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President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 6

Mobilization of public opinion in developed and developing countries regarding the United Nations Development Decade (continued) (E/4784 and Add.1/Rev.1, E/L.1303)

1. Mr. KARIM (Pakistan) expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General for the excellent report (E/4784) before the Council. In analysing that document, his delegation had been struck by three fundamental concepts regarding the mobilization of public opinion with a view to the attainment of the goals of the Second United Nations Development Decade. Those concepts were stated in paragraphs 4, 13 and 19 of the report.

2. It was stated in paragraph 4 that "neither policy-makers nor public opinion yet appear to have arrived at a full realization of the issues which are at stake in so far as development aid is concerned". While his delegation had no intention of reopening the debate on the question of development aid, it could not fail to note the lack of political will on the part of the developed countries with regard to aid. The disillusion and distrust which was affecting both developed and developing countries were due partly to the subject's lack of newness and the lack of interest in it. It was therefore essential to mobilize public opinion in order to dispel that attitude, which might otherwise, in the long term, lead countries to take refuge in a disastrous form of self-reliance.

3. With regard to paragraph 13, which stated that, although every day more coverage was devoted by information media to development questions, there had been little improvement in the climate of opinion, it should be recalled that the main difficulty arose from the fact that development was not an instantaneous process, which could be communicated by means of facile slogans, but a long-term evolution involving difficult concepts. That was why the mobilization of public opinion depended directly on Governments. In that connexion, he cited paragraph 105 of the report of the Committee for Development Planning¹ from which it was clear that Governments must convince citizens of their responsibility in the war against poverty and must persuade them to accept a well-conceived strategy for world development.

4. During the debates of its fourth session, the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade had stressed that the assistance efforts of the developing countries should not depend solely on the

effective mobilization of public opinion. Their leaders must galvanize public opinion, not rely upon it for guidance. A study made the previous year by the University of Michigan showed that public opinion was in favour of development aid, although many people had a highly exaggerated idea of its cost. It therefore seemed likely that support for aid to developing countries could be increased considerably if the public were better informed.

5. Lastly, paragraph 19 of the report stated that the attention of the public could be captured more easily if it was possible to present it with concrete evidence of a determination by Governments to rededicate themselves to the problems of development. That was, in his opinion, an essential point. In the Preparatory Committee and in the Second Committee many conflicting views had been expressed concerning the importance of mobilizing public opinion. Some delegations had felt that such mobilization would serve no purpose while major issues remained unresolved and that it might merely reduce the development strategy to a set of hollow formulas. During the fifth session of the Preparatory Committee some progress had been made towards the definition of a strategy. The more definite the over-all strategy, the easier it would be to arouse the enthusiasm and support of public opinion, and the mobilization of public opinion was, unquestionably, an important component of the international development strategy.

6. With regard to the question of the launching of the Development Decade, his delegation endorsed the views of the Norwegian representative (1661st meeting) and considered that the proclamation referred to in the report was indeed the international strategy itself and not a separate declaration.

7. Mr. PRAGUE (France) said that in a democracy public opinion was a reality of which the Government was the reflection, and a means of action which the Government could and should utilize. The problem of development and development aid was, precisely, an area in which the Government should influence public opinion, because with regard to economic problems as a whole, the ignorance of the public was undoubtedly vast and its interest rarely spontaneous.

8. While efforts to mobilize and inform public opinion could not take the place of strategy, they were nevertheless essential for the success of the Second Development Decade. In the case of the Governments of industrialized countries, whose contribution to development was not all that it should be, the publicity work should be a demonstration of their political dedication. The mobilization of public opinion was, of course, a national affair, but international organizations could play an important part by lending their support.

¹ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 7 and Corr. 1.

