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Eleventh Session

CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 11 July 1950, at 3 p.m.

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Present:

Chairman:

Mr. NORIEGA (Mexico)

Members:

Australia

Mr. CUMES

Belgium

Mr. VANISTENDAEL

Mr. BRANCART

Brazil

Mr. MURTINHO

Canada

Mr. BERLIS

Chile

Mr. RODRIGUEZ

China

Mr. TSAO

Denmark

Mr. RICARD

France

Mr. JUVIGNY

India

Mr. SEN

Iran

Mr. SOTOUEH

Mexico

Mr. CALDERON PUIG

Pakistan

Mr. AKHTAR

United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr. TENNANT

United States of America

Mr. ROSEMAN

Representatives of specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation

Mr. JENKS

Mr. ALVARDO

Mr. RICHES

~~United Nations Educational,~~

~~Scientific and Cultural~~

~~Organisation~~

Mr. BERKELEY

International Civil Aviation
Organisation

Mr. MARLIN

~~Universal Postal Union~~

Mr. RADICE

~~World Health Organisation~~

Dr. HAFEZI

/Representatives

Representatives of non-governmental organisations:

Category A

International Organisation of
Employers

Mr. KUNTSCHEN

Category B

Commission of the Churches on
International Affairs

Mr. MOURAVIEFF

Secretariat:

Mr. Martin Hill

Director of Co-ordination
for specialized agencies
and economic and social
matters.

Mr. Urquhart

Secretary to the Committee.

1. REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (item 35 of the agenda) (E/1719)

The CHAIRMAN said that in the tense situation prevailing in the world it was important that the work of the Economic and Social Council and of the specialized agencies should be properly appreciated. The reports with which the Co-ordination Committee was dealing should therefore receive very careful attention. It was well known that the press and the radio tended to give very little attention to the work of the Economic and Social Council. Governments were also guilty of such inattention. However, he was not one of those who thought that public neglect was diminishing the prestige of the United Nations, since the Organisation was comparatively new, and its prestige was still growing. But it was none the less for the Economic and Social Council to carry on its work in such a way as to compel the attention of governments.

Mr. JENKS (International Labour Organisation) conveyed the regrets of Mr. Morse, its Director General, who had looked forward to resuming close co-operation with the Council in its examination of the Organisation's report, which was regarded by the Organisation as one of the important events of its year, but who had been prevented by illness from attending.

In the present-day world it was essential that the work of international organizations should be closely related to urgent needs. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) tried to achieve that end by continuous contact with those members of governments who were responsible for labour policy, and with the organizations of employers and workers. One example of such contact was provided by the participation in the recent Thirty-third Session of the International Labour Conference of Labour Ministers from eighteen Member States. But his Organisation recognized that the success of its work depended on effective action in related fields of economic and social policy, and therefore looked to the Economic and Social Council to assist it in keeping its work in tune with developments in those fields. Informed criticism which might help to secure a more effective contribution to the general effort was welcomed, and indeed invited.

ILO's Report (E/1719) had been made as detailed as practicable, and any further information of interest to the Council would gladly be furnished. In the meantime, it might be helpful to supplement the Report with more recent information on certain matters. Most of the items dealt with at the Thirty-third International Labour Conference had only been in the stage of first discussion, so that action would not be taken on them till the following year; but on the question of the vocational training of adults the Conference had adopted unanimously the recommendation foreshadowed in the Report.

The question of training was a good illustration of the manner in which the Organisation's function of formulating international standards of policy and legislation was being supplemented by operational activities designed to assist governments to meet urgent needs. For example, the Field Office at Bangalore was organising regional training institutes for key governments officials. Steps were being taken to meet requests from Middle Eastern countries for assistance in developing a supervisory training and employment services organization. In Latin America, a Manpower Field Office had been established at Sao Paulo, Brazil, to deal with requests by governments for technical assistance. The ILO was greatly indebted to the Brazilian Government for its co-operation and assistance in that connection.

Migration was another problem in which progress had been made since the publication of the report. The Preliminary Migration Conference of countries concerned with migration within Europe or from Europe, held at Geneva early in 1950, had called attention to the need for closer co-operation between those countries for solving the problem of surplus manpower in Europe. It had recommended that the United Nations and the specialized agencies do everything possible to further European emigration, and that ILO itself should intensify its work in that field and draw up, in consultation with governments, proposals to be submitted at a subsequent meeting. The Conference had outlined a series of steps to be taken by the countries and organizations concerned to provide the information needed to assist migration and to deal with such questions as recruitment and selection,

/transport,

transport, reception, placement and settlement services and so forth. The Foreign Minister of Great Britain, France and the United States of America had taken formal note of the value of the conclusions of the Conference in their statement issued in London on 13 May 1950.

