in the same methods and seeking the same end, using audio-visual techniques supplemented by psychological methods. Fundamental education presented a problem of co-ordination which had been solved by the establishment of fundamental education committees on the Departmental, Federal and Territorial level. Further, in certain Territories such as the Ivory Coast, Dahomey and French West Africa it was entrusted to services with a wider sphere of competence, such as the Social Affairs Service. Those were the principles laid down in February 1954 by the Council supérieur des affaires sociales d'outre-mer and more recently by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation de base, established in September 1954. With

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the assistance of a staff composed principally of Africans, campaigns had been carried out in French West Africa, French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, the Upper Volta, Dahomey and French Equatorial Africa, and others were being organized. The subjects taught were agriculture, cattle-breeding, health and hygiene, soil and forest conservation, civic training and the education of women. In addition there were in French West Africa a federal organization and permanent territorial organizations endowed with funds. The monitors took a course of training in the federal organizations. The territorial organizations prepared the campaigns, supplied the audio-visual aids and other equipment, and prepared publications. In the field, the campaign was conducted by mobile teams, whose work was then continued either by volunteers chosen from the active elements of the villages or by the rural teachers.

The indigenous rural communities of Madagascar had been modernized. During a first stage lasting from 1944 to 1950 the rural communities had been organized as administrative, economic and social units, each with its own budget and powers and directed by an elected council. In the second stage, beginning in 1951, an "Agricultural Equipment and Modernization Centre" had been established to give rural communities technical and financial aid on request, to grant credits and carry on the work of infrastructure. Those communities were now designated as "organized rural communities". Experts were assigned to advise them according to their needs and aspirations, but the communities were self-administered. There were at present 120 organized rural communities and twenty modernized rural communities.

The resettlement villages, another means used to encourage the formation of communities, were established in areas where the population was dispersed and unorganized, as for instance among the forest dwellers of the Gaboon and the nomads of the Chad region. The site for such a project was carefully chosen, account being taken of the quality of the land, health conditions, and possibilities in regard to communications and expansion; the infrastructure of a village organization with economic and social institutions was then laid. The population was then encouraged to regroup and settle in the new centre, which had thus been created from nothing and would serve as the starting point for a new community.

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Along the same lines, the Office du Niger had organized a number of rural colonization sectors in the irrigated areas of the Niger valley.

The co-operative movement, which was another form of community organization, called upon the traditional community's spirit of solidarity. Through that movement, communities could learn to adjust themselves to modern economic and social conditions, could be shown the advantages of combining their efforts in the domains of production, consumption and trade, could be taught to assume responsibility, and could be acquainted with the notions of credit, saving and planning for the future: notions which were foreign to traditional thought. That was why France was endeavouring, through the establishment of indigenous provident societies, to develop the co-operative movement as much as possible; in the French territories in tropical Africa, there was at least one indigenous provident society in each administrative circonscription. At first, those societies had been governed by an Executive Board composed of representatives of members of the societies and assisted by the chefs de circonscriptions; their funds had been obtained from members' subscriptions and State loans. Subsequently, as the people had advanced and indigenous civic leaders had become available, the indigenous communities themselves had taken over the management of the provident societies and the Administration had confined itself to providing technical and financial assistance and supervising the societies' operations. Some of the co-operatives had grown considerably, having budgets of several tens of millions of francs. In French West Africa, a special service had been established, under the High Commissioner, to assist the co-operatives, organize training courses for indigenous civic leaders and publish reviews. Efforts in that direction would be increased as the new four-year plan was implemented.

France believed that the *élites* should participate actively in the community development of the overseas territories and should bridge the gap between the modern and traditional worlds. It was aware of the fact that the *élites*, torn between those two contradictory forces, were in an anomalous position and only too often dissociated themselves from the mass of the population. Hence, France was helping them not only to achieve a social balance, but also to assume their mission of giving guidance to their fellow citizens. To that end, France was endeavouring to expand the study groups, where problems of development were discussed.

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He concluded by referring members of the Committee to the excellent report prepared by the Secretariat.

Mr. LOOMES (Australia) observed that document A/AC.35/L.188 on community development contained suggestions for a possible revision of the Standard Form. He did not think that it was necessary to discuss the question at the present stage of the debate, but reserved the right to do so at the appropriate time. He pointed out that document A/AC.35/L.188 as a whole dealt with the same subject as document E/CN.5/303; it therefore appeared that there was some duplication between the work of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories and that of the Social Commission.

No full scale project of community development had been undertaken in Papua. Nevertheless, the Queen Elizabeth II Trust Fund for Mothers and Children had been enthusiastically received. The Fund's main purpose was to equip mobile health units. Australia was keenly interested in community development in the South Pacific and, to that end, had co-operated with the South Pacific Commission, to which reference had been made by the United States representative. Co-operative societies also played an important part in community development. There were 108 such societies in Papua, with a total membership of nearly 18,500. The management of the societies was more or less autonomous, depending upon their legal status. Their purpose was to market the goods produced by their members or to sell consumer goods to those members. Some of the societies combined the two functions. Several building co-operative societies had also been established among workmen. Co-operative societies sometimes joined together in associations, which enabled them to extend their services. For instance, some of the associations owned ships in which they transported the goods they sold.

The Papuan Administration had undertaken a large-scale training programme, including the organization of a six-weeks course for store-keepers and a six-months course for inspectors and other staff of the associations. In 1953-1954, 148 students had taken part in the training programme. Furthermore, in 1954, two indigenous inhabitants had participated in the Queensland co-operative Congress visiting a number of Australian societies and obtaining information on

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their activities. During their periodical visits to villages, co-operative officers organized discussion groups. The constant travelling by the indigenous inhabitants also contributed indirectly to co-operative education. Thus, it could be seen that co-operative societies made a notable contribution to community development, and he thought that the Committee's report should take account of that fact.

The CHAIRMAN requested the Committee to decide on the membership of the Sub-Committee on Social Conditions. After hearing representatives' views, he said that he would be in favour of a Sub-Committee of eight members, since that would permit it to take advantage of the assistance of the experts who were present. Representatives of the specialized agencies would also be able to participate freely in the Sub-Committee's discussions. He proposed the following membership: Australia, Burma, China, France, Guatemala, India, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that experts on public health would be present at meetings during the week beginning on 25 April. It might therefore be useful to establish a working group which could examine the question of public health with those experts.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.