9. The reports E/4784 and E/4784/Add.1/Rev.1 showed a very clear awareness of the objectives to be pursued and the methods to be used, and his delegation was duly gratified. It believed, however, that it was not enough just to develop information dissemination activities; the quality of the information provided must also be improved. The Centre for Economic and Social Information, for example, should not confine itself to providing technical documentation, but should try to provide documentation suited to the needs of users. Thus, audience categories should be diversified and more contacts developed with the potential reading public so as to better evaluate the various needs.

10. His delegation would like further details concerning the progress of the reforms referred to in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report (E/4784) and the state of relations between the Centre for Economic and Social Information and the United Nations information centres in different countries. It would also like to have further information concerning the target audience data bank mentioned in paragraph 17. His delegation still had some doubts regarding the symposia, visits and field trips referred to in paragraphs 9 to 14 of the report, because it felt that the results of such projects were rarely in proportion with the cost.

11. With regard to his country's effort in the field of information, he reminded the Council that French opinion had long been aware of the problem of development. France was nevertheless receptive to the suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report and was considering methods of establishing a national organization for the Second Development Decade and also the possibility of suggesting to the Head of State or to the Prime Minister that he should broadcast a message to the people to mark the launching of the Development Decade.

12. His delegation had no objection to the agenda item relating to the Second United Nations Development Decade being considered at the beginning of the General Assembly session so that the proclamation of the Development Decade would coincide with the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

13. Mr. SPENCER (Observer for Canada) thanked the Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Information for his comments in introducing the interesting and constructive documents before the Council. In regard to the Director's remarks concerning the meeting held in Canada in February to discuss the possibility of setting up national development commissions, his Government was pleased that Canadian officials had been able to participate in the meeting; the outline of a possible structure for such a commission, which had been drawn up at the meeting, was now under active and sympathetic consideration by the Canadian Government.

14. He wished to emphasize the usefulness of efforts to mobilize public opinion. In some important countries and in some key areas of development, the successful mobilization of public opinion could be an essential factor in the success of the Development Decade and, in some cases, modest sums spent on public relations might bring enormous returns.

15. He noted that the concept of the Second United Nations Development Decade should not be equated with

the strategy being drawn up for it. The Council was considering the mobilization of public opinion for the Second Development Decade and not just for the strategy. The strategy provided the framework within which the various activities were to be carried out, whereas the Second Development Decade represented ten years of determined efforts by both developed and developing countries.

16. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that there were two aspects to the item under discussion: the first, the mobilization of public opinion *per se*, had been considered by the General Assembly; the second, the mobilization of public opinion for the Second United Nations Development Decade, had been dealt with by the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade at its fourth and fifth sessions, and the Committee had decided that the mobilization of public opinion should be a component of the strategy for development.

17. While the United Nations played an essential role in collecting and disseminating information, the decisions relating to the mobilization of public opinion should be taken at the government level. Commenting on the need and importance of mobilizing public opinion both in the rich countries and the disadvantaged countries, he emphasized the influence that could be brought to bear to that end by political and religious leaders and by internationally-renowned figures. The establishment of national agencies, commissions or councils was another way of interesting the whole population in development action. An attempt should be made to reach all social classes and to create a collective awareness. In that connexion, he felt that town-twinning was an excellent means of reaching the masses of the people. Tunisia had always attached a great deal of importance to the activities of the United Towns Organization (*Fédération mondiale des villes jumelées*) and hoped that they would continue to expand. He was also pleased to note that his country had been host to a meeting organized by the Centre for Economic and Social Information and he recalled that a group of journalists had made a trip to Tunisia to study daily life in a developing country. He hoped that such initiatives would persuade the press to give more space to development problems and direct the attention of readers to those problems.

18. In his view, it was not possible to mobilize public opinion for the Second Development Decade without having a goal. That goal should be provided by the strategy for development. Consequently, agreement must be reached on the objectives to be sought within the framework of that strategy. If it could not be reached, there would be no point in mobilizing public opinion. Therefore, existing differences of opinion on the means of achieving a common goal, which threatened to slow up or stave off the process of development, should be overcome in a constructive spirit.