The establishment of the Manpower Field Office at Sao Paulo and the arrangements made to co-operate with the Economic Commission for Latin America on development projects connected with migration were examples of the steps already taken to implement the conclusions reached at the Conference. Since the Conference, some of the interested European countries had, through the Organization for European Economic Co-operation, placed at the disposal of the International Labour Organisation a special fund totalling 988,000 dollars to be used for technical assistance in the field of migration. The fund had been accepted by the Governing Body on 30 June 1950.

As social policy had developed, the emphasis had shifted from the formulation of general legislative standards to the concrete administrative tasks involved in the training and placing of skilled manpower, the conduct of industrial relations and the administration of social security schemes. The work of the Organisation must and did reflect that change, and would increasingly do so as funds became available.

A special communication had been submitted to the present session of the Council on the question of full employment.

Chapter 2 of the Organisation's report contained an historical account of the Organisation's work in the promotion of full employment, and gave the background against which the discussions at the recent session of the International Labour Conference fell into perspective as part of a continuing process of study and action on employment problems by the Organisation, which had generally secured for such action the agreement of governments, employers and workers.

The Conference had had before it a report on Action against Unemployment, prepared by the International Labour Office in accordance with the resolution adopted by the 1949 Session of the Conference, and also the

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report by the United Nations group of experts on national and international measures for full employment. Those documents had been communicated to the Conference in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Council, which had commended the report of the group of experts to the interested specialized agencies for consideration and examination.

The Conference had adopted by 96 votes to 30 with 13 abstentions a resolution on action against unemployment, the text of which was being communicated to the Council together with the records of the relevant discussions. There had been a notable measure of agreement among the Governmental and Workers' members of the Conference on most of the main proposals of policy in the two reports before the Conference, but an important section of the Conference - the Employers' Group, one of the major interests concerned with employment policy - had been unable to accept a resolution dealing with those proposals in detail. The Employers' Group would have been able to accept a general resolution affirming the importance of appropriate policies to combat unemployment, and pledging the co-operation of the ILO in further examination of the question.

The specific resolution affirmed that mass unemployment and under-employment were social evils that must be eradicated without prejudice to the fundamental freedoms of individuals, drew attention to various types of national and international action in that field, called for adequate benefits for unemployed workers, urged governments to establish the information services and administrative machinery needed for the implementation of full employment policies, drew attention to the domestic measures which could help to maintain a level of aggregate demand conducive to full employment, and indicated the types of action needed in countries where problems of unemployment arose from shortage of capital resources. It also pointed out that, in any country, full employment depended partly on the policies of other countries, and accordingly invited governments to consider action to ensure that fluctuations in world trade should not spread depressions from one country to another, to encourage the expansion of international trade, and to increase the opportunities for more

productive employment in under-developed countries.

Finally, the Conference had drawn attention to the possible advantage of an international labour convention on full employment, and had asked the Governing Body to co-operate closely with all interested organizations to further international action in that field.

The Organisation was now working on such special aspects of the unemployment problem as the calculation of percentage rates of unemployment to make possible direct international comparisons. If there were other specific points which the Economic and Social Council wished to have examined in detail by the Organisation, the Director-General would be pleased to refer such points to the appropriate quarter. It would, of course, be necessary to allow sufficient time to consider such points through the democratic process of tripartite discussion based on full consultation with governments and with employers' and workers' organizations, so as to secure the widest possible area of agreement.

The Conference had also considered the problem of increased productivity, without which no lasting increase of purchasing power or rise in living standards could be expected.

The labour problems of agriculture had also received attention. A basis had been drawn up for an international convention on minimum-wage-fixing machinery, and on the basis of a survey of agricultural labour problems before it, the Conference had singled out some problems as deserving special consideration. Those problems included the questions of social security, vocational training, hours of work and the agricultural aspects of manpower and employment problems, and of safety and hygiene. That emphasis on agricultural labour problems reflected the increased attention given by the Organisation in recent years to the needs of the agricultural, under-developed areas of the world. The expansion of regional activities in that field had been recorded in successive reports to the United Nations, and an important recent development was the establishment of an Asian Advisory Committee. The increase in regional activities was an important aspect of the increase in that

universality at which the Organisation had always aimed.

