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AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

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ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

UNRESTRICTED

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

Third Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING

Lake Success, New York
Wednesday, 4 May 1948 at 2:30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. H. MARSHALL (Canada)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. P. C. MAHALANOBIS (India)
Rapporteur: Mr. S. A. RICE (United States of America)

Mr. D. K. LIEU (China)
Mr. G. DARMOIS (France)
Mr. Ph. J. IDENBURG (Netherlands)
Mr. E. PETERSEN (Norway)
Mr. S. BILKUR (Turkey)
Mr. V. A. RABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)
Mr. T. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. H. CAMPION (United Kingdom)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mr. R. M. WOODBURY (International Labour Organization)
Mr. R. HOFMAN (United Nations Educational, Social
and Cultural Organization)
Mr. K. STOWMAN (World Health Organization)

Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Mr. L. TEFER (American Federation of Labor)

Secretariat:

MAY 20 1948

Mr. W. R. LEONARD (Representing the Assistant Secretary-
General in charge of Economic Affairs)
Mr. W. J. BRUCE (Secretary of the Commission)

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CONSIDERATION OF ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA - AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATION IN STATISTICS (Documents E/CN.3/43 and E/CN.3/43 Add.1)

Mr. RICE (United States of America) drew the Commission's attention to a cablegram which had been received from UNESCO concerning the prospect of support by that Organization for the proposed programme for education in statistics, which read as follows:

"UNESCO WILLING IF REQUESTED CONSIDER SUPERVISE WITH COLLABORATION INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE PROGRAMME STATISTICAL EDUCATION. CONSIDER TOTAL COST SHOULD BE DIVIDED PROPORTIONATELY BETWEEN UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS. UNESCO PARTICIPATION CONTINGENT APPROVAL NEXT GENERAL CONFERENCE."

In his opinion, it was a very satisfactory reply and a hopeful augury that a constructive programme involving UNESCO participation could be developed.

The only issue about which there had been no general agreement in the Commission had been the sponsorship of the programme. The original proposal put forward by the International Statistical Institute had called for a programme to be arranged by the United Nations through action of the Economic and Social Council. The alternative later submitted by the United States delegation had suggested that the arrangements and sponsorship should be made by UNESCO at the request of the Council.

In the light of the cablegram from UNESCO, Mr. Rice wished to suggest an alternative action by the Commission which, in accordance with the proposal of UNESCO, would leave open the question of the precise arrangements to be made. The proposed amended resolution would read as follows:

"THE ECONOMIC

"THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Recognizing that a world-wide shortage of adequately trained statisticians is impeding the development of statistics throughout the world and is adversely affecting the ability of many national governments to supply ^{information} to the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, required by them to further the economic and social objectives of the United Nations Charter, and believing that an international programme for education and training in statistics should be formulated and implemented as soon as possible,

"RECOMMENDS:

- "(1) That the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, other interested Specialized Agencies, the International Statistical Institute, and other appropriate organizations, arrange for preparation of a plan to formulate and implement an international programme for education and training in statistics.
- (2) That such a plan take into account the views expressed by the Statistical Commission and those contained in a communication on this subject addressed to the Commission by the International Statistical Institute through its President (E/CN.3/43).
- "(3) That the Secretary-General submit as early as possible a report to the Economic and Social Council which shall include definite proposals with respect to the organization of the programme."

Should the resolution be adopted, Mr. Rice hoped that a report by the Secretary-General, if called for by the Council at its meeting in July 1948, might be made directly to the Council at its meeting early in 1949, without the necessity of its being referred again to the Statistical Commission.

The CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention to the following telegram which had been received from Mr. Taeuber of FAO:

"WE SUPPORT NEED FOR STATISTICAL EDUCATION AS OUTLINED
IN MR. RICE'S MEMORANDUM. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH TRAINING
PROGRAMMES SO FAR EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR SUCH BASIC
TRAINING ON THE OBJECTIVES SET FORTH."

With regard to the resolution put forward by the United States representative, Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom) pointed out that the first section asked for an exploration of the technical plan. The second part took into account the views which had been expressed by the Commission. The third suggestion was that the Secretary-General should submit to the Economic and Social Council in January 1949, concrete proposals for action by the Council without reference back to the Commission. He was anxious to know whether that would mean that the exploration of the work to be done would cover the whole programme for education and training in statistics for a number of years.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) said that his proposal could mean that, though it did not necessarily do so. The original proposal had contemplated a preliminary survey which would develop into a plan which might have as its result a more permanent programme. If it were possible to speed up the time-schedule, as a result of a report by the Secretary-General to the Council, a more permanent programme might be initiated at an earlier period.

