

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

**NINTH SESSION**  
*Official Records*



**THIRD COMMITTEE, 589th  
MEETING**

**Monday, 22 November 1954,  
at 11.55 a.m.**

**New York**

**C O N T E N T S**

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 12:	
Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) ( <i>continued</i> ).....	237
Tribute to the memory of Mr. Andrei Vyshinsky.....	239

*Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).*

**AGENDA ITEM 12**

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) (A/2686, A/C.3/573, A/C.3/L.432, A/C.3/L.433) (*continued*)**

**GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)**

1. Mr. PAVLICEK (Czechoslovakia) said that one of the tasks of the Economic and Social Council, of which Czechoslovakia had been a member since the beginning of 1954, was to draw up a programme of practical action in the social field on behalf of workers and to determine effective methods of combating discrimination of every kind. A study of the report (A/2686)<sup>1</sup> indicated that the Council had only partly fulfilled those obligations during the past year. The United Nations Children's Fund had achieved considerable results and several functional commissions had done good work, but, as a whole, the results of the Council's activities were still unsatisfactory. The questions dealt with in chapter IV, section III, of the report represented only a very small part of the social field; the achievements listed would have only a very small influence on the solution of the general problem. In fact, the Council was not trying to tackle first the most important and urgent questions, such as the raising of the workers' standard of living, social welfare and social security. As for the Social Commission, it confined itself for the most part to studying theoretical problems or else busied itself with items of secondary importance.

2. Czechoslovakia paid continued attention to social problems. As a people's democracy, it had a social welfare system, regulated by law, which enabled all workers to obtain the care they needed; sick persons, old people, expectant mothers, persons incapable of earning a living, all benefited from the necessary assistance. The Government was particularly concerned with the health of the people. During the past five years many hospitals had been built or enlarged; the number of hospital beds had been increased by more than 28,000 between 1949 and 1953. The services for the training of health personnel were developing constantly; there were 6,500

more doctors than in 1948, that is, one doctor to every 760 inhabitants as against one for every 1,218 in 1937. The Constitution guaranteed all citizens the right to permanent social security; all means of treatment were owned by the people and every kind of care was available free of charge to all. The trade unions administered the health insurance funds under a new system, and in 1953, contributors had received more than three and a half milliard Czechoslovak crowns, that is, an increase of 124 per cent over 1948. The sum of old-age pensions, social security, sick and other benefits had been increased; in 1953, the money spent for that purpose had been more than six milliard crowns, that is, an increase of 71 per cent over 1948. The constant improvement in living conditions was shown by the falling death-rate and rising birth-rate. Thus, the rate of natural increase had tripled in five years and the number of inhabitants had risen by about 500,000. Those few details were enough to show how Czechoslovakia was tackling social problems, to which it attached the very greatest importance.

3. Chapter V, section II, of the report dealt with recommendations concerning international respect for the right of peoples and nations to self-determination. The Commission on Human Rights, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 738 (VIII) had prepared two draft resolutions which the Economic and Social Council had decided—in resolution 545 G (XVIII), which was adopted by a small majority—to refer back to the Commission for re-examination. Thus the Council was to some extent forcing the Commission on Human Rights to mark time and was showing itself more preoccupied with the interests of the colonial Powers than with those of the millions of human beings still living under a régime of colonial oppression. The Czechoslovak delegation had already stated in the Economic and Social Council that the colonial Powers were systematically seeking to prevent the examination of the problem and the effective application of the right to self-determination through recourse either to legal quibbling or to diversionary manoeuvres. The representative of the United States of America had seen fit, at the preceding meeting of the Third Committee, to deliver an attack on the socialist countries. She had thus shown that she did not understand or did not want to understand the character of the relations which at present united those countries, relations based on mutual respect for sovereignty and national independence, on mutual understanding and on the disinterested grant of fraternal assistance; such sincere co-operation between the peace-loving States held out magnificent prospects for the future of the people. The representative of the United States of America had obviously sought to distract the Committee's attention from the fight of millions of human beings in the colonial and semi-colonial countries for the right of self-determination. Those peoples were awake and refused to allow themselves to be exploited any longer; that was one of the most

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Supplement No. 3.*

striking facts of the present day. The oppressed nations were marching towards economic and political independence; they could not be halted. Czechoslovakia, which had endured foreign domination, was profoundly attached to the right of peoples to self-determination, which it had always defended and would continue to defend.

