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WORLD SHORTAGE OF CEREALS AND OTHER FOOD STUFFS

REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

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At its thirty-third plenary meeting on 14 February 1946, the General Assembly adopted a resolution urging action both directly by Governments and through the international organizations concerned, to alleviate the serious shortage of bread-grains and rice.

The General Assembly, at its forty-sixth plenary session on 21 October, decided to refer this question, which appeared as item 21 of its agenda, to the Second Committee for consideration.

The Committee studied the documents provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization which had been submitted by the Secretary-General (documents A/76 and A/76/Addenda 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

The Committee heard statements from the Counsellor of the Food and Agriculture Organization and from the Secretary-General of the International Emergency Food Council. The Committee agreed on the seriousness of the food situation in 1946-1947 and on the necessity of urging Governments and international organizations concerned to take immediately measures to alleviate the situation.

Many delegations expressed their points of view on the question. Draft resolutions and amendments were submitted formally by the delegations of Argentina (document A/C.2/28), Brazil (document A/C.2/31), Canada (document A/C.2/27), Egypt (document A/C.2/46), Guatemala (document A/C.2/27/Add.1), Saudi-Arabia (document A/C.2/46), United Kingdom (document A/C.2/39), and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (document A/C.2/49).

/A Drafting

A Drafting Sub-Committee, composed of nineteen countries, was established to prepare a single draft resolution and studied the above documents together with an additional amendment submitted by the Delegation of Greece. The Sub-Committee held ten meetings and developed a draft resolution which was approved by the Second Committee at its meeting on 3 December 1946 for submission to the General Assembly.

The Second Committee, therefore, recommends the adoption by the General Assembly of the following resolution:

WORLD SHORTAGE OF CEREALS AND OTHER FOODSTUFFS

At its thirty-third plenary meeting on 14 February 1946, the General Assembly adopted a resolution urging action both directly by Governments and through the international organizations concerned, to alleviate the anticipated serious shortage of bread-grains and rice.

The General Assembly has learned with satisfaction of the extent to which the position in 1946 was improved, particularly with respect to bread grains, by the common effort of the United Nations, thus saving millions of lives during the critical months before the 1946 harvest.

The General Assembly recognizes, however, that the food situation is still unsatisfactory. A number of countries have not yet overcome the devastating results of the enemy occupation to which they were subjected and are obliged on this account to continue emergency imports of grains, fats and other foodstuffs. A severe shortage of these foodstuffs exists in many European countries, even in some of those which before the war were themselves exporters. In a number of countries of Asia the shortage of cereals and other foodstuffs has led to undernourishment and even famine, resulting in heavy loss of human lives, as in the case of India and China. There is also a widespread shortage of livestock.

The General Assembly notes, moreover, that in 1945 and 1946 some countries of Europe and Asia were affected by drought and bad harvest, resulting in still further deterioration of their food situation. Some

countries which were not under enemy occupation have even introduced bread rationing for the first time, for instance, the United Kingdom. In addition, some countries of Latin America are experiencing food shortages and are obliged to import grain.

The General Assembly has learned with concern that expected supplies of bread-grains, rice, fats and oils, dairy products, meat and sugar appear to be substantially inadequate to meet minimum requirements for human consumption in 1947. Many countries, especially those which have suffered from enemy occupation and those which do not produce sufficient foodstuffs to meet their own requirements, need agricultural supplies such as machinery, implements, fertilizers, pesticides and seeds.

In addition, international payment difficulties on the part of certain importing countries, as well as transport and other difficulties, threaten to prevent the utilization of such food supplies as may be available. At the same time, there is a tendency in some countries to reduce the areas under cultivation of cereals and other foodstuffs, which may cause unwarranted price increases and still further aggravate the food situation. Inflationary prices, and other price factors, in many cases constitute another obstacle to the production and distribution of food supplies to those in need.

THEREFORE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

URGES the Governments and international agencies concerned to adopt or continue measures designed to overcome the deficit during 1947 in bread-grains, rice, fats and oils, dairy products, meat and sugar and to achieve the equitable allocation and prompt distribution of the available supplies free from political considerations, and in particular

RECOMMENDS

1. Food producing countries to take all practicable steps
 - (a) to increase the output and collection of foodstuffs

/to the maximum

to the maximum extent;

(b) to prevent reduction and encourage an increase of areas under grain cultivation;

(c) to improve transportation facilities for cereals and other foodstuffs;

(d) to increase exports to countries suffering from a shortage of foodstuffs;

(e) to continue and strengthen international machinery with a view to utilizing exportable food supplies with due consideration for the urgency of the food requirements in the needy countries;

(f) to take measures against any unwarranted increase in the price of grain and other foodstuffs, especially such as would be detrimental to the interests of consumers and would mainly favour speculative interests without resulting in any real advantages to the farming population.

2. Countries which are largely industrial and produce transportation equipment, agricultural implements, machinery, spare parts and supplies for the construction of workshops for manufacturing and repairing the essential categories of such materials, or which produce fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, and animal feeding stuffs, to take all appropriate and practicable measures for expanding production, increasing export, and facilitating transportation of such supplies to countries in urgent need of them, and for facilitating the construction in these countries of small factories and workshops for the manufacture and repair of the most essential agricultural machines, implements and spare parts, for increasing food production.

3. All countries to carry out as far as practicable appropriate and necessary measures to regulate consumption, including the

/maintenance

maintenance of high extraction rates, the dilution of flour, restrictions on usage of bread-grains for beverages and other non-essential purposes, and restrictions on the feeding of bread grains to animals.

4. Governments and international agencies concerned to continue and expand publication of the fullest possible information on supplies and requirements of foodstuffs and materials mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 above and on action taken to carry out the recommendations contained in this resolution in order that future action may be guided by full knowledge of the relevant facts.

5. That attention continue to be given to the need for measures necessary to enable importing countries to overcome international payment difficulties in order that the above recommendations may be rendered effective in improving the food situation.
