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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Ninth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 22 April 1958, at 3.10 p.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. LALL	(India)
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. KELLY	Australia
	Mr. CASTRO ALVES	Brazil
	Mr. DURAISWAMY	Ceylon
	Mr. YIN	China
	Mr. de CAMARET)	France
	Mr. POURCHEL)	
	Mr. URRUTIA APARICIO	Guatemala
	Mr. MITRA)	India
	Mr. NATARAJAN)	
	Mr. KITTANI	Iraq
	Mr. VAS NUNES)	Netherlands
	Mr. GRADER)	
	Mr. CASTON)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. CHINN)	
	Mr. MORE	United States of America
	Mr. ALFONZO RAVARD	Venezuela

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. METALL)	International Labour Organisation
Mr. PAYRO)	
Mr. ORR	Food and Agriculture Organization
Mr. SALSAMENDI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Dr. SACKS	World Health Organization

<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. COHEN	Under-Secretary for Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self- Governing Territories
	Mr. PEREZ GUERRERO	Director, Division of Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories
	Mr. KUNST	Secretary of the Committee

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (continued)

The CHAIRMAN proposed that a sub-committee should be set up to prepare a report on social conditions for submission to the Committee. If there were no objections to that proposal, the sub-committee might consist of representatives of Ceylon, China, France, Guatemala, India, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Rapporteur would serve ex officio in accordance with the usual practice. The representatives of the specialized agencies would of course, as in the past, be welcome to participate in the sub-committee's deliberations, if they so wished.

It was so decided.

Mr. GRADER (Netherlands) observed that the future of the Territory of Netherlands New Guinea, which was predominantly agrarian, would depend on the rural population's ability to promote agricultural development. That would not, however, be an easy task. Much of the land was largely or even totally unsuitable for agricultural purposes. Long-continued and strenuous efforts would be required to develop the possibilities that existed. What was needed above all was the emergence of a competent agricultural class, a long period of training in husbandry and the creation of efficient types of rural organization. To the local observer, engrossed in the details of daily life, progress might seem fast, but from the standpoint of the requirements of modern life it was still a long way from the virtually neolithic economy prevailing in the greater part of the country to a stage where the cost of the existing social services could be met from local revenues. It was not only a matter of introducing new techniques; a new mentality must first be generated, directed towards progress and the improvement of standards of living. Continuous intellectual, spiritual and moral development was also called for.

In the vast Territory of Netherlands New Guinea conditions varied widely from place to place and there was a confusing diversity of customs and beliefs and cultural patterns. The degree of contact with the outside world also varied greatly. In a number of districts the influence of commerce, the missions and the

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Administration had had a cumulative effect over many years. On the other hand, the Baliem area, in the central mountains, had only recently been opened up and Government activities there were for the time being limited to exploration and to the establishment of small bases and airstrips. Missionary activities and educational experiments were preparing the way for more intensive intercourse. Between those two extremes - the coastal areas and the highlands - there was a great variety in the degree of outside influence and cultural change.

The first move by the Government had been in the direction of securing law and order and inducing the people to conform, at least superficially, to codes of behaviour considered essential in contact with the outside world. In many instances the social structure had undergone a profound modification as a result of continuous and systematic activities by the Government and the missions. Cultural contacts through trade had been of less importance, foreign trade having been largely confined to the coastal areas. As elsewhere in the South Pacific area, the Chinese played an important role as middlemen, although the total number in the Territory was only about 3,500. Many of them lived in the little townships as small shop-keepers and manufacturers. Non-indigenous commercial contacts with the interior were mostly limited to the trade in crocodile skins.

It was the administrative, religious and cultural changes which had had a decisive influence on the life of the Papuan peoples. The prohibition of warfare and the attempt to abolish, or at least to modify, the important festivals and ceremonies connected with head-hunting had resulted in the disintegration of cultural patterns which could not survive in modern conditions of life. Other radical changes had been the introduction of regulations requiring the men to live with their own families and not, as formerly, in the Men's Houses, which had been the centre of the old culture. Endeavours had also been made to centralize widely scattered groups in settlements and villages, thus rendering

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possible supervision and control. The essential question was what should be done to give people living in tiny communities some substitute for the excitements of their former more eventful existence. Moreover, the old values had lost their significance and time would be needed before a new set of rules was really accepted.