4. Chapter V, section XI, of the report related to the status of women. There could be no genuine political and social progress unless women were granted all their fundamental rights. The Czechoslovak delegation noted with satisfaction the activities of the Commission on the Status of Women, whose efforts would be more fruitful if they were not prevented from co-operating with certain very important non-governmental organizations. It was now a question of seeking the practical application of the resolutions which it had adopted on matters which had, for the most part, been on the agenda for several years. Unfortunately, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (General Assembly resolution 640 (VII), annex) did not contain adequate safeguards for the implementation of the rights set forth in it or any provisions relating to the Trust Territories and to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Nevertheless, it did represent a first important achievement; in drawing it up, the Commission on the Status of Women had considerably helped women throughout the world who were fighting to obtain recognition of their rights.

5. The Czechoslovak delegation reserved the right to refer to the attitude adopted by the Economic and Social Council in other fields when the Third Committee took up those parts of the report which were separate items on the agenda.

6. Mr. ABDEL GHANI (Egypt) said that he had a few remarks to make on chapters IV and V of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2686). In connexion with chapter IV, section I, he had a few words to say on community development projects. In resolution 496 (XVI), the Economic and Social Council had recommended that the United Nations and the specialized agencies should promote and implement community development projects. Egypt, which had already obtained very good results in that connexion, was in favour of the Council's resolution and believed that the implementation of the projects in question could be useful to all countries with a social and economic structure similar to its own; it hoped that the United Nations and the specialized agencies would devote themselves particularly, in preparing the programme of concerted practical action in the social field, to research into appropriate methods of community development through meetings and study sessions. Egypt was well advanced as far as community development was concerned. Its work for social progress had resulted, *inter alia*, in the establishment of about 200 rural social centres serving nearly two million inhabitants; the appropriate authorities encouraged their development, and the Government, which was seeking to raise the standard of living of the masses and to secure for them a maximum of social justice, was giving them financial assistance. Those centres were so organized as to meet all the needs the agricultural worker might have in the social, educational and health fields and for his vocational training. He recalled that Sir John Boyd Orr, the former Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, had recognized their value and had said that, in his opinion, Egypt's example should be followed by the other agri-

cultural countries. Another distinguished social scientist, Professor Spon, of Columbia University, who had been struck by the co-ordination he had observed in the work of those centres, had said that as far as services for agricultural workers were concerned, Egypt was more advanced than his own country, since it dealt with all social problems simultaneously. There was no need to dwell on the work in those centres, which would certainly be described appropriately in the Secretary-General's international survey of programmes of social development, the publication of which had been so long awaited. He would confine himself to a few brief remarks.

7. First, he was happy to note that with the Council's authorization the Secretary-General had arranged for a study group for the Far Eastern countries to be held at Manila in December to consider the best methods of community development in the various participating countries. Secondly, he stressed that for such meetings to produce any real results, the social and economic structure of the participating countries had to be similar; the Council had recognized that fact, for in resolution 496 (XVI) it had stipulated that the Secretary-General should convene groups of representatives of Governments having similar social and economic problems. Any deviation from that fundamental principle, particularly in the case of conferences and study groups on social questions, would be a matter for grave concern and could only weaken the action of the United Nations in the social field. Lastly, he pointed out that his Government's initiative in community development projects was not limited to projects in Egypt but extended also abroad: two Egyptian experts had been sent to Iraq and Pakistan at the request of the United Nations; two years previously a mission had visited the Caribbean area and Mexico to consider the possibilities of community development projects there in the light of experience in Egypt. In 1955, the fourth social service seminar for the Arab States would be held in Saudi Arabia and the question of community development would probably be one of the main subjects studied. In view of its ties of brotherhood with the other Arab countries, Egypt would certainly give them the benefit of its experience.

8. Turning to chapter IV, section II, of the report, he was happy to note the great humanitarian work accomplished by the United Nations Children's Fund. Its activities were a tangible proof of United Nations efforts to promote the welfare of the masses throughout the world and an example of international co-operation for peaceful purposes. He expressed his country's gratitude to all the countries which contributed to the Fund. In the fight against epidemics, UNICEF provided most valuable assistance for Egyptian children, and thanks to the assistance given to enable Egypt to produce DDT itself, anti-malarial spraying could be intensified, with the result that more children would be protected. Furthermore, UNICEF had set up a milk-conservation factory in Egypt, the Government providing the site and the materials. The production from that factory would form a part of the projected large-scale feeding programme for children. His Government appropriated more than six million Egyptian pounds annually for school meals in primary and secondary schools. As primary education was compulsory for boys and girls and secondary education was free for everyone, that meant that virtually all children of school age in Egypt received a substantial lunch free of charge at the school they attended. Nevertheless, the problem of malnutri-

tion was far from being solved and any international assistance would be welcome. The contribution made by Egypt to the Fund was primarily a token of its gratitude; it was to be hoped that UNICEF would remain in existence and prosper for the welfare of humanity and the prestige of the United Nations.