19. He then introduced a draft resolution sponsored by Brazil, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Pakistan, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia (E/L.1303).

20. Mr. NAITO (Japan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the strengthening of measures to inform the public in developed and developing countries

about the Second United Nations Development Decade, and that Japan had taken or planned to take various steps to mobilize public opinion in that country. A number of Government publications devoted a great deal of space to the problems of the developing countries. In addition, a number of Ministries published magazines which gave accounts of the proceedings of the main conferences dealing with development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was planning to issue a special edition of its monthly magazine in connexion with the launching of the Second United Nations Development Decade, about which it had already published and circulated widely a series of pamphlets. Summaries, in Japanese, of the three main reports on the development question, namely, the Pearson,² Jackson³ and Tinbergen⁴ reports, had been given to the press and other interested parties. The Japanese Government was also using radio and television in its information campaign. Efforts to mobilize public opinion had also been made by private institutions, such as universities and the United Nations Association of Japan, as well as other associations which organized discussions and conferences. Finally, the theme of the United Nations pavilion at the World Exposition (Expo '70) at Osaka was "development through co-operation". In view of those activities and efforts, the Japanese Government hoped that the question put by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report (E/4784) had been satisfactorily answered.

21. The Secretary-General's report included a number of excellent suggestions and stressed the value of exchanges of young people, scholars and journalists between developed and developing countries. Since the United Nations did not have the resources to undertake a very ambitious programme, those activities should be pursued by public relations work, cultural exchange or technical co-operation programmes launched by Governments. The United Nations could support those activities by facilitating the exchange of information.

22. His delegation was concerned, however, by the stress laid in the report on the problem of mobilizing public opinion in support of aid efforts by the developed countries. The development problem had come to be recognized not only as a problem of assistance, but as requiring an effort by most of the developing countries. Consequently, his delegation would have liked to see in the report a description of measures for mobilizing public opinion in the developing countries.

23. With regard to the national measures suggested in the addendum to the report (E/4784/Add.1/Rev.1), while he admitted that messages on the day of the launching of the Development Decade might be useful, he thought that the choice of the method to be used should be left to the national information services. On the international level, he believed that it would be desirable for the proclamation of the Second United Nations Development Decade to be made in conjunction with the celebration of the twenty-

fifth anniversary of the United Nations, but suggested that a final decision on the matter should be postponed until the forty-ninth session of the Council.

24. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) felt that the Council had digressed somewhat, and pointed out that the Secretary-General's report (E/4784) was concerned, on the one hand, with assistance to Governments of Member States for the mobilization of public opinion and the formulation of the development strategy and, on the other hand, with the efforts made by the Secretary-General to prepare an action programme. With regard to the first point, it must be noted that no Government had requested the help of the Centre for Economic and Social Information. No doubt, each Government planned to mobilize public opinion according to its own methods. With regard to the second point, the main topic of the report, his delegation would have liked more information about the collaboration given the Secretary-General by the specialized agencies, a question that had been mentioned in Council resolution 1357 (XLV).

25. The Secretary-General's report contained interesting suggestions and he appreciated the prudence with which the participation of youth in the development strategy had been dealt with. The implementation of the study trips mentioned in paragraph 14 would provide a clearer insight into subsequent action.

26. His delegation would like to have more detailed information about the target audience data bank mentioned in paragraph 17. It hoped that the establishment of such a bank would be carried out with the co-operation of the Secretariat department responsible for studying the establishment of a storage and retrieval unit.

