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Chairman: Mrs. Helvi SIPILÄ (Finland).

AGENDA ITEM 53

World social situation: report of the Secretary-General
(continued) (A/8380, A/8403, chap. XV, sect. A; A/C.3/XXVI/CRP.1, E/CN.5/456, E/CN.5/456/Add.1 and Corr.1, Add.2 to 4, Add.5 and Corr.1, Add.6 and 7, Add.8 and Corr.1, Add.9 to 16)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. KANGWA (Zambia) said that the 1970 Report on the World Social Situation deserved careful study, particularly since it could facilitate the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.
2. It had not proved possible to narrow the gap between the developed and the developing countries in the past few years and the developed countries, although talking of disarmament, were continuing to engage in the arms race at the expense of the well-being of millions of people who were living in poverty and ignorance. Words must now be transformed into deeds and the United Nations could play a particularly effective role in that connexion as an agency for co-ordinating the actions of all nations. The developed countries had a moral obligation to help the developing ones, since the existing social situation in the majority of the latter unquestionably had its roots in the historical circumstances of colonial domination. That was conspicuously evident in Zambia, where for 75 years a foreign nation had extracted enormous wealth without doing anything to promote the social development of the local population. Since the attainment of independence the national Government had striven to promote social development for the benefit of the entire population and had accordingly introduced State participation in all major industries with a view to meeting the expenses entailed by free education, free health services and other social benefits considered necessary for the well-being of the inhabitants.
3. The imbalance in the world social situation called for closer co-operation among the developing countries themselves and an effort on the part of all States Members of the United Nations to attain the goals set forth in the Organization's Charter.
4. Mrs. GORBACHEVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) observed that most delegations attached great importance to the question of the world social situation and considered that it was not enough that the relevant report should be studied by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, for in those bodies, as everyone was aware, not all States were represented.
5. A study of the report showed that, despite the efforts made, the situation in the developing and capitalist countries had scarcely improved and had even deteriorated in some respects. Such problems as unemployment, poverty, disease, lack of housing and unequal distribution of wealth were still acute in those countries. Yet the report did not indicate that the basic causes of the deplorable situation in the developing countries were the consequences of colonialism and the neo-colonialist policy of the Western Powers.
6. It was stated in chapter I of the report (E/CN.5/456/Add.1 and Corr.1) that, in the absence of major concessions from the developed regions, the developing Asian countries were suffering from the instability of the world market for primary products. As everyone was aware, the socialist countries had always called for the stabilization of prices, while the imperialist Powers had opposed such stabilization in every possible way. There, as in other instances, it could be seen that the report sought to place the capitalist countries, former colonial Powers which had been enriching themselves for centuries by exploiting other nations, in the same position as the socialist countries, which were providing many-sided assistance to the nations struggling to win their freedom and independence.
7. It was also indicated in chapter I that United States intervention in South-east Asia was practically a blessing. The basis for that assertion was the inflow of capital to certain countries in that region. But the incalculable human sufferings which the militaristic imperialism of the United States had visited upon the peoples of that region should never be forgotten. Unquestionably peace was the basic condition for social progress. But the report did not even mention that the war in Indo-China, Israel's aggression against the Arab countries, Portugal's colonial war against Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) and the racist policy of the Republic of South Africa and of the Southern Rhodesian régime were having the most dire effect on the situation of the peoples of those areas.
8. There were repeated references in the report to rural development and the importance of the "green revolution" was exaggerated while agrarian reform, which was of paramount importance if there was to be any real progress in rural areas, was neglected. In most cases the reason why the present situation was being perpetuated was that Governments lacked the will to carry out the far-reaching changes in rural areas necessary to enable the land to be transferred to its legitimate owners, the workers, and agriculture to be conducted on a co-operative basis. The report likewise failed to mention the experience gained

along those lines by such countries as the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Mongolian People's Republic.

9. In chapter VI, on the situation in Western Europe (E/CN.5/456/Add.6), it was noted that as the decade of the 1970s began the countries of the region were entering upon a critical period of social change. But the general picture of peace and well-being in the area was illusory. There were certain obvious contradictions in the chapter. On the one hand it was stated that there were striking disparities in income distribution, and on the other hand it was asserted that the increase in the gross national product of the countries had favourably affected the material levels of living of all strata of the population. It was indicated in the report that a large number of people in Western Europe lived in poverty, but at the same time it was stated that poverty was only a relative concept and that poverty properly so-called did not exist in the societies of Western Europe. The report thus sought to convey the impression that calm and well-being prevailed in capitalist society, whereas in reality it was a well-known fact that there were many profound problems and contradictions inherent in the system.