The object of those activities, an integral part of the world-wide programme of the ILO, was to allow all parts of the world to make their most effective contribution to the general international effort, and to give general international measures their most effective application in all parts of the world.

Chapter 3 of the Report mentioned the recent meeting of the Organisation's committee of social security experts to draw up plans for the revision of international conventions on social insurance. At the next conference the draft of an international instrument on that question would be considered. The broadened concept of social security covering the needs of the whole population had first received international expression in the Recommendations on income security and medical care adopted by the Conference in 1944. The recent meeting of experts had marked a further stage in the laying down of international standards embodying the new concept of social security.

Chapter 4 of the report described the action taken by the Governing Body to establish a fact-finding and conciliation commission on freedom of association. The Governing Body had reported to the Conference on the establishment of the Commission, and its decision had been approved and confirmed by 92 votes to 3 with 21 abstentions.

The Organisation, conscious of the gravity of the political situation and true to its traditions, would continue its task with faith, courage, vigour and determination, corresponding to the needs of the hour. Universality remained the objective and freedom the watchword, and a realism which fully recognised that international action on social and economic questions could not achieve results of lasting value without intensive concentration on a limited number of well-defined objectives remained the basis of its policy. The ILO looked to the Council, as to the United Nations as a whole, to serve in those tense days of expectant anxiety as a rallying point within a framework of world order, for the forces of freedom, progress and good will.

/Mr. CALDERON

Mr. CALDERON PUIG (Mexico) wished to congratulate the International Labour Organisation on a truly magnificent report. There was no time in a brief intervention to comment in detail on a report dealing with such varied problems as emigration, full employment, the rights of trade unions, unemployment statistics and the problems of agricultural manpower, but he wished to make special mention of some items.

Chapter IV, on freedom of association and industrial relations, mentioned the convention which had come into force on 4 July. Mexico had always shown great interest in the protection of trade union rights, without which the development of satisfactory relations between labour and employers was impossible, and, although the fact was not mentioned in the report, perhaps because such reports were prepared well in advance of presentation, he wished to underline the fact that Mexico had deposited the instrument of ratification of ILO Convention, concerning freedom of association and the protection of trade union rights, on 31 March 1950.

The chapter on technical assistance showed that the practical work of the Organization in that field, particularly the sending of missions to countries requesting advice, was likely to constitute a major part of the sum of the work of the United Nations.

The report was, in general, highly satisfying, although the Organisation had not yet reached perfection. There were areas of the world which had as yet scarcely been touched, but, as the Mexican delegation had said at the thirty-third International Labour Conference, it was for the Member States of the Organisation to give the fullest possible support to its activities and to provide the constructive criticism which would help to make its work more effective than ever.

Finally, it was to be hoped that the Economic and Social Council would express thanks to the Organisation for submitting such a full and well drawn up report.

/Mr. BRANCART

Mr. DEANCART (Belgium) said that all who had read the report would agree that it was well drawn up, that it represented a considerable body of work, and that it showed a constant concern for co-ordination and for intelligent decentralisation to regional level.

Turning to the actual text of the report, he said that the chapter on full employment showed that the Organisation was fully alive to the need for co-ordination in that field, where lack of proper liaison often led to the duplication of work at national and international levels. Between the two wars, the Organisation had always striven for a high level of employment and could justly be called the fore-runner of the champions of full employment. A study of "Action against Unemployment", published by the Organisation, showed a more realistic approach to the realities of the problem than did the report of the United Nations group of experts. It paid greater attention to the social aspects of the problem, which the experts' report had rather overlooked. He hoped that when the time came for the Council to discuss the problem of full employment and to take positive decisions thereon, the work of the Organisation in that field would not be forgotten. It was a field where the inter-action of economic and social factors made itself particularly felt. It would be well to bring to the attention of United Nations officials working on full employment the decision of the Organisation to publish a series of manuals on the organization of employment services in various countries.

The section of the report that dealt with vocational guidance was particularly praiseworthy, and he wished to draw attention to the definition of vocational guidance given in the Recommendation adopted at the last session of the International Labour Conference. Vocational guidance was defined as help given to an individual with a view to solving problems relating to the choice of a profession or to professional advancement, having regard to the characteristics of the person concerned and to the relation between those characteristics and the possibilities in the labour market. That definition clearly laid down the principle of individual freedom of choice.