The problem facing the Administration was not only how to ensure the participation of the Papuans in Western productive processes, in which some success had already been achieved, but also how to make life and work in rural surroundings acceptable to the better educated Papuans and to those who had seen something of the outside world. The only satisfactory answer was a general programme for the transformation of rural society, which would make it better adapted to modern circumstances and would also guarantee the people's participation in production.

The Papuan population was divided into a vast number of groups living in thousands of small villages and hamlets. Although social systems varied in detail in different parts of the Territory, they nevertheless conformed to the general pattern prevailing throughout the Melanesian area. The village was the largest effective political unit. The people's sense of community rarely extended beyond the village or group of neighbouring hamlets and even in the larger groupings where the same language was spoken there was usually little feeling of common interest. Within the villages the inhabitants might be further subdivided into groups such as clans, which had many important functions, for instance in connexion with marriage regulations and land tenure. Within the clan the family was the basic social and economic unit.

Community leadership depended mostly on personal ability or wealth. Hereditary rank was hardly known. Generally speaking all the men in the community had some influence and all had the opportunity to become chiefs as a result of personal effort and achievement. Outstanding knowledge of the group's customs and rights was still of great consequence. Sometimes a reputation as a practitioner of black magic could help to raise a man to leadership. The

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belief in black magic was a matter of concern to the Administration since it was often the cause of hostility between individuals and groups. The introduction of European money had to some extent modified the influence of older forms of wealth.

As far as community development was concerned, the main problem in rural districts arose from the fact that in little more than a decade numbers of people had for the first time come into contact with the world outside their villages. With increased travel facilities more and more Papuans had returned from the towns, from labour barracks and from centralized boarding schools where they had become involved in Western activities. It was now essential to create a balance between the expectations aroused by this new contact and the possibilities offered by village life. Long-term programmes including extended communications, better agricultural methods, the introduction of village industries, improved health conditions and above all more education and cultural and recreational activities were needed to lay the foundations of a new existence.

In discussing the problems of community development, it was necessary to bear in mind that the communities concerned were small, scattered over vast areas, and characterized by a paucity of material culture, an exceedingly low technological level, a lack of social and economic differentiation and practically no division of labour or specialization. Relations between those communities had been until very recently, and to some extent still were, governed by mutual distrust. There was consequently little prospect of utilizing the communities as agencies of self-help and local rule, nor could the communities be expected to initiate welfare schemes. The absence of formal chieftainship was another important factor, since local authority and leadership were indispensable for successful welfare projects. There was little likelihood of finding sufficient numbers of competent leaders among the people. The promotion of welfare required capacities which did not develop within the narrow spiritual confines of the village. Much depended on the school teachers, who were often a powerful influence for change.

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Despite the difficulties due to the structure of Papuan society, the organization of community development and local government was an outstanding feature of administrative policy. The correlation between the two was obvious. It was hoped that the establishment of indigenous government councils would strengthen local authority and leadership and would make it possible to extend the scope of development schemes beyond the limits of a single village to a number of settlements working together. The encouragement of local leadership was of particular importance. The fact that modern changes and the wide diffusion of new ideas could best be brought about by contacts between Papuans had long since been recognized.

Community development called for a programme of integrated activities which frequently proved to be beyond the grasp of the people themselves. Consequently, as experience had shown, the introduction of multi-purpose schemes was likely to result in a loss of initiative and interest. For the time being, therefore, development schemes were being concentrated on agrarian projects which would provide a basis for further development in other fields and a framework into which all other measures could be integrated.

It should be remembered that in primitive areas there was great resistance to change and the co-operation of the local inhabitants depended to a large extent on the relationships which trained development workers, such as teachers, agricultural extension personnel or civil service officers, were able to establish with them. Levels of living were low, health and educational conditions were backward and the possibilities of capital accumulation were limited. It was necessary to take into account not only the community's present capacity for change but also the kind of life the people would be likely to lead in future, for if the Administration achieved progress which could not be maintained and continued by the people themselves, a sense of frustration and defeat would result. Community development projects had therefore been started only in a few areas where conditions seemed particularly favourable. There did not appear to be a need for a single Territory-wide community development organization. Co-ordination at the regional and local levels was rather the task of ad hoc committees acting under the chairmanship of the resident commissioner and the

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district officer respectively and comprising local technical officers and representatives of the missions. One of the most important functions of those committees was to maintain good personal relations with the population. Anthropological research in connexion with community development was carried out by the Office for Native Affairs, while complementary socio-agronomic investigations were undertaken by the Agronomic Research Section of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Such investigations, in conjunction with the natural resources inventories drawn up by the branches concerned, were of great importance as a means of enabling the Administration to see the problems of the Territory in their full perspective.