/Should the

Should conditions prove to be too complicated, it might be wiser to revert to the proposal calling for further exploration by ISI, but in that respect, he was prepared to defer to the judgment of the Secretary-General.

Mr. IDENBURG (Netherlands): pointed out that the new United States resolution no longer contained the idea that ISI was the appropriate body to be assigned to undertake the proposed programme. He asked if it was the intention to defer recommendation as to the central body to execute the plan, or could definite suggestions be included in the present draft.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) said that he had had no thought of either minimizing the role of ISI or of deferring unnecessarily a concrete recommendation. However, many organizations were interested in the programme and should in some way be associated with the project.

Paragraph 2 of the proposed resolution included a statement to the effect that the views of the Statistical Commission and those contained in the communication on the subject from ISI, would be taken into consideration.

The Commission was now in the process of expressing its views.

Mr. DARMOIS (France) agreed that the question before the Commission was an urgent one, but felt that it would be dangerous to attempt to carry out such important work in too great haste. Organizations did exist which could provide statisticians at the present time. In his opinion, it would be to the advantage of the Commission to scrutinize the general structure of the plan very carefully.

Mr. BILKUR (Turkey) emphasized the necessity to improve national statistics, without which it would be impossible to further the economic and social objectives of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations Statistical Office had been given the function of collecting data from all countries, but in respect of the less developed countries that was particularly difficult.

/The adoption

The adoption of the United States resolution would lead to long-term benefits, but something further was needed which would provide a more direct solution to the problem. He suggested the creation of a pool of ten or fifteen professional statisticians with an administrative as well as a technical background, to whom could be assigned for study, the various geographical areas of the world. The countries of the Middle East would greatly appreciate such a suggestion being transmitted to the Secretary-General. It would have the effect of increasing and improving the statistical information at headquarters and also would encourage governments to make larger expenditures for statistical work.

Mr. STOWMAN (World Health Organization) expressed the view that the question of the expenses of the proposed programme should be carefully studied before the various Specialized Agencies were approached on the subject. A large item of the WHO budget had been assigned to fellowships, but during the past year, of two hundred and forty-five fellows, only four had specialized in statistical work. It was not that the Organization did not consider public health statistics of importance, but that the question of preliminary training was not its specific function. Until the expenses of the proposed programme had been carefully calculated, therefore, he would have to restrict himself to stating what the policy of WHO had been hitherto.

Mr. RABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) supported the remarks of the WHO representative. It would be necessary to have information on the financial aspect of the proposed programme before an adequate solution to the problem could be worked out.

In reply to the CHAIRMAN, Mr. DARMOIS (France) repeated that he had no new proposal to make, but that the United States resolution contemplated a too hasty procedure.

/Mr. MAHALANOBIS

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) supported the point of view expressed by the French representative. During the many years in which he had been associated with efforts to organize projects for statistical training, he had come to the conclusion that time was needed to organize such work, even within the boundaries of one country. In this connection, he drew attention to the attempts of the Royal Statistical Society to arrange examinations, diplomas and training for statistical work.

The wording of the first paragraph of the resolution implied that it was a plan for a programme for education in statistics. With the French representative, he felt that there was danger in devising a plan without first knowing what work was being carried out in the various countries of the world. Such information could not be gathered from national statistical office only; non-governmental organizations would have to be consulted. On the whole, it would be desirable for the Statistical Commission to have an opportunity to study the plan for the proposed programme.

To meet the views of the Indian representative, Mr. RICE (United States of America) suggested that the phrase "to formulate and implement" ^{the} should be deleted and the words "for/formulation and implementation" should be substituted in the first paragraph of his resolution. He explained that the plan would be the machinery by way of which the proposed programme could be carried out.

In his opinion, the views of the French and USSR representatives were antithetical. It would not be possible to calculate the exact cost of such a programme and yet at the same time, to proceed with the work slowly and cautiously. One could not allocate expenses until one knew the exact details of the plan to be developed. The work was now in its preliminary stages and unlike the representative of France, he felt that it would be profitable not to refer the Secretary-General's report back to the Statistical Commission before it was considered by the Economic and Social Council.