The approach of the Organisation to the problem of migration was a striking example of its concern for co-ordination. The summoning of the Preliminary Conference on Migration was a particularly welcome step, and it was hoped that the effort thus undertaken would be continued in the same spirit of co-ordination.

At its last session, the Economic and Social Council had decided to make use of the services of the fact-finding and conciliation commission to be established by the Organisation for the investigation of violations of freedom of association. He believed that the composition of that commission was now known, and it was to be hoped that at the next session of the Council representatives might hear the first results of its work. Representatives were not unaware that in many parts of the world freedom of association was seriously threatened, and the activities of the commission would concert public opinion.

It was gratifying to see that in Chapter V of the report the social problems of agriculture were beginning to take a place in the deliberations and in the work of the Organisation. Those problems were of cardinal importance, both in the vast territories of Asia and for all the Latin-American Republics. That development was all the more welcome because the social problems of agriculture would inevitably play an important part in the problems of technical assistance for under-developed territories. The references to guaranteed wages and profit-sharing in the same chapter showed that the Organisation was not content with recording what had been achieved, but dared to move forward.

In Chapter XIII, on women's work, it was satisfying to note that the problem of equal pay for equal work was being actively dealt with and that legislative measures at international level could be expected.

The Belgian delegation would like to see a detailed study undertaken of the economic value of the work of the housewife. It might be very difficult to get precise data on that question, and it was known that very few serious studies existed, but it would not be the first time that the Organisation had embarked on something entirely new. In that connection, the Committee might remember the wish which had been expressed by the Belgian delegation at the ninth session of the Council, and which had elicited a promise from the representative of the Organisation.

On Chapter XVII, dealing with statistics, he wished to ask the representative of the Organisation whether any practical results had been achieved in rendering statistics from different countries comparable. It would also be well if any results obtained in the field of productivity statistics could be brought to the attention of those concerned with the problem of full employment.

Mr. TIENTANT (United Kingdom) regretted that the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation had been unable to appear himself, but was sure that the Committee would be grateful for the lucid statement of the Assistant Director-General.

It had previously been the practice to deal with the report of the Organisation in plenary, but, since a decision taken at the ninth session, that task had become the responsibility of the Co-ordination Committee. Like the other representatives, he would try to prove worthy of that responsibility, but wished that the Council had retained it in its own hands.

The report was up to its usual standard, a good record of a year's good work. Last October had seen the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Organisation. It was encouraging to find that in spite of its maturity, ILO was not losing its suppleness, but that its activities were being framed ever more closely to meet the needs of the moment.

The report, like its predecessor, gave prominence to activities in the operational field, especially to the problems of manpower and employment. He felt that highly important as that work was, it should not be regarded as tending to impair the traditional work of the Organisation in fixing minimum standards. It was, in fact, gratifying to see in the report evidence of the close link between the legislative and operational work of the Organisation.

No programme, however good in itself, could serve any useful purpose unless related to present needs. Such activities as the establishment of field offices and the summoning of regional conferences were evidence of the determination of the Organisation to gear its work to existing requirements.

Had the Organisation answered all the urgent calls on its services, the report would have been two or three times as long, but Chapter XXII showed that close attention had been given to internal priorities and that the system of priorities had not been treated merely as a paper scheme. It was a matter which received the close and continuing attention of the Governing Body.

The best co-ordination machinery in the world would be useless unless organizations did in fact have the will to co-operate with each other. The report contained numerous examples of co-operation between the Organisation, the United Nations and the specialized agencies on particular problems that had arisen, and proved that the Organisation was, in the truest and most practical sense, "co-ordination-minded".

Of all the practical subjects in the report, he wished to mention only two. First, in the debate at the last session of the Council on the Organisation's report, the criticism had been advanced that the Organisation seemed little concerned with unemployment; the present report showed conclusively that that criticism was unfounded. Secondly, the United Kingdom delegation welcomed the key role which was being played by the Organisation in the field of migration. He was confident that the ILO would be able to undertake the further work which would be necessary in that field and hoped that after a full discussion the Report would be accepted by the Committee and by the Council.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Chile) said that his country followed from year to year the development of the activities of the Organisation, not only because Chile was particularly active in that field, but also because of the importance that the implementation of its directives held for the improvement of social and labour conditions in the world. It was hoped that all the proposals in the Report would be fully implemented.