9. With regard to the question of narcotic drugs, he reminded the Committee that his country had always taken active steps to suppress illicit traffic in narcotics. Two years previously the Government had formulated new legislation providing for stricter penalties and even life imprisonment for smugglers, pedlars and drug addicts. After a detailed study the competent Egyptian authorities had decided to approve the model code and commentary to be prepared by the Secretariat for the application of the Opium Protocol of 1953 (E/NT.8).<sup>2</sup> The activities and efforts of the Egyptian anti-narcotics service and the work of the Anti-Narcotic Bureau of the Arab League were appreciated by all those engaged in the fight against narcotic drugs.

10. He went on to comment on chapter V, part A, of the Economic and Social Council's report and drew attention to the Council's attitude to the right of peoples and nations to self-determination. That attitude affected not only the part which the United Nations should play in the protection and development of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but also the relations which should exist between the various organs of the United Nations in conformity with the letter and spirit of the Charter.

11. The General Assembly had requested the Commission on Human Rights to submit recommendations on steps which might be taken to develop international respect for the right of self-determination (Assembly resolution 637 C (VII)). In accordance with those instructions the Commission had prepared recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly, but the Economic and Social Council had intervened and had refused to transmit them to the General Assembly even for study. Two facts were incontrovertible: first, the Council was composed of only eighteen members and, therefore, it could not voice the will of the United Nations as the General Assembly did; secondly, it had entrusted the work on human rights to one of its functional commissions. The Council had ignored those facts and had acted in a way that was not in conformity with the General Assembly's clearly expressed wishes. It had thereby adopted a most improper attitude towards its commissions, an attitude which was bound to reduce the competence and effectiveness of the Commission on Human Rights. Of course, the Council had not exceeded its authority over the functional commissions,

but there was always a difference between what could be done and what should be done. The Council had rejected the Commission's recommendations without giving it any instructions on its future work on the right of peoples to self-determination; it had merely invited the Commission to reconsider the two recommendations in question in the light of the Council's discussions (Council resolution 545 G (XVIII)). The discussions showed that the only objection to the recommendations had been that they were not exhaustive. That was a pretext which might be invoked against any recommendation since no recommendation was ever exhaustive. The two recommendations had been referred back to the Commission on Human Rights for reconsideration; on the other hand, the Commission's next session would last four weeks and the agenda included a number of very important items, notably the consideration of the report of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and a new item entitled "Development of the work of the United Nations for wider observance of, and respect for, human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world". It was quite likely therefore that the Commission would be unable to reconsider the two recommendations and make them exhaustive.

12. His delegation felt that the General Assembly's attention should be drawn to that fact in order to avoid any unnecessary delay in working out steps to develop international respect for the right of peoples to self-determination. One way of avoiding delay would be for the General Assembly itself to deal with the question: the Third Committee might devote part of each session to discussing the right of peoples to self-determination and submit recommendations on the subject with a view to ascertaining how the subject peoples could be helped on towards the ultimate objectives of freedom and independence.

13. In conclusion he reminded the Committee that Mr. Padilla Nervo, President of the General Assembly at its sixth session, had said that all the fundamental human rights were based on the right of peoples to self-determination. That principle was embodied in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter and had therefore been a corner-stone of the United Nations from the very outset.

#### ***Tribute to the memory of Mr. Andrei Vyshinsky***

14. The CHAIRMAN announced the death of Mr. Vyshinsky and conveyed the Committee's deep sympathy to the USSR delegation. He invited the members of the Committee to observe a minute's silence.

*The Committee observed a minute's silence in memory of Mr. Andrei Vyshinsky.*

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

<sup>2</sup> See *United Nations Opium Conference, Protocol and Final Act signed at New York, 23 June 1953, United Nations Publications, Sales No.: 1953.XI.6.*