The Mappi district agricultural development scheme was an example of the way in which the important problem of training local leaders could be met. That project had been launched in 1956 and covered seventeen villages with a population of about 3,500. It was based on the improvement of subsistence agriculture and the introduction of cash crops, such as cocoa and coconuts and possibly coffee at a later stage, the ultimate objective being to encourage the development of more concentrated settlements, in which kitchen gardens would be cultivated within the dwelling compounds and the surrounding area would be used for the cultivation of other food crops and cocoa and coconut groves. Such groves and gardens would be subdivided into clan areas which in turn would consist of family plots with individual property rights. Special training centres had been established to instruct the most promising of the local inhabitants, particularly among the younger generation, in improved farming methods so that they in turn could propagate the idea of planned agricultural development among the population. At the present stage attention was concentrated on improving the cultivation of food crops and of such cash crops as cocoa and coconuts. Stockbreeding and the processing and marketing of local produce would be introduced into the curriculum at a later stage. The centres offered a one-year residential course and the majority of the trainees were married and were accompanied by their wives, who also received practical instruction in agriculture and stockbreeding, basic

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hygiene, dietetics and housekeeping. At each training centre there was a small shop, which sold simple implements, textiles, canned foods and other imported goods and which acted as an agent for the purchase of local products. Those shops enabled the people to become accustomed to handling money and to buying and selling. It was intended to give refresher courses for pioneer farmers at the centres at a later stage.

As another means of developing a sense of initiative among the people simple community halls had been built in which the village leaders met regularly to discuss community affairs. It was the Administration's policy always to consult such leaders on measures affecting the village.

After making a number of over-ambitious and therefore unsuccessful attempts to develop representative bodies on a higher level, the Administration had in 1955 adopted a more realistic approach and had concentrated on the establishment of local advisory councils in a few urban centres and in some of the more advanced rural districts. Those councils represented a transitional stage in the process of organizing municipal and district authorities. In addition to giving advice about the way in which local interests could best be served, they considered the feasibility of establishing autonomous local councils and advised on the composition of such councils, on the method of their election, on matters of competence and responsibility and on the raising of local revenues. The advisory councils for the islands of Biak and Japen were, in addition, responsible for organizing the local authorities within their respective areas and council members had toured the islands to familiarize the people with that innovation. The advisory council for Biak had submitted a proposal for the grouping of the numerous small settlements on the island into eighteen village authorities operating under the supervision of a district council for the entire area. Geographical conditions on Japen made the organization of separate village authorities impracticable and a district council exercising authority on both the district and village level would probably prove to be the most suitable form of local government.

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The Administration was following with interest the organization of local government in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and in the previous year had sent a study group consisting mainly of members of advisory councils to visit that Territory and observe at first hand the application of the Native Local Government Councils Ordinance 1949-1956.

The transition from primitive conditions to a new way of life must take place gradually if development was to be stable and the hopes raised were to be fulfilled. The structure of Papuan society, the peculiar language pattern and the dispersion of the population were such that the awakening of political responsibility and a sense of national unity would of necessity be slow. Nevertheless, a start had been made and the process of development could be expected to gain momentum with the passage of time.

Mr. KELLY (Australia) said that conventional sociological or socio-economic categories were not always capable of providing a realistic picture of life in societies such as the subsistence gardening communities of Papua. For example, it was hardly possible as yet to speak of the existence of a "peasantry" in primitive Papua. His remarks were therefore chiefly intended to throw light on some changes in methods of land tenure and cultivation in the subsistence gardening communities c. Papua.

The systems of land tenure among those communities varied, but were in general based on communal ownership combined with shifting usufructuary rights vested in individuals or groups such as families or clans. Individual rights also existed; the degree to which they were asserted varied according to the availability of arable land, the location of particular areas in relation to the village and the social organization of the group. Frequently, fairly well-defined individual or family rights were asserted for areas close to the centre of the settlement, while the community as a whole claimed more outlying areas.

