



Monday, 29 November 1954,
at 10.50 a.m.

New York

CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) (<i>continued</i>).....	275

Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

AGENDA ITEM 12

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (chap-
ters IV and V) (A/2686, A/C.3/L.434, A/C.3/
L.436, A/C.3/L.444) (*continued*)**

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY (A/C.3/L.434, A/C.3/
L.436, A/C.3/L.444) (*continued*)

1. Mr. MENON (India) recalled that his Govern-
ment had already supported the general principle of
a World Children's Day at the 492nd plenary meeting
of the General Assembly. The Indian draft resolu-
tion (A/C.3/L.436) was a further step in the same
direction. World Children's Day should not be con-
fined to a few specific activities, such as child welfare,
but should promote the ideals of the United Nations.
It should be used to convince the world's 900 million
children of their fundamental fraternity, in spite of
differences of race and culture. Like Human Rights
Day and United Nations Day, it could be used to focus
world attention on the dangers of partisanship and the
value of internationalism: all that was fully in ac-
cordance with the first paragraph of the Preamble of
the United Nations Charter. The children of today
should become the enlightened citizens of tomorrow.

2. World Children's Day could be used to call at-
tention to three important questions: first, the place
of children in society; secondly, the contribution they
could make to world-wide fraternity; and thirdly, the
activities of the United Nations Children's Fund and
other organizations on behalf of children. There was
no intention of discounting the excellent work already
done in the same field by other organizations but
merely to use the General Assembly's authority to
awaken young minds to their future responsibilities.
Much had already been done by UNICEF for in-
stance, but in over eight years it had only been able to
help 150 million of the estimated 600 million children
in need of help. In India, the position of children was
specially safeguarded by the Constitution, and Child-
ren's Day, which was observed on 14 November, was
used to direct children's attention to their international
and civic obligations.

3. Two draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.434 and A/C.3/
L.436) and two amendments (A/C.3/L.438 and A/
C.3/L.439) were before the Committee. After discus-

sion with the Uruguayan delegation, he was happy
to announce that the two delegations would sponsor
a joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444), which incor-
porated the main points of both.

4. The amendment proposed by Denmark, Norway
and Sweden (A/C.3/L.438) was so fundamental that
it amounted to a counter-proposal. It drew attention,
in particular, to the work already done by the Inter-
national Union for Child Welfare. Although it was
not usual to mention non-governmental organizations
in United Nations resolutions, the co-sponsors had
agreed to include a reference to the International Union
in their draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444). He hoped
that the three Powers would consider that sufficient
and withdraw their amendment. He did not wish to
detract from the value of the work of the Interna-
tional Union for Child Welfare, but it was a mistake
to limit a great idea to one organization and he had
felt constrained to mention governmental and volun-
tary agencies in the last paragraph of the preamble.

5. In requesting the Secretary-General, in associa-
tion with the Executive Board of UNICEF, to take
steps to establish Children's Day in accordance with
the resolution and report progress to the General As-
sembly at its tenth session, the co-sponsors had in-
tended to make the United Nations a focus for a wide
range of activities aimed at strengthening its constant
aims.

6. The year 1956 had been selected for the first World
Children's Day in order to leave the Executive Board
of UNICEF time to meet and to give Governments the
opportunity to make their views known before the tenth
session of the General Assembly. No definite date was
proposed for the celebrations, since the most appropriate
date would vary from country to country.

7. He was not sure of the position of Costa Rica with
regard to the amendments (A/C.3/L.439) it had pro-
posed to the original Uruguayan draft resolution (A/
C.3/L.434). He supposed that, unless it were moved
again as an amendment to the joint draft resolution (A/
C.3/L.444), it could be considered as withdrawn also.

8. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) said
that he was glad the Indian delegation had agreed to
combine its draft resolution (A/C.3/L.436) with the
Uruguayan draft (A/C.3/L.434), since the two texts
were based on the same principle and had a common
purpose. Criticisms of the Uruguayan draft which had
been made in the general debate had been taken into
consideration; for example, the Swedish representative's
view that World Children's Day should not be a holiday
had been met and the relevant phrase had been deleted.

9. The operative part of the joint draft resolution (A/
C.3/L.444) thus instituted the day, suggested to Gov-
ernments that they should observe it on the date and in
the way they considered appropriate, urged various na-
tional organizations to support its observance and re-

quested the Secretary-General and UNICEF to take the necessary steps and to report progress to the Assembly at its next session. The first word in paragraph 1, which had been taken from the original Uruguayan draft, should be "resolves" instead of "recommends". A definite Assembly decision was involved.

10. He hoped that the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish delegations would not press their amendment (A/C.3/L.438), which had originally applied to the Indian draft resolution (A/C.3/L.436), now that the latter had been combined with the Uruguayan draft (A/C.3/L.434). He fully endorsed the Indian representative's explanation of the reference to the work done by governmental and voluntary organizations for the children of the world and to the observance of a World's Children's Day in some countries. The whole purpose of the joint draft resolution was to transfer such observance from the national to the international level.

11. Mr. NUÑEZ (Costa Rica) recalled his earlier suggestion (591st meeting) that it might be advisable to hold meetings of Member and non-Member States to pledge contributions to UNICEF, so that the organization would know what money it would have in the next financial year. He had not then intended to make a formal proposal, but interest had been expressed by various members of the Committee and he had moved an amendment (A/C.3/L.439) to the original Uruguayan proposal (A/C.3/L.434). As the Indian representative had implied that that action involved some procedural difficulty, the delegation of Costa Rica had submitted a revised amendment (A/C.3/L.445) to the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444).

12. The proposal to convene a meeting for pledging of contributions was based on the experience of the Technical Assistance Administration, which had had financial difficulties similar to those of UNICEF and convened the Technical Assistance Conference in order to ascertain in advance what sums would be forthcoming from Governments. Such action would provide the Executive Board of UNICEF with additional security and would help to establish the work of UNICEF on a permanent basis. He hoped that the Indian representative's fear that the incorporation of the amendment would jeopardize the unanimous adoption of the joint draft resolution was unfounded and that the Committee would take a positive step towards the consolidation of the budget of UNICEF.

13. Mrs. ELLIOT (United Kingdom) welcomed the combination of the Indian and Uruguayan draft resolutions, but needed time to study the joint text (A/C.3/L.444) in more detail. The Indian representative had rightly stressed the educational importance of a World Children's Day; it was therefore inadvisable to make the day a holiday. Moreover, in the United Kingdom school holidays were regulated by local education authorities in accordance with religious and industrial holidays and could not easily be changed.

14. She had also been glad to hear the Indian representative emphasize that there would be no interference with the work of existing organizations and with the arrangements for Children's Day already prevailing in certain countries.

15. The Costa Rican amendments (A/C.3/L.445) seemed to raise some difficulties. Her delegation believed that it would be better to adopt a general resolution on the subject and not to go into detail.

16. Mrs. ROSSEL (Sweden) asked if the Executive Director of UNICEF could give the Committee more information on the Children's Days observed in various countries. Her delegation also wanted more time to study the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444).

17. Mr. MENON (India) did not consider that it would be appropriate to use the word "resolves" at the beginning of operative paragraph 1, since an instruction was already implied in the words "shall be instituted".

18. Although the Costa Rican amendments (A/C.3/L.445) contained some valuable ideas, its introduction into the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444) was inopportune, as discussion of it would extend the scope of the debate. With regard to the Swedish representative's request, it was to be hoped that the Executive Director would refer only to the activities of UNICEF in connexion with Children's Day, and not to the work of other organizations.

