



**CONTENTS**

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 12:	
Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) ( <i>continued</i> ).....	247

**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 and Add.1 and 2, A/C.3/L.434, A/C.3/L.435, A/C.3/L.436, A/C.3/L.437) (*continued*)**

**GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)**

1. Mrs. HARMAN (Israel) thought that the work of the Economic and Social Council, its subsidiary organs and the specialized agencies had enabled Governments and peoples to determine their needs, to establish priorities and to initiate measures to meet those needs. On the basis of a relatively small investment, appreciable results had already been obtained and the enthusiasm shown in combating poverty and disease showed that passivity and fatalism, which had for so long hampered progress, had been overcome. Countries were also becoming more and more aware that technical assistance, however important, had to be accompanied by an organized and continuing effort on the part of Governments and communities, relying on their own resources and abilities.

2. Her delegation thought that concentration on community development projects in conformity with Economic and Social Council resolution 496 (XVI), was the best method of implementing the principle of self-help. That method laid a great responsibility on local communities and permitted full expression to people wherever they lived; it was calculated to stimulate latent energies, encourage initiative, develop civic spirit and awaken in individuals a consciousness of their own dignity.

3. The training of local personnel and development of local leadership skills was of great importance. Training programmes had played an important part in the social work of the United Nations. Technical assistance in all its forms had been very effective in that connexion. Fellowships had enabled many people holding key posts in their respective countries to travel abroad and study new methods which could be adapted for use in their own countries. Adaptation of the newly acquired knowledge to the different environment, customs, traditions and educational levels prevailing at home frequently presented difficulties. For that reason, her delegation

would stress the importance which it attached to the provision of local training opportunities. Such training was particularly desirable in rural areas, where conditions of life were still relatively primitive and where the possibility of providing effective aid was closely linked with the understanding of local characteristics. Consideration might be given to the establishment of a new type of fellowship, in addition to those already available, particularly in the social field, which would make it possible for the work to be taken up in the home country instead of abroad; such fellowships would be granted on the same terms as existing fellowships. In such cases, Resident Representatives and foreign experts visiting the countries could do good work as advisers. In many under-developed countries, progress had been so rapid that persons working in one field could not always keep abreast of developments in others; as there was often a close connexion between different fields of action, advance made in one might affect another, making it necessary to re-evaluate activities, concepts and goals. That was why in certain situations it would probably be to the advantage of countries to increase understanding of forces operating at home rather than to observe methods of work in totally different circumstances. There was no need to emphasize the interdependence of economic and social factors. Team-work was essential to ensure that over-specialization did not become an obstacle to harmonious co-operation in various fields of social progress. Holders of fellowships working in their own countries could keep abreast of the developments in fields related to their own. The reports which they would prepare and transmit to the United Nations would represent an invaluable contribution to increasing understanding of the social changes taking place in various parts of the world.

4. Referring to chapter IV of a note by the Secretary-General (E/2598), dated 13 May 1954, she noted that the Secretary-General was proposing to abolish certain publications on social subjects. While she fully understood the desire to reduce the volume of documentation and to improve its quality, she felt that it might be useful to point out that the United Nations Secretariat was the most important social research institute in the world. She recalled the considerable number of economic and social projects undertaken by the Organization and the specialized agencies. The scope of those projects varied, but as a whole they were all characterized by their practical value and their importance to the international community. Duplication of documentation should of course be avoided, but the Secretariat was in a unique position with regard to research and the fullest use should be made of it. If certain research work were entrusted to universities and other outside institutions, as the Secretary-General proposed, excellent results might be obtained and money might be saved; but such work should not be given, for the most part, to the better endowed universities

in wealthier countries; universities of all regions should be invited to participate. If the research and publications of the United Nations were to have their full value, they should inspire confidence throughout the world.

5. She associated herself with the tributes which had been paid to the United Nations Children's Fund, whose work continued to protect the health and welfare of millions of children. The initial stimulus given by UNICEF in the form of supplies and services had set in motion a chain of reaction resulting in many permanent programmes for the benefit of the total population of a country. As a member of the Programme Committee of UNICEF, she had that year visited five countries of Central America and seen for herself the extension of social services in those countries. Like the representative of Belgium, she thought it appropriate to draw attention to the efforts made by beneficiary countries which, since the establishment of the Fund and up to 1953, had provided matching contributions to a value of \$294 million, that is, 157 per cent of the total amount of UNICEF aid during that period (E/ICEF/L.594, para. 10). Most of the requests submitted to the Executive Board at its recent session had referred to the development of existing programmes, particularly in connexion with maternal and child welfare, which clearly showed the importance attached by those countries to such programmes and their intention of continuing them. It was encouraging to note that the co-ordinating committees in various countries concerned with technical assistance questions were including UNICEF in their over-all considerations. As all countries were endeavouring to prepare long-term programmes in all fields, the decision of UNICEF to plan its programmes on a three to five-year basis was particularly welcome.