/Mr. RICE

Mr. RICE (United States of America) said that the resolution, if adopted, would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its next session in July, the latter referring it to the Secretary-General with a request that he should report back to the Council. The suggestion was that the report should go to the Council without being referred back to the Statistical Commission.

Mr. BRUCE (Secretary of the Commission) thought that the proposal that the Secretary-General should report back directly to the Economic and Social Council was, in the opinion of the Secretariat, unlikely to be accepted by the Council. The latter would consider that the proposed programme should be evaluated by the technicians rather than by the Council itself, and would therefore probably recommend that the report should be referred back to the Statistical Commission.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) stated that there was nothing in his resolution which determined whether it should go to the Council directly or through the Statistical Commission. He had thought that the plan might be submitted to the Economic and Social Council during its January session.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom) said that the question of the financial arrangements for the proposed plan was an important point which required consideration. The representative of the United States had not only included the question of education, but also of training. Mr. Campion wished to know whether the intention was that the whole scheme of FAO training should be transferred to the proposed programme. The third part of Mr. Rice's resolution left the question open as to when the proposal should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council. Mr. Rice had suggested that it should be done at the January session of the Council, but in Mr. Campion's opinion it would be inadvisable for

/the proposal

the proposal to be submitted to the Council without having been referred back to the Statistical Commission for study. Neither the method of implementation nor the financial arrangements were as much the concern of the Commission as the programme itself. Without the expert advice of the members of the Statistical Commission, the Economic and Social Council might adopt a resolution which had not been formulated in detail and did not fully cover the needs of the proposed programme.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) said that he did not object to including in point 3 of his resolution a definite statement to the effect that the report should be submitted to the Statistical Commission, or to the Economic and Social Council, /through the Statistical Commission.

Mr. LIEU (China) supported the view that the plan should be submitted through the Commission. He also considered it necessary that the Secretary-General should get in touch with the corresponding authorities in different countries to ascertain what plans they had already put into practice, particularly countries which needed statistical training, and where different conditions and degrees of education existed. He supported the proposal submitted by the United States representative, but wished to raise a few points which particularly concerned his country.

In China, as in a great many countries, the statistical education had not reached a high degree of development. There were a number of colleges giving courses in statistical training, but the problem in his country was that not enough people were taking up those special studies. If any educational plan was to be carried out by the United Nations, UNESCO, or any other international body, the question of language difficulties would have to be taken into consideration. Foreign experts sent

/to China

to China to give training in statistics, would be faced with the language barrier, and they would have to work through interpreters. To simplify matters, he suggested that pamphlets should be printed in Chinese summarizing the latest developments in statistical training.

With regard to the taking of population censuses, Chinese experts would have to be trained in the technique of collecting census statistics, and in that connexion, the foreign experts would also be faced with the fact that Chinese people as a whole were unaccustomed to supplying data for statistical purposes. Mr. Lieu suggested that any proposed international organization should take into consideration the points he had raised. Reference could be made to them in the proposed resolution, or the Secretary-General might be asked to take note of the views he had expressed.

Mr. LEONARD (Representing the Secretary-General) wished to know whether the Commission agreed that the two questions raised in the UNESCO telegram, if approved, could be regarded by the Secretariat as the terms of reference for the report.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) wished to clarify that his proposal was merely a plan for a programme and not the programme itself. The Secretary-General was not being asked to develop a plan for an educational programme, but merely to make arrangements in order that some organization might undertake the development of such a plan. He had hoped that the International Statistical Institute would be given that responsibility. The plan that the Secretary-General would present in his report to the Council, would be administrative in character. The Statistical Commission could review, with other organizations, the administrative arrangements which the Secretary-General proposed.

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There was a plan before the Commission in the first document but the Secretary-General should also consider other factors, including the suggestions from UNESCO, and submit his own ideas on the subject.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) said that if the question was simply one of machinery for the formulation of the plan, the matter should be left entirely in the hands of the Secretary-General, with a request that he should recommend action which should be taken.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom) said that the United States resolution should cover as fully as possible the question of the educational programme, and should also determine the procedure by which the question would come before the Commission at its next meeting. The Secretary-General's report, after consulting the Specialized Agencies and other bodies concerned, should specify how the programme was to be carried out.

The question of the financing of the proposed programme had also to be considered. If the expenditure involved was large, national governments should generally be expected to bear the cost. Before requesting the Secretary-General to take up the question of implementation, the members of the Commission should have a clear understanding as to the exact purpose of the programme.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) thought that the United States proposal could be divided into two stages;

- 1) preparation of a programme for educational training;
- 2) implementation of that programme.