27. As for the mobilization of public opinion, certain comments during the meeting and certain terms in the report were only very loosely related to the realities of his country, where individuals were determined to think for themselves and where the plan to "marshal the energies" of all was an ambitious, if not a reckless, operation. Of course, the people of his country were aware of the needs of the developing countries but it might be difficult to make them accept a development strategy which was not yet defined. The mobilization of public opinion could not be the task of the United Nations. It was the responsibility of each Government with the help of the information media at its disposal. Thus, the Centre for Economic and Social Information was perfectly right to concern itself with the journalists and trade unionists of the various countries. The Council must remember that the campaign for mobilizing public opinion must be based on a precise development strategy. In the United Kingdom, the Government could influence public opinion only by presenting its policy to Parliament and to the nation.

28. With regard to the launching of the Development Decade, discussed in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the addendum to the Secretary-General's report (E/4784/Add.1/Rev.1), his delegation hoped that that operation could be performed during the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. It agreed with the Indian delegation that the proclamation of the Development Decade should constitute one of the salient features of the twenty-fifth anniversary and should not be drowned in the other ceremonies. The United

² Commission on International Development, *Partners in Development* (New York, Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1969).

³ *A Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.I.10).

⁴ Committee for Development Planning, *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 7 and Corr. 1.*

Kingdom would do everything in its power to ensure that the development strategy was finalized before the ceremonies of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Organization.

29. Finally, his delegation wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Tunisia.

30. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) said he was surprised at the turn which the debate had taken, but that he would not yield to the temptation to comment on the substance of the question as had the first three speakers. The representatives of India, Brazil and Yugoslavia would not be astonished if the views of the United States on the matter were different from theirs. The United States placed a new emphasis on the qualitative aspect of aid but the present administration continued to press for a larger volume of aid. While the United States did not agree with all the policy measures proposed by the developing countries, it continued to discuss them in the appropriate bodies.

31. It was important to obtain the support of public opinion for the development strategy for the Second Development Decade. He also agreed with the representatives of Brazil and India that public opinion should be mobilized in favour of something definite. If public opinion could be mobilized in favour of development, it would be still easier to mobilize it provided the United Nations had defined a development strategy which would permit the launching of the Development Decade as planned.

32. There had been much talk about the political will of the developed countries but much less talk about that of the developing countries. There was a considerable gap between the desire and the will to develop, and the United States Government was not convinced that that gap had been bridged in all the developing countries, nor that the necessary sacrifices had been accepted in those countries.

33. He agreed with the Preparatory Committee that it was impossible to launch the Development Decade, if the strategy was incomplete. His delegation was prepared to expedite the study of that question in the General Assembly, but it felt that the launching of the Development Decade with an incomplete strategy was fruitless.

34. With regard to certain suggestions put forward in the Secretary-General's report (E/4784), he pointed out that the United States Government did not have an official information service operating on its territory and that public opinion must be informed through media belonging to the private sector. He was sure that the Centre for Economic and Social Information would know the private organizations to approach. For its part, the United States delegation would do its best to facilitate agreement on the objectives and resources of the development strategy for the Second Development Decade.

35. Mr. VERCELES (Observer for the Philippines), recalled that the Philippine delegation had participated in the efforts and negotiations in the Second Committee which had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2567 (XXIV). The Philippine Government was interested in the question, firstly, because it was convinced of the need

to reform the methods and techniques used by the United Nations to publicize international efforts in favour of development and, secondly, because it felt that the mobilization of public opinion was one of the decisive means of overcoming the difficulties facing international co-operation.

36. The Philippine delegation had played an essential role in the adoption of Council resolution 1357 (XLV), the starting point for the activities which had led to the preparation of a paper by the Centre for Economic and Social Information for the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade (A/AC.141/L.11) and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2567 (XXIV).

37. The Secretary-General should be congratulated for having put forward new ideas, methods and techniques of information which could make the public aware of the efforts made by the international community and the United Nations assistance organs in favour of development. It was the task of Governments to ensure the effective application of those ideas, methods and techniques. In that respect, General Assembly resolution 2567 (XXIV) was an event of historic importance because of the recommendations set forth in paragraph 3. The Secretary-General's activities in pursuance of resolution 2567 (XXIV) had evoked the satisfaction of all the organs concerned.