6. The importance her delegation attached to the training of personnel of all categories made it particularly appreciative of the decision of UNICEF to participate in the costs of training local personnel. She was glad to have the opportunity of paying a tribute to the Executive Director of UNICEF, his staff, and the staff of the specialized agencies. She hoped that the idea of instituting a World Children's Day would be taken up.

7. Turning to the question of the status of women, she suggested that it was important that in countries still in the process of development, the recognition of equality of rights for men and women should go hand in hand with economic and social progress. If their equality with men was recognized and their special needs as wives and mothers were taken into account, women could take their place with distinction in all spheres of action. A large number of countries had already signed and ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (General Assembly resolution 640 (VII), annex), but her delegation would not be satisfied until all countries had acceded to it. The exercise of the right to vote, which was fundamental and unconditional, was a powerful instrument for the development of understanding and a sense of responsibility. A Government freely elected by both men and women would naturally seek, in the interests of democracy, to combat illiteracy, poverty, hunger and disease. Her delegation congratulated the Commission on the Status of Women on its work and paid a tribute to Miss Bernardino, whose unflagging and admirable

zeal had been a constant source of inspiration to the members of the Commission.

8. The delegation of Israel would state its views on the draft resolutions before the Committee when they came up for discussion.

9. Mrs. CHAMORRO ALAMAN (Argentina) pointed out that the importance of the social questions with which the Economic and Social Council and its commissions had to deal made evident the heavy responsibility which lay with them and the realism which they had to exhibit in the settlement of those questions. All countries should unite in an effort to solve those problems so that the United Nations might have a solid foundation upon which to build peace. Her country attached particular importance to social problems, and as General Perón had said, the only privileged persons in Argentina were the children. Her delegation had followed the activities of UNICEF with great interest, and she wished to associate herself with the tributes which had already been paid to that body. Although Argentina had received no aid from UNICEF, she had noted with satisfaction the increased attention which the Children's Fund was devoting to the problems of Latin America. Its allocations for that region in 1953 had risen to over \$2 million and would probably exceed \$3 million in 1954. The maternal and child welfare programmes were particularly satisfactory, and Argentina was glad to see that there was a steady increase in the sums allocated for them. She also welcomed the development of the pasteurization and dried-milk programmes in Latin America and the establishment of milk-conservation plants in Chile and Nicaragua.

10. Commenting on international narcotics control, and in particular the question of coca-leaf chewing which was of special concern to Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, she said that the countries concerned recognized the harmful effects of coca-leaf chewing, which was a form of drug addiction. The Argentine Republic did not produce coca leaves but imported them from Bolivia and Peru for the Indians in the north-east of the country. In that area coca-leaf chewing was an age-old habit attributable to the nutritional deficiencies from which the poverty-stricken Indian population had suffered. In order to do away with the harmful practice, the Argentine Government had taken steps to control the importation and consumption of coca leaves and had attempted to improve the economic and social conditions in that area. A special committee had been set up by a resolution of the Ministry of Health in which it recognized the harmful effects of the habit on the health of the population and instructed the committee to study the effects of coca-leaf chewing, make proposals for the reform of existing legislation with a view to the gradual elimination of the habit, and determine the annual quantities to be imported, and their allocation among the importers. As a result of the restrictive policy adopted, imports had fallen from 500,000 kilogrammes in 1951 to 200,000 in 1953. The full significance of the reduction would be realized if it was borne in mind that the population of north-eastern Argentina had increased during the past ten years as a result of the immigration of Bolivian workers who were also coca-leaf chewers.

11. With regard to the problem of statelessness, she emphasized the generosity of Argentine legislation towards stateless persons. The national Constitution guaranteed aliens the enjoyment of all the civil rights

granted to Argentine nationals. Unless he made an express declaration to the contrary, an alien acquired Argentine nationality after five years' continuous residence in the country. If they so requested, aliens could become naturalized citizens after two years. All those measures were an effective contribution to the elimination of statelessness. The constitutional principle had been reaffirmed by the new legislation on nationality, citizenship and naturalization recently enacted by the Argentine National Congress to provide aliens resident in Argentina with easy access to citizenship and the benefits of citizenship.

12. She wished to associate herself with the tributes which had been paid to the Commission on the Status of Women for the work it had done to ensure that women enjoyed the rights which the Charter of the United Nations had sought to confer upon them. She sympathized with the Commission's desire that the Convention on the Political Rights of Women should be speedily signed and ratified by all States so that women throughout the world could enjoy the advantages conferred upon them by the Convention, which Argentina had ratified some time previously. Argentine women enjoyed equal political rights with men and their active participation in political life was encouraged by the State in all possible ways.