10. It was asserted further on in the same report that for millions of workers the living-room with its television receiver had replaced the union hall and the political club and that the working class was satisfied and had lost its revolutionary character. That was a falsification and a distortion of the facts, for the working class had always been and would always be the spearhead of social progress. That was demonstrated by the developments in recent years in which the working class had shown itself to be an anti-monopolist revolutionary force, particularly in countries such as France and Italy. In England, the tensions generated by the class struggle had become so great that the situation could only be compared to that created by the general strike in 1926. The London newspaper *The Times* in its edition of 28 May 1971 had said that in the first four months of 1971 strikes in industry and services had cost England 9,950,000 man-days, whereas in the same period in the preceding year only 3,129,000 man-days had been lost.

11. In the United States, the protests of the workers against monopolies had assumed wide proportions; the struggle of the blacks to win their legitimate rights and of youth in its opposition to the war in Viet-Nam had given rise to an intense conflict.

12. The workers' organizations, particularly those affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions, were playing a significant and growing part in all recent class confrontations. The report spoke of the bureaucratization of the world trade union movement. Perhaps that was true of the leadership of certain trade unions, but even in the United States the trade union leaders had finally had to oppose President Nixon's anti-labour policy.

13. The United States representative had alluded at the 1831st meeting to the existing conflicts in the United States and had said that they contributed to the maintenance of a "free society"; he had referred to trade union protests and other protests taking place in the United States and had said that they were a characteristic manifestation

of democracy. But that democracy was a democracy in name only, and the facts showed that in the United States recourse was had all too frequently to the use of bayonets, tear gas and night sticks. An example was the detention in Washington in May 1971 of 13,000 persons protesting against the war in Viet-Nam. As for trade union freedom in the United States, she wished only to point out that *The New York Times* of 4 October 1971 had reported that President Nixon had on that date invoked the Taft-Hartley Act against striking dock workers.

14. There could be no question that the main cause of all those conflicts was private ownership of the means of production, which led inevitably to the exploitation of man by man.

15. Her delegation felt, as did that of Poland, that chapter V, on the socialist countries (E/CN.5/456/Add.5 and Corr.1), did not give due attention to the social progress achieved there thanks to the socialist system. It should be borne in mind that it had been socialism which, for the first time in history, had solved a great social problem, that of eliminating the exploiting classes and the causes of the exploitation of man by man. It should be stressed that improving the welfare of the population depended fundamentally on the development of the productive forces and on increases in productivity. The experience of the Byelorussian SSR was a case in point: between 1966 and 1970 its industrial output had increased by nearly 80 per cent and agricultural production on farms by 45 per cent. Those developments had made it possible to raise considerably the level of the material well-being of the workers and promote their cultural progress. By 1970 the national product had increased by 50 per cent over the figure for 1965, the real income of the population by 37 per cent and average wages by 31.6 per cent. The income in cash and kind of collective-farm workers had increased by 60 per cent. Remuneration for labour was the main, but not the only, source of income. A growing part in enhancing the well-being of the population was being played by social consumption funds, which were primarily used for maternal and child welfare, free education and medical services and care for the aged and disabled members of society.

16. In the school year 1970-1971 almost 2 million children, i.e. all children of school age, had attended school in Byelorussia. Some 286,000 young people had attended higher and specialized secondary educational establishments and almost 275,000 children had been in kindergartens. During the period of the current five-year plan, the transition to universal secondary education would be completed. The public health services available to the population were also increasing and improving year by year. In the past five years one fifth of the population of the Republic, or some 2 million people, had moved into new apartments or improved their living conditions in the housing they already occupied.