38. The Philippine delegation, a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Second Development Decade, shared the disappointment felt by other delegations at the failure to agree on the essential points of the strategy for the Second Development Decade. In such circumstances, representatives must not adopt a negative attitude. The absence of agreement, on the contrary, made it essential to try even harder to mobilize public opinion and to carry out the decisions embodied in Council resolution 1357 (XLV) and the General Assembly resolution 2567 (XXIV). The Council must ensure that the failure was not due to any lack of effort.

39. Mr. BRADLEY (Argentina) thanked the Secretariat for the work it had done, but agreed with other representatives that it would have been more profitable not to examine the report of the Secretary-General until after the Preparatory Committee's May session at which time the discussions would be more realistic. The question should perhaps be discussed again after the Preparatory Committee's May session, if the Council did not reach agreement on the development strategy.

40. His Government considered that the success of the strategy would depend on the measures taken by Governments to achieve the objectives of the Development Decade. Public opinion could not be mobilized in terms of the objectives of the Development Decade, but in terms of the concrete measures which should be taken to attain them. Each Government should therefore announce regularly the political decisions which it was taking in the framework of the strategy of the Second Development Decade. His Government also considered that the success of the Development Decade would depend on the political will of the countries which wished to develop, although international action would be needed to remedy some

shortages. Several countries had not waited for the launching of the Second Development Decade to announce their objectives and the means which they intended to use to attain them. For several years, his country had been making great development efforts and regularly informed public opinion of the remarkable results which had been attained and to which international assistance and bilateral assistance had contributed. Like a rocket the Development Decade would be launched; it was to be hoped that it would have a destination and would be continued in other than verbal terms. In short, everything would depend on the concrete measures set forth in the strategy. His delegation would therefore support the draft resolution submitted by Tunisia.

41. Mr. BARTON (World Federation of Trade Unions) hoped that the mobilization of public opinion would take into account the fact that the peoples concerned had the right to participate in defining the development objectives and the methods to be used to attain them. If the mobilization of public opinion was based on the conception of a passive mass to be influenced, it would fail. The representative of UNESCO had emphasized the importance of involvement as an essential part of real support for the Second Development Decade. Involvement was also a constant theme of trade union life in all countries, since in most of them workers were forced to accept measures over which they had no influence and suffer the consequences of decisions made by restricted groups or international monopolies. The mobilization of public opinion in favour of the Second Development Decade could only be effective to the extent that those being mobilized had some choice in the objectives and were assured that their efforts were achieving the desired results. That would be a difficult task if no steps were taken to allow peoples to exert an influence on economic policy. Therefore, the World Federation of Trade Unions stressed primarily the mobilization of national resources, the democratization of economic life, the development of the public sector and the elimination of foreign economic domination. Aid which increased the dependence of developing countries on the developed countries was an obstacle and not a help to development. The increase of private capital investment in developing countries also created further obstacles to independent economic progress. The mobilization of public opinion could not be envisaged except in relation to the practical meaning, in each country, of the development measures. The nature of those measures and their probable effects must be clarified. Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report (E/4784) listed some of the main issues: performance criteria, employment problems, waste of resources and the distribution of income. But the results were apparently prejudged. The mobilization of public opinion would require convergent measures to solve those problems. The solution of all the problems should not be laid down in advance, but mobilization of public opinion should be linked to action designed to reach those objectives.

42. He recalled that the 140 million workers in the trade unions affiliated to the Federation represented, with their families, a large part of the world's population and that trade union meetings provided a fruitful exchange of views on all types of problems. At its seventh congress, the World Federation of Trade Unions had supported the basic aims of the Second Development Decade, in particular the world

employment programme of the ILO. But it could only envisage mobilization of the workers in favour of the proposed measures to the extent that they tackled the real obstacles and were designed to change the pattern of the system of trade so as to eliminate neo-colonialist relationships and privileges; to limit and, ultimately, eliminate the power of international monopolies, to ensure the full participation of the workers and their organizations in development efforts at the national level; to implement structural reforms which were necessary for economic progress, especially in agriculture; to give aid which would enable the peoples of developing countries to expand their industry and employment, to broaden the domestic economy, to strengthen the public sector and to carry out projects in the fields of vocational training, literacy, health and housing.