19. Mrs. TSALDARIS (Greece) pointed out that the effect of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444) would be to draw the attention of Governments to all aspects of work for children, such as allowances, health, education, labour and the combating of delinquency, by instituting a World Children's Day covering all fields of concern to the new generation. Governments would be absolutely free to work out all details of the arrangements. In that connexion, she paid a tribute to the International Union for Child Welfare, which had been the precursor of the United Nations in action on behalf of children and had been instrumental in establishing a Children's Day in many countries, including Greece. The Greek maternity and child welfare organization was one of the founder members of the International Union and had been collaborating with it for a long time. At the same time it acted as the executive organ for UNICEF emergency and long-term programmes in Greece. It was therefore obvious that the International Union co-operated closely with UNICEF and could give it valuable assistance through the national organizations which were members of the Union. It was gratifying that the services which the International Union had rendered to children were recognized in the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444). She mentioned the assistance given to her country for many years by Swedish, British, Canadian, United States and French branches of the Union.

20. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) said that the text of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444) was a great improvement over the original texts and he could support it in general. He could not, however, see any reason for the specific reference to a single non-governmental organization, however meritorious, in the fifth paragraph of the preamble; the concluding phrase of that paragraph, beginning with the words "on the initiative. . ." might well be deleted.

21. He was in favour of the retention of the word "recommends" in operative paragraph 1 for the reasons given by the Indian representative.

22. He was not sure whether the word "suggests" in operative paragraph 2 was appropriate; certain countries already celebrated Children's Day and, in any case, it was not quite correct to suggest to Governments that they should use their own discretion.

23. The words "to establish Children's Day" should probably be deleted from operative paragraph 3; according to paragraph 2, the arrangements were to be

left to the Governments. A reference to taking steps "in accordance with this resolution" would be sufficient and more logical.

24. Mr. FOMIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed in principle that Governments of countries which did not yet celebrate Children's Day should be asked to do so. The USSR celebrated it on 1 June, following a request made by the Women's International Democratic Federation in 1949, which was reiterated by a widely representative conference on child welfare held in Vienna in 1952. Other countries, however, used other dates, so that all countries might be left to make their own arrangements, as the sponsors of the joint draft resolution had rightly provided.

25. He agreed with the Afghan representative about the defects of the fifth paragraph of the preamble. The International Union for Child Welfare might be a most meritorious organization, but so were the Women's International Democratic Federation and possibly a number of other non-governmental organizations also; if one organization was mentioned, all would have to be. The International Union should be satisfied with the tributes paid to it during the debate.

26. He, too, did not understand the meaning of the phrase "to establish Children's Day" in paragraph 3 of the operative part. Governments were asked to do that in paragraph 1; the most that the Secretary-General and the Executive Board could do would be to provide advice. For those reasons, the USSR delegation would vote for both the Afghan amendments. It would, if necessary, make a statement on the other amendments, when it had seen the texts.

27. Mrs. HARMAN (Israel) said that her delegation whole-heartedly supported the idea of a World Children's Day, which was needed as much by children as by educators for teaching international responsibility to all. On many occasions she had stressed the great importance of UNICEF and all activities on behalf of children; a World Children's Day would focus attention on all the manifold activities on one day of the year. In Israel the day was held in March. To give each country freedom to choose the most appropriate day was the most practical method. The Costa Rican suggestion (A/C.3/L.445) could hardly be carried out if there was not to be one day universally adopted.

28. The reference to the International Union for Child Welfare was justified by the Union's comprehensive activities and by the fact that it had taken the initiative in association with UNICEF.

29. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) believed that the word "urges" should be replaced by the word "invites" in paragraph 2 of the operative part of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444). Non-governmental organizations, over which the United Nations had no authority, might not like to be urged to take action by the United Nations.

30. He would support the draft resolution.

31. Mrs. ROSSEL (Sweden) said that the amendments proposed by the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish delegations (A/C.3/L.438) would be moved to the new joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444). They might be revised and the sponsors would also consider the appeal for their withdrawal. She wished to hear the statement requested from the Executive Director of UNICEF before deciding.

32. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) supported the Swedish representative's request. The Executive Director's statement would have a direct bearing on her view of the joint draft resolution.

33. Mr. PATE (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that, if the World Children's Day had been proposed as an activity specifically connected with the United Nations, the Secretary-General would have been anxious that it should be associated with United Nations Day, already established. It seemed, however, that the occasion was not to be celebrated specially as a United Nations day and that even the selection of a single day would hardly be possible, since many countries already had their Children's Days and the traditions attached to them. The United Nations Children's Fund had been receiving a considerable amount of information about the national celebrations. In the past few years, some fifteen countries had issued special stamps or had raised funds for child welfare by special surcharges on postage stamps. Thus, the Committee was dealing with an idea which had been in operation in certain countries for many years.

34. He welcomed the considerable emphasis in the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444) on the role of the non-governmental organizations. Experience had shown the wisdom of the Executive Board's policy of bringing in all initiatives, governmental and non-governmental. The most important feature in the draft resolution was, however, the encouragement to all countries to hold a World Children's Day. It would be splendid if, in the course of time, a single day could be adopted internationally. The United Nations Children's Fund might, under the resolution, become a kind of clearing-house for information on what use countries made of their Children's Days. It had been doing some work of that kind in the two years since it had been associated in the celebrations with the International Union for Child Welfare. It had co-operated on Press releases, messages and the like, with a view to encouraging and continuing that organization's initiative.

35. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) and U MAUNG MAUNG SOE (Burma) asked the Executive Director in how many countries World Children's Days had been instituted by the International Union for Child Welfare and the names of the countries already holding such days and the dates.

36. Mr. PATE (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that he would supply that information in due course.

37. Mr. MENON (India) said that he had admitted when introducing the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444) that a reference to a non-governmental organization was unusual in a General Assembly resolution, but he had retained it partly because of the nature of that organization's work, partly to meet the intention of the Scandinavian countries' amendments (A/C.3/L.438) and partly because of the very considerable pressure of the lobbies on its behalf. He was more interested in the adoption of the draft resolution in some form than in the details and had accordingly made the necessary concessions. He had had to agree to the retention of the fifth paragraph of the preamble because the phrase "World Children's Day" had already been used by another organization, one closely associated with UNICEF. He did not wish to be unfair to other similar organizations nor did he intend the paragraph as a

testimonial; it merely recorded historical fact. The other organizations were covered by the wording of the first half of the paragraph. He had hoped to reduce divergencies of opinion and in the same spirit he wished to make reservations about the statement requested from the Executive Director. To answer the questions asked by the Dominican and Burmese representatives and to discuss non-governmental activities in an official statement would only lead to embarrassment. There would inevitably be omissions, lack of balance and complications, and the statement would probably not mean a great deal, since many of the national organizations might be very small. Delegations should obtain such information by their own means. They would be better advised to tolerate the retention of the paragraph and merely abstain on it.

38. He would consult his co-sponsor on the respective merits of the words "resolves" and "recommends" in paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444). He had no objection to replacing the word "urges" by the word "invites" in paragraph 2.

39. The reference to Children's Day in paragraph 3 of the operative part meant the Children's Day as celebrated in various countries. The Secretary-General and the Executive Board of UNICEF would supply information to Governments about World Children's Day. The Board would provide, as it were, a set of patterns.

40. He asked the Costa Rican representative not to press his suggestion (A/C.3/L.445) at that stage. There was not a majority in favour of fixing a single day. All such suggestions could be left to the Executive Board for discussion. It was essential that the largest possible majority should be mustered in favour of the draft resolution. The details could be settled later.

41. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic), speaking on a point of order, said that the question she had put to the Executive Director of UNICEF was closely connected with the fifth paragraph of the preamble of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.444). She could not see how there could be any objection to a simple query.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.