17. She hoped that in the preparation of the next report account would be taken not only of the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its fiftieth session but also of the comments made by many of the delegations in the Third Committee, especially those of the United Republic of Tanzania, Algeria, Mongolia and

Morocco. She also hoped that the report would stress that social conditions could improve only in an atmosphere of international peace and security. Colonialism, neocolonialism and racism had adverse repercussions on the social situation, especially in the developing countries. Furthermore, the social situation should be more closely related to economic development. More attention should be paid to problems of the class struggle in the capitalist countries and to the elimination of unemployment, racial discrimination and inequitable distribution. Lastly, the way in which the imperialist monopolies were impeding the progress of the developing countries should not be disregarded, and it was important to make wider use of the positive experience gained by various countries, particularly the socialist countries, in solving social problems.

18. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that there were no panaceas for social problems. Unlimited faith should not be placed in statistics, which were deceptive because their conclusions were based on averages and did not reflect the actual situation of each individual. The world social situation unquestionably presented a sombre picture, even in the richest countries. What were the reasons? The social situation depended directly on the economic situation, and the political situation in turn was largely the product of the economic situation.

19. Leaving aside the question of ideologies, most men everywhere aspired to material wealth and to power and glory. However, in the course of that vital process anarchy must be avoided. Society must be regulated by law, based on an ideology, whether religious or political. At the 1831st meeting, the United States representative had spoken of the freedom which existed in his country, but he had not mentioned the possible excesses, abuses of power or improper use of wealth. The fact had been overlooked that it was dangerous to amass knowledge unless it was used wisely. The advances of technology should not be applied for destructive purposes. The developing countries should be wary of blindly imitating the industrialized countries, because by so doing they ran the risk of being engulfed ultimately by the same evils.

20. The developing countries should take note of the great social ills from which the developed countries were suffering, such as the excessive use of sedatives and drugs. Although the inhabitants of those countries unquestionably enjoyed more material goods, they also suffered the evils inherent in consumer societies. The report gave statistics concerning the percentage of individuals holding doctor's degrees who were out of work. It was true that all children should receive higher education, but it must be recognized that they did not all have the necessary capacity to absorb it. The world needed more craftsmen, more manual workers, who had fallen into disregard during the years when intellectual accomplishment had been extolled. If a different course had been followed, the world would not have so many problems at the present time.

21. The United States representative had spoken of the standard of living, but he had not mentioned inflation. He had cited figures, but in absolute terms, figures had no meaning. There would be no social development as long as the masses continued to be exploited. For all those reasons youth, which could not accept the principles of the

previous generation, was rebelling. Young people felt confused and refused to go to war merely because the politicians so ordained. They were not prepared to believe in false patriotism or distorted nationalism. The world social situation was disastrous because man was not making proper use of the available resources. It was therefore essential that the developing countries should take note of the evils afflicting the wealthy countries and ensure that they did not fall heir to them. It was essential that they should preserve their tradition and institutions and that the concern for material wealth should not lead them into situations like those prevailing in the industrialized countries.

22. The report also spoke of freedom of information, which was confused with freedom to spread propaganda and pornography. For years efforts had been made to draft an international convention on freedom of information, an item to which an insufficient number of meetings had been allocated at the current session. Many were opposed to consideration of the item, and others proclaimed that freedom already prevailed in their countries. In that regard, he wished to reiterate that he was in favour of freedom but not of license.

23. The world social situation was disastrous: that was the result of two world wars and many other wars during the past 50 years. It was therefore not surprising that youth was protesting and was against war. Until the politicians of the world decided to spend less on arms and more on development, the world would continue to be in a catastrophic situation.

24. Mr. BALEWA (Nigeria) recalled that the Nigerian Commissioner for External Affairs, when addressing the General Assembly at its 1948th plenary meeting on 1 October 1971, had observed that the First United Nations Development Decade had not fully met the expectations of many States. The reasons for that were indicated in the *1970 Report on the World Social Situation*, which showed, for example, the rapid growth in the world population, which had increased by some 340 million since 1965. A considerable portion of that increase had taken place in the developing countries and had, unfortunately, not been accompanied by a rise in the standard of living. It was often said that the solution to the "population explosion" lay in family planning programmes, but although such programmes might help, it was a fact that few Governments, especially in countries with a high percentage of illiteracy among the population, could implement such programmes effectively. Education was therefore essential, because it was the most sure and effective way of breaking down the traditional barriers which stood in the way of social change. The developing countries were making efforts to deal with the situation, and a number of them, including Nigeria, had launched national development programmes aimed at speeding up their economic and social progress. Nigeria was allocating considerable sums for planned education to meet the country's future needs. Nevertheless, the developing countries were faced with tremendous obstacles in their course towards progress and found it difficult, for example, to implement their national development programmes because of the lack of sufficient technical resources and aid from the developed countries. His delegation did not believe that progress could be achieved through charity,

and, while recognizing the need to obtain equipment, expertise and capital from the developed countries, it believed that that should be done in a spirit of co-operation and for the benefit of both parties, in accordance with the objectives of the United Nations.