43. The extent to which the workers in the developed countries could be mobilized to support the Second Development Decade would depend on the extent to which the workers in developing countries would benefit from that mobilization. The World Federation of Trade Unions would study with interest the proposals for trade union exchanges, and felt that field trips by trade union leaders to developing countries would enable them to meet local trade union leaders.

44. In raising those problems, the World Federation of Trade Unions only wished to ensure that the solidarity which should be expressed in terms of the Second Development Decade would help to remove the obstacles which stood in the way of real international co-operation and which created confusion about the root causes of underdevelopment.

45. Mr. KITI (Kenya) was concerned at the fact that the Council was contemplating the mobilization of public opinion before even knowing exactly on what. The first thing was to submit specific proposals and to formulate a detailed strategy for development during the Second Development Decade. Like many delegations of developing countries, the Kenyan delegation was in favour of most of the measures set forth in the report of the Secretary-General.

46. Referring to the statements of the Indian and United States representatives, he thought that the co-operation of national leaders was essential if public opinion was to be successfully mobilized. Some speakers had said, with a certain amount of bad faith, that it had not been possible to mobilize public opinion in their countries because there was no governmental institution capable of influencing public opinion. Yet those very countries, when they wanted, were very adept at using information media, such as television, for that purpose.

47. One delegation had observed that as much emphasis should be laid on the goodwill of the developing countries as on that of the developed countries. He agreed, but most developing countries had already adopted the requisite attitude towards the Second Development Decade and had already drawn up development programmes. Again, if the developing countries were to mobilize their public opinion, they must be able to rely on firm commitments by the developed countries.

48. He agreed with the Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Information that the proclamation and all the other documents to be used must be drafted in terms that were clear and understandable to all.

49. Kenya endorsed the objectives of the Second Development Decade and was ready to mobilize its public opinion. He therefore hoped that a complete text of the development strategy would be available before 24 October; without it the Development Decade could not be launched without running into disaster.

50. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) explained to the Kenyan representative that he had not meant that his Government could not or would not act on public opinion, but that each country had to approach the problem in the way most appropriate to it. He had had no intention of denying the responsibility of his Government or of claiming that it had been unable to act.

51. Mr. GIBSON PARKER (Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Information) said that he had taken note of the points raised during the discussion, including those more directly concerned with information methods.

52. He thanked those delegations which had commented on the executive briefing papers. He wished to make it quite clear that those papers, by the time they were completed, would cover the whole span of geographical distribution on subjects connected with development. He had taken note of the suggestions put forward by the representative of India (1661st meeting) with regard to subjects. The Centre was currently engaged in negotiations with publishing houses of countries whose language was not one of the official languages of the United Nations so that the documents could be published in as many languages as possible. He pointed out that the Tinbergen report is a Council document.⁵

53. In reply to the Indonesian and Japanese representatives, he said that the World Youth Assembly was scheduled to be held soon. It would bring together some seven hundred young people from all over the world and its agenda would certainly include various aspects of economic and social development. The debates would be very useful, especially since some of the young people would eventually be assuming positions of importance in government, industry and education. Further, the Commission for Social Development had approved a project for a meeting to be held at Geneva in 1971, at which major youth organizations would be represented, and the agenda would include items on youth participation in economic and social development.

54. Some representatives, including the French representative, had asked for precise information on paragraph 17 (E/4784), which referred to a data bank for distribution purposes. The international organizations were confronted with many difficulties when trying to ensure the dissemination of information. For that reason the United Nations, with UNDP participation, was trying to set up an electronic system of data collection for distribution. It was to be hoped that other international organizations would participate in the project.