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Individual rights were gradually extended to such areas as the population spread out after pacification. The language of paragraphs 10 to 13 of document A/AC.35/L.268 would therefore appear to require some modification. He would agree, however, that in a subsistence gardening community there was little need for the assertion of individual rights, since the method of agricultural production required communal effort. It was based on a bush-fallow or grass-fallow rotation system whereby garden lands were abandoned after a short period of use, sometimes after only one cropping, and were allowed to revert to natural secondary forest growth or grass. Each year the village leaders decided on the area of land to be cleared, usually without reference to land ownership, since the determining factor was the good of the community.

Although indigenous social institutions in Papua were tending to break down in the face of educational, administrative and economic progress, the indigenous institutions connected with rural economic activity, particularly agriculture, were full of vitality. The policy of restricting land alienation and of securing the land to the people under tribal rights was a factor militating against change. At present, that policy was in accordance with the feelings of the indigenous inhabitants, who were strongly attached to their methods of land use and crop husbandry and to tribal rules concerning land tenure and inheritance. The Agricultural Extension programmes were designed to avoid any direct clash with those methods and rules, while at the same time stimulating progressive changes in agricultural methods. Farmers might, for example, be encouraged to introduce new crops and to substitute a rotational pattern for single-crop farming, or to introduce small plantings of properly spaced and shaded perennial crops instead of the disorderly groves which characterized the primitive cultivation of perennials.

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(Mr. Kelly, Australia)

In certain areas of Papua there was no basis on which to establish the usual types of institution associated with agricultural and economic progress, such as co-operatives and rural progress societies largely because the populations of those areas had been outside the range of commercial development and the development of communications, and had taken virtually no part in the cash economy of the Territory. In recent years a special programme had been carried out in one such area, the Milne Bay District, to develop new types of institutions. The programme included the formation of village agricultural committees, whose activities were linked with the training of farmers in the use of new techniques and crops and the appointment of resident indigenous village agricultural assistants. The programme had so far been successful over a broad area and had awakened new interest in agricultural progress. The chief problem in those areas was the lack of any crop which could be used as a basis for initial contacts with the expanding commercial economy.

The introduction of new crops such as peanuts and rice and of improved varieties of existing crops made it possible to obtain higher yields from the subsistence system and frequently provided a surplus which could be sold for cash. Increased productivity was also being achieved by the introduction of crops such as cocoa and coffee, which was not cultivated under the subsistence system. Those developments might generate pressure for changes in the existing institutions connected with agriculture and land uses. In particular, the growing of perennials such as cocoa and coffee which were primarily cash crops, might be expected to produce changes in the indigenous systems of land tenure and inheritance. The use of perennial tree crops led to a greater degree of assertion of individual rights and might create a desire for individual tenure, since the indigenous system of communal rights and tenure did not permit the long-term economic security required for the proper cultivation of such crops. Pressures for change in the indigenous systems of land tenure and inheritance had not yet been felt in Papua, although they were already in evidence in certain more advanced areas of the adjacent Territory of New Guinea. Changes would be essential if indigenous agriculture was to progress beyond the level of small-holder gardening or farming and to avoid the pitfalls of excessive land fragmentation.

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In order to raise their standard of living and to satisfy their wants the indigenous inhabitants would need means of earning cash. They could do that by selling either surplus subsistence crops or perennial tree crops. The former would call for rationalization in the system of cultivating communal village gardens and the latter for individual tenure of land devoted to perennial tree crops.

The Administration was giving serious consideration to the whole problem. Carefully worked out administrative and legal arrangements would be necessary to ensure that any changes in the system of land tenure took place along sound lines and with the full agreement of the indigenous inhabitants, and that measures for economic progress were consistent with the development of the Territory's social institutions.

The CHAIRMAN said that in view of the extensive information contained in the statements made by experts and representatives of the Administering Powers, it would be useful for the Committee to adopt the procedure of having a formal question and answer period. He would emphasize that his suggestion was not an attempt to extend the Committee's functions, but merely to make greater use of the special knowledge of the experts who appeared before it.

In reply to a question from Mr. THORP (New Zealand), the CHAIRMAN said that he was merely making a suggestion, which the Committee might deal with when it had completed its consideration of item 4.

It was so decided.