25. The trends revealed by the report were not encouraging, and the international community must take positive steps to combat them and to cope with such social evils as unemployment, drug abuse and air pollution. A change of attitude on the part of the developed countries was needed, and his delegation hoped that the encouraging signs of a change of attitude on various major political issues which seemed to characterize the beginning of the Second United Nations Development Decade would be extended to social problems because only then would it be possible to ensure a better world for the generations to come.

26. Mr. FASSOU (Guinea) said that as soon as his country had freed itself from French colonialism, it had established a popular democratic régime under which priority was given to the individual and efforts were made to promote the development of the human person in a climate of peace, social justice, security and progress. For Guinea, the way to exploit its natural wealth rationally for the exclusive benefit of its citizens was through non-capitalist development based on State monopoly. As a result of co-operation with friendly countries, that system had achieved very tangible results in the spheres of education, health, and the situation of workers, young people, women and the army.

27. Colonialism in education was characterized by the imparting of mediocre theoretical knowledge which was an imitation of the teaching in the metropolitan country, with a view to making the colonized strangers to their own country and culture. Since attaining independence, Guinea had instituted free compulsory education from the age of six to fourteen; between 1958 and 1970 there had been an increase from 5 to 65 per cent in the number of schoolchildren, who were then, according to their abilities, given a more thorough technical training, with a view to preparing the cadres necessary for progress. UNESCO had given much assistance to the people of Guinea in the promotion of literacy, taking the vernacular languages as the starting point.

28. The purpose of Guinea's first three-year plan had been to establish the infrastructure for public health, administration and education throughout the country, which French colonialism had failed to provide. Under that plan, which had been 90 per cent fulfilled, each of the 29 administrative regions had been provided with a hospital and each of the 210 districts with a maternity clinic. Medical care was free, and traditional popular remedies, developed and rationalized, also helped to improve the people's health.

29. Guinean workers, organized in committees for each production unit and in trade unions, under the direction of the National Confederation of Workers, enjoyed a social security system which was probably the most advanced in the region. Guinea's socialist régime had also mobilized and integrated women and young people into all aspects of national life. On the political plane, both young people and women were organized on the basis of the party structure. Women were active in the executive and legislative branches

of the government and in the local governments, functioning with great efficiency and a sense of responsibility. There were also many young people in responsible posts. The Guinean Government and the Democratic Party of Guinea were well aware that the country's future was in the hands of youth and that it had to be prepared for leadership.

30. The national army was not an army of conquest or aggression; it was made up exclusively of Guinean citizens whose purpose was to defend the country's security and territorial integrity. Guinean soldiers were militants in uniform and, as such, contributed to national economic development. They were organized into committees of the party, democratically elected, and enjoyed all the advantages of the civil service and social security.

31. There were no agrarian problems in Guinea; on the country's accession to independence the land had been distributed to those cultivating it and the farmers had been organized in co-operatives. The gradual mechanization of agriculture favoured rural development and avoided the problems of flight from the land.

32. Thus, Guinea had made great strides forward in its 13 years of independence. However, international imperialism was trying to disrupt that process of rapid and harmonious development. The social and economic progress of a people was incompatible with armed aggression, bombing and war. It was impossible to speak of the world social situation without giving due attention to the imperialist wars against the Arab, African and Asian peoples. Seventy-three per cent of the world population lived in developing countries and 56 per cent in Asia. Likewise, in that connexion the Third Committee could not ignore the fate of South-east Asia, where the war had taken on an endemic character.

33. Mrs. JOKA-BANGURA (Sierra Leone) said that the *1970 Report on the World Social Situation* provided a vantage point not only for evaluation of social change during the period under review but also for consideration of the social problems which remained to be dealt with during the Second Development Decade. It was to be hoped that the next report, to be produced in 1974, would serve as a guideline in assessing the progress made in the first years of the Decade.