⁵ *Ibid.*

55. He informed the French representative that the Centre was working closely with the fifty-one information centres throughout the world and with the UNDP Resident Representatives' offices; in fact, those were the main channels of dissemination.

56. The United Kingdom representative had commented on the language used in paragraph 20 of the report of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's point, he thought, was simply that the proclamation should be worded in terms that were clear and understandable to all, rather than technical.

57. Some representatives had requested clarification of the trade-union programmes referred to in paragraph 10. The first meeting on the subject had been held at Geneva, between the United Nations and the ILO. The report of the meeting had many promising aspects to offer. He thanked the Tunisian representative for expressing his satisfaction with the visit of international journalists to Tunisia. The latter had since emphasized the complete success of their visit and some of them had reported that the Tunisian information programme for development could serve as model for other countries.

58. Mr. DE SEYNES (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said he was gratified that the delegations had expressed political opinions on United Nations economic and social policy, because it was valuable for the Secretariat, in its public information activities, to know the reactions of the various countries.

59. There seemed to be some fear in certain quarters that the programme for mobilizing public opinion might conceal the inadequacy or slow pace of the progress made, and also that the documents that might be used to inform the public might depart from the letter of the decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, that they might be misused or that they might conflict with certain objectives or policies. If it was aware of the dangers inherent in the information programme, the Secretariat would be better able to avoid them by exercising caution.

60. He agreed with those who thought that the proposed programme might contribute in a modest way to generate the still reticent and wavering political will of Governments.

61. It must be remembered that the documents the Secretariat might use would be addressed to many different groups of readers and would therefore have to be adapted to the needs of each group so as to inform, educate, and, indeed, convince them. Apparently, some feared that that multiplicity of purpose would conflict with orthodoxy. Apparently, too, the Secretariat was expected to distribute official documents, especially United Nations resolutions, as widely as possible. Although those resolutions had become almost sacred for delegations, who understood all their subtleties and nuances, the same was obviously not true for the public at large. The Secretariat would fulfil the mandate granted to it by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council only to the extent that it could manage to adopt a pluralist approach and still abide by the spirit and the letter of United Nations decisions and official documents. It would be useful if the Secretariat could continue to benefit from the views of Governments

and national information agencies so as to stay on the right track.

62. Clearly, it was not always possible to make tangible or visible the results of the new information programme. In fact, the results were not necessarily included in the statistics and there was no question of changing public opinion overnight. Nevertheless, the programme gave new meaning to the actions of the United Nations system, even though the programme was necessarily limited and even if it was difficult to evaluate its impact.

63. Mr. SKATARETIKO (Yugoslavia) asked the Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Information to clarify paragraph 20 in the report (E/4784) and the end of paragraph 6 in the addendum to the report (E/4784/Add.1/Rev.1). The representative of Yugoslavia thought it was generally understood that a proclamation would be issued only if a final text for the strategy were adopted when the Second Development Decade was launched.

64. Contrary to the opinion of some, the Yugoslav delegation wished to criticize no one. It merely emphasized that it was not possible to make an artificial distinction

between the Second Development Decade and the strategy or to mobilize public opinion for something which did not yet exist. That did not mean that Yugoslavia was opposed to the Second Development Decade or that it was not acting in good faith; on the contrary, it supported many proposals advanced in that connexion. However, it was also true that one of the great Powers was not participating in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Second Development Decade.

65. Mr. GIBSON PARKER (Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Information), in reply to the Yugoslav representative, stated that the date on which the two reports in question were issued explained the surprise of the latter. In fact, at that time, the Preparatory Committee for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations was considering the kind of celebration that should be prepared. It was envisaging a statement which would cover several topics, and especially the Second Development Decade. It was only later that the Preparatory Committee for the Second Development Decade, at its fifth session, had opposed that suggestion.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.