Mr. YIN (China), speaking on agenda item 4 (c), said that it was clear from the Secretariat's paper (A/AC.35/L.270) that the problem of juvenile delinquency was still virtually non-existent in many territories where traditional social organization remained comparatively strong. It had, however, assumed serious proportions in many African territories, where increasing industrialization had brought about rapid socio-economic change. It was characteristic of those areas that juvenile delinquency was concentrated in the urban centres where the old tribal and family controls had lost much of their force and where urbanization had completely disorganized the moral, family and

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material living conditions of the people. In other Territories, such as Hawaii and the principal Caribbean Territories, Mauritius and the Seychelles, which were characterized by a weakness of primary group organization, the problem of juvenile delinquency had been of considerable concern for a long time.

As statistics on juvenile delinquency must be interpreted in the light of fluctuations in child populations, it was impossible to determine whether the incidence of juvenile delinquency had been rising or declining in any of the Territories listed in table I of the Secretariat paper. It seemed safe to assume, however, that in view of the rapid rate of industrialization of many African Territories and the relatively slow rate of development of social services, the rate of juvenile delinquency in those Territories must be on the increase and should be given careful attention by the Administering Powers.

There was no need to dwell on the serious effects which the spread of juvenile delinquency would have on the community. Recent statistics from a highly-advanced country had shown that about 35 per cent of the children brought before the juvenile courts had appeared on one or more previous occasions, while almost half of those judged delinquent were later convicted of criminal offences as adults. It was regrettable that the Secretariat's study contained no information on recidivism by juveniles in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

It was encouraging to note that in nearly all the Territories educational methods of treatment aimed at the social rehabilitation of the individual offender were replacing punitive methods, and increased emphasis was being laid on the prevention of crime through the care and supervision of children. In practice, however, it was doubtful whether existing facilities and services were adequate for the successful implementation of those policies. There were as yet no special juvenile courts in many Territories, while many Governments were unable to attain their goals with regard to the administration of correctional institutions because of a lack of funds. The same applied to the organization and extension of the probation system in many Territories. The Administering

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Powers should therefore endeavour to establish comprehensive rehabilitation programmes in their Territories and to improve the quality of the institutions and personnel concerned with the execution of those programmes.

Other factors in the spread of juvenile delinquency were the general poverty of the populations, which perhaps accounted for the fact that theft accounted for so high a proportion of the offences committed by juveniles enumerated in table II of the Secretariat paper, and the lack of opportunities for general education and vocational training. Other contributory causes were poor housing, broken families and the lack of facilities for group activities and recreation.

The prevention of juvenile delinquency, therefore, seemed to call for a co-ordinated effort to improve general social, economic and educational conditions in the Territories, for as was pointed out in the Secretariat study, specific measures for the control and prevention of juvenile delinquency might fall short of their purpose unless they were part of a broad social programme intended to strengthen the family as the basic unit of society and to create conditions which would hasten the evolution of the impermanent and badly-integrated urban structures of the present transitional stage into stable and progressive communities. Community development activities in urban areas would also help to prevent juvenile delinquency by instilling a sense of communal responsibility.

As the Special Representatives of France and the United Kingdom had said, the home was the first safeguard against delinquency. In conjunction with social and economic measures, therefore, societies in transition should endeavour, through mass educational efforts, to retain the virtues of their traditional social structures, and in particular to keep alive the sense of parental responsibility for the proper care and guidance of children.

Dr. SACKS (World Health Organization) introduced the reports on various health problems provided by WHO for the Committee's current session and noted that, while WHO had not prepared specific papers on urbanization, housing, juvenile delinquency or community development, health aspects of those subjects were dealt with in the other documents before the Committee. He wished, in particular, to draw the Committee's attention to the following: the observation

(Dr. Sacks, WHO)

in the paper on Population Trends and Public Health (A/AC.35/L.275) that medical personnel was scarce in the very areas where poor health conditions were most likely to be found; the important recommendations on the control of communicable diseases made in paragraphs 121-125 of the paper on Long-Term Health Planning in the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.35/L.279); paragraphs 156 and 157 of that document, which emphasized the importance of peripheral health units providing both curative and preventive services, and the conclusions set forth in paragraphs 228, 229 and 237. WHO would be prepared to give assistance, at the request of the metropolitan Governments concerned, in carrying out a general planning survey in selected Non-Self-Governing Territories, as suggested in paragraph 237. In the paper on Maternal and Child Health in Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.35/L.271) the Committee should note in particular the comments in paragraph 76 and subsequent paragraphs the reference to the urgent need for more pediatricians and for the further training of all medical personnel in child health, clinical nutrition and teaching methods.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.