The first stage required clarification, and a suggestion had been made to form a group whose duty would be the preparation of the machinery to deal with the question. The Secretary-General should be requested to make a preliminary survey in order to inform the Statistical Commission,
/or the Economic

or the Economic and Social Council, how such a programme could best be formulated. With regard to the programme itself, Mr. Mahalanobis agreed with the United Kingdom representative, that the matter should be dealt with by the Statistical Commission.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) pointed out that the original proposal contained a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council to request the International Statistical Institute, in collaboration with UNESCO and other agencies, to formulate and organize an international programme for education and training in statistics. The new proposal recommended that the Economic and Social Council should receive the advice of the Statistical Commission before taking any action. Apart from the fact that it did not have the necessary resources, the Institute could not develop a full programme because it had not been invited by the United Nations to do so, and could not volunteer its services without receiving such an invitation. Mr. Rice thought that the Institute would undertake to carry out the task if it had to bear only part of the cost.

After an exchange of views, the Commission agreed that guidance would be sought from the Secretary-General and the Economic and Social Council on the nature of the organization that would probably have to be established.

The CHAIRMAN invited comments as to what would be the next step for the Commission to take, on the assumption that the Economic and Social Council would give a favourable decision on the organization to be set up.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) considered that the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, after the latter had studied the question with various interested bodies

bodies, would adopt a resolution making certain requests for their participation in the programme. When an understanding had been reached on the financial arrangements to be made, the International Statistical Institute could be requested **to proceed with the development** of the programme. As an indication of the kind of procedure which might appropriately be adopted, the original resolution had suggested that the International Statistical Institute should create a commission of its own, made up of competent scholars in the field. That commission would ascertain the definite requirements of the programme, and collect information about educational facilities and financial resources in different countries. That programme would be referred back to the Statistical Commission for review.

The redrafted text of the United States resolution was introduced on the motion of the UNITED KINGDOM representative, and was seconded by the representative of the UNITED STATES. The revised text read as follows:

"THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL,

"recognizing that a world-wide shortage of adequately educated and trained statisticians is impeding the development of statistics throughout the world and is adversely affecting the ability of many national governments to supply information to the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies, and other inter-governmental organizations, required by them to further the economic and social objectives of the United Nations Charter; and

"believing that an international programme for education and training in statistics should be formulated and implemented as soon as possible;

"RECOMMENDS

"RECOMMENDS

"(i) that the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, other interested Specialized Agencies, the International Statistical Institute, and other appropriate international organizations, arrange (a) for a survey of the needs for education and training in statistics and for the formulation of an international programme to meet those needs; (b) for a report on the means by which such a programme may be put into effect.

"(ii) in such consultation the Secretary-General should take into account the views expressed by the Statistical Commission and those contained in a communication on this subject addressed to the Commission by the President of the International Statistical Institute (E/CN.3/43).

"(iii) that the Secretary-General should submit to the Fourth Session of the Statistical Commission a survey and report recommended in paragraph (i) above, prior to further recommendations by the Commission to the Council on this matter."

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Mr. LEONARD (Representing the Assistant Secretary-General) said that the financial implications of the proposed programme would appear in an annex prepared by the Secretariat, which would be circulated among the members together with the report, at the next meeting of the Commission.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) referred to the question of field service staff in the United Nations, which required further discussion. In the report of the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling, there was a specific request that those services should be furnished as soon as
/possible.

possible. Arrangements should be made for occasional visits by competent professional statisticians to the various countries which were in need of expert advice.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) said that on the basis of the report of the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling, which the Commission had approved, the draft which would be submitted to the Statistical Commission supported the idea of furnishing field services.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) stated that two points in the recommendations of the Sub-Commission's report dealing with the question of a permanent staff of experts would take time to develop and would entail considerable expenditure. The Sub-Commission considered that it should be possible to arrange for occasional visits of experts, which did not necessarily have to be financed by the United Nations. The suggestion of the Sub-Commission was that the United Nations should act as a "clearing house" and give the necessary facilities.

The CHAIRMAN thought that if a government needed the services of an expert, and was willing to defray the expense of his visit to the country, he felt sure that the Secretariat would be able to make those services available.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) said that he doubted whether the Commission was at a stage when it could anticipate any further action, apart from that which had been envisaged in the draft.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.