34. As several delegations had observed, the report made no recommendations; to do so might perhaps have been too ambitious. However, it made certain observations that served to highlight the problems facing the developing and developed countries alike. One of those observations dealt with structural dualism; another called into question the effectiveness of political leaders and their responsiveness to people's needs. In the developed countries there appeared to be a crisis of confidence between the public authorities and certain segments of society, particularly the young.

35. The report had drawn two important conclusions: first, that resources necessary for the expansion of trade and international assistance could be realized from a drastic reduction of military expenditures; secondly, that dualism and inequality within countries must give way to equality in development. Many delegates agreed that the First Development Decade had been a failure, mainly because of

the emphasis placed on economic development at the expense of social development. The report itself brought out the relationship between those two aspects of development. For example, improved medical facilities, by reducing mortality rates and prolonging life expectancy, had confronted the developing countries with immense requirements for the improvement of facilities for education and training and for the development of employment opportunities. Again, recent technical progress in agriculture was likely to aggravate unemployment by reducing the need for agricultural labour. In the light of that relationship her delegation would support the suggestion that future reports on the world social situation should be submitted to the organ or organs that would be established to conduct a review and appraisal of the Second Development Decade.

36. In Sierra Leone, receipts from mineral exports had increased from 25 per cent of the total in the early fifties to more than 80 per cent. With the expansion of mining, there had been a noticeable manpower shift from agriculture which had resulted in grave problems for the agricultural economy, on which the nation's future development had to be based.

37. As mineral ores were non-self-reproducing assets, her Government had decided to take greater interest in the determination of policy in the mining sector. Accordingly, it was negotiating with companies to acquire a 51 per cent share of their capital. That system would safeguard private initiative in the day-to-day management of the enterprises; the State would only intervene on major issues of policy which might affect the well-being of the nation.

38. The staple food in Sierra Leone was rice, and it was hoped that with mechanization and the rational use of fertilizers the country would be self-sufficient by the 1972/1973 crop year. The Government was combating plant diseases and it intended to promote the diversification of agriculture, with the development of poultry farming and pig-breeding, with the related processing industries. Sierra Leone recognized the need for a change in land tenure systems and was studying possible solutions of that difficult problem; meanwhile, it had launched plans for agricultural development and had set up technical training institutes.

39. With regard to public health, there was a ten-year development plan for health care services, in connexion with which WHO provided the assistance of experts. The Government had continued its efforts against disease, and smallpox, for example, had been completely eradicated.

40. Attention had been given to the development of the basic health services and the training of medical staff. In that connexion a plan for a university centre for health sciences was under consideration, and with the assistance of WHO a feasibility study for that project had already been completed. Negotiations were also continuing regarding the offer of the Soviet Government to build four 500-bed hospitals.

41. With regard to housing, mention should be made of a pilot project which was to be implemented under the United Nations/FAO World Food Programme. The Government had also decided to give priority to the improvement of primary education and was increasing the number of primary school teachers. Likewise, progress had been made in the diversification of the secondary school curriculum to embrace vocational and technical subjects as well as agriculture. The Government had received 2.6 million leones from the International Development Association for a design and construction project for education. The Canadian Development Agency had also offered over half a million leones for teaching equipment.

42. Those development programmes were an important step in the right direction, but they would not by any means solve all the country's problems. Development required co-operation between States; in that connexion her Government had recently signed a cultural and technical agreement with Yugoslavia, designed to encourage collaboration between the two countries in the fields of education, science and culture as well as the press and information. An agreement had also been concluded with the Government of the Republic of Liberia for the promotion of trade and the development of industries, with the over-all aim of fostering economic co-operation in West Africa. As Sierra Leone's Minister for External Affairs had said at the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly (1847th plenary meeting), the failure of the First Development Decade gave urgency to the need for a more positive approach for the Second Decade. Those were the needs not only of the developing countries but of all mankind and the international community should respond to that appeal. That would require co-operation, not only between rich and poor countries, but among the developing countries themselves, as the President of Sierra Leone, Mr. Siaka Stevens, had stated.

43. The CHAIRMAN announced that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions on the item under consideration had been extended to 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 October.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.