The Report reflected closely the new tendencies that had appeared in the Organisation since Mr. Morse had been appointed Director-General, and was characterized throughout by the close adaptation of activities to the problems of the day.

At its thirty-second session the International Labour Conference had suggested the preparation of a comprehensive report on unemployment and had requested that the Organisation should co-operate with the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned, in the analysis of employment problems and in the formulation of recommendations. That report had been published under the title "Action against Unemployment" and had proved useful in the discussions at the Conference which had recently taken place. The Organisation had fully carried out the provisions of what all must agree was an extremely important resolution. The Organisation had also carried out studies on all problems relating to shortage of manpower. Increased production was often dependent on additional manpower, which was sometimes not available, or not immediately available, owing to the need for special training; that problem therefore was of particular importance.

The countries of Latin America would all join in welcoming the establishment of the International Labour Office at Sao Paulo. Its activities would help particularly towards the modernising of the methods used by the various national employment offices, particularly in the field of statistical methods. It only remained to be hoped that the work of the said office would so adapt itself to the local aspects and special characteristics of problems in Latin America that the results would be highly profitable. The use of expert South American staff would indisputably contribute to better results.

The Organisation had also used a regional approach to the problems of migration. The Preliminary Conference on Migration held the previous April had shown concrete results, and it was gratifying to note that a general conference on the problem might soon be called. He also noted with approval the fund which had been placed by interested countries at the disposal of the Organisation for operational work in this field. The Organisation had shown its will to co-operate with other organizations concerned in the problem of migration, a problem in which co-operation was particularly important because of its close connections with related social and economic questions.

The social security legislation of Chile was extremely progressive and the

work of the Organisation in that field was always followed with interest in his country. There the proposed revision of all present conventions on that matter would be welcomed. In order to carry out that work, the Governing Body of the Organisation had re-organized the former Correspondence Committee on Social Security as a Committee of Social Security Experts, which had already held one meeting with a view to drawing up a draft questionnaire on the minimum aims and standards of social security in every country.

The Report made no mention of the renewal of the activities of the Inter-American Committee on Social Security, which, the Chilean delegation understood, was acting as an intermediary between various Latin American Governments and the International Labour Office. The Organisation should intensify its regional activity in the matter and profit from the work of that body in the establishment of which it had taken part and to whose work it had contributed considerable technical and financial aid.

Chile had noted with marked interest the establishment by the International Labour Office of a Fact-finding and Conciliation Commission on Freedom of Association, which would continue the work already accomplished in that field by the Economic and Social Council since 1948. The Commission was now fully established and it was to be hoped it would begin work during the current year. The Government of Chile had learnt that certain governments and institutions had criticized the establishment of that Commission from various angles, querying not only its legality, but also the very nature of its functions.

The Chilean delegation protested against such accusations and hoped that nothing would hamper the working of a legally constituted organization, the membership of which, drawn from every continent, constituted the best guarantee of its responsibility, impartiality and high standard of knowledge and experience.

From a study of the Organisation's report, it could be inferred that the Economic and Social Council would take cognizance only of those reports of the Fact-finding and Conciliation Commission which referred to States Members of the United Nations not Members of the International Labour Organisation.

/The Chilean

The Chilean delegation believed that, although the appropriate resolution of the Council at its ninth session made no specific mention of the point, its spirit implied that the Council should take cognizance of every report, without exception. On that point, it would be glad to hear the opinion of the representative of ILO.

The Chilean delegation congratulated the Organisation on the considerable extension of its activities in regard to aid to Member States. That aid has been fourfold: the sending of consultative missions; the supply of information; the establishment of a programme of fellowships; and the share taken by the Organisation in the increased programme of technical assistance to under-developed countries.

The Chilean delegation attached special importance to the programme of fellowships established by the Governing Body of the Organisation, which it congratulated on its initiative in that respect. It hoped that, so far as resources and circumstances allowed, the programme would be continued and extended in the future.

2. ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN announced that he could not be present at the next meeting, and invited nominations for a Vice-Chairman.

Mr. ROSEMAN (United States of America) nominated Mr. Martinho (Brazil).

Mr. VANISTENDAELE (Belgium) and Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Chile) supported the nomination.

Mr. MURTINHO (Brazil) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.