13. The principles embodied in the draft convention on the nationality of married women (Economic and Social Council resolution 547 C (XVIII)) were fully in accordance with those contained in Argentine legislation. Her delegation believed that the Commission on the Status of Women should in future pay particular attention to the participation of women in economic life. Argentina could place its experience in that field at the Commission's disposal; during the past ten years the participation of Argentine women in economic life had been given special attention by the competent national authorities, whose policies were at all times guided by the principles of social justice which governed the country's economic and social life. Her delegation had read with great interest paragraphs 819 to 821 in the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2686),<sup>1</sup> dealing with educational opportunities for women. Her delegation had already had occasion to refer to the importance which it attached to the Commission's work in that connexion; education was one of the most important factors in ensuring that women enjoyed their rightful place in the world. Her delegation joined with the Commission on the Status of Women in hoping that, in conformity with Article 8 of the United Nations Charter, women would be able to participate to an ever increasing degree in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

14. Mr. MENESES PALLARES (Ecuador) viewed with satisfaction the excellent work that had been done by UNICEF. He was glad to note the increase in the number of beneficiary countries, the judicious use made of available funds, and the General Assembly's decision (resolution 802 (VIII)) to make the Fund a permanent institution. As a member of the Executive Board and the Programme Committee of UNICEF his delegation had watched the work of UNICEF develop from the time when its assistance had been given mainly to war-devastated areas to the present when its field of operations extended to practically all the children of the world. Unfortunately, in some parts of the world, par-

ticularly in Latin America, the plight of children was almost as tragic as in the worst war-devastated countries. For that reason the assistance given by UNICEF to twenty-seven Latin American countries, and in particular Ecuador, had been especially appreciated. The Fund had been most generous in its aid to countries which had been struck by disaster, including Haiti, Costa Rica, Panama and Ecuador. His delegation attached the greatest importance to the new UNICEF maternal and child welfare programme. He emphasized that in various countries, services established with the help of UNICEF had been continued thanks to the efforts of the Governments concerned; that would make it possible to maintain the various national programmes without interruption when UNICEF aid ended. It was vitally important to go on with the work which had been started, especially in the underdeveloped countries. He paid a tribute to the Executive Director of the Fund and to his colleagues and again thanked UNICEF for the aid it had given his country.

15. He congratulated the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its work. His delegation was in favour of establishing a United Nations narcotics laboratory and would support the joint draft resolution to that effect submitted by France, Turkey and the United Kingdom (A/C.3/L.432).

16. Turning to chapter V of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2686), which dealt with human rights, he said that his delegation reaffirmed its support of the principle of the right of self-determination, which it considered to be the keystone of the whole structure of human freedoms. At the 498th plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 22 November 1954, Mr. Trujillo, the head of the Ecuadorian delegation, had stated, with regard to the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Finance or Economy, that the organization of the American continent had not been accomplished overnight but was the result of an arduous historical, social and cultural process which had begun when the American nations had resolved to throw off the colonial yoke and win the right of self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over their territories and their material and spiritual resources, in other words, the right to be the masters of their fate. The Commission on Human Rights had completed the preparation of the draft covenants (E/2573, annex I). It was now important to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms were respected throughout the world. Unfortunately, many years would elapse before the covenants could be fully applied in every country but the United Nations should not slacken its efforts to that end. The Charter laid legal obligations on the Organization in that respect and his delegation did not feel that the United Nations had in the past done all it could and should do to assist the international community in that direction.

17. The Commission on Human Rights should now concentrate its efforts on problems connected with the affirmation of the right of self-determination, a vital task which had been entrusted to it by the General Assembly. It should also pay due attention to the work of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which had accomplished much despite many difficulties and the complexity of its task. The elimination of discrimination was a *sine qua non* of the universal exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The protection of

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



ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities was an equally important problem which closely affected the fundamental question of human rights as well as international peace and security. With respect to minorities, two types of measures should be envisaged; measures to eliminate discrimination and measures to enable minorities to preserve their characteristics and traditions, if they so desired, without prejudice, naturally, to the cultural and linguistic unity of the State in which they lived or to the loyalty which they owed to that State. Those were the far-reaching problems the Sub-Commission had to tackle.

18. His delegation was gratified that the Economic and Social Council had adopted a resolution at its eighteenth session to convene a conference of non-governmental organizations interested in the eradication of prejudice and discrimination (resolution 546 (XVIII)). The organizations concerned would be able to exchange views on the best means of combating discrimination, co-ordinate their efforts in the field and consider the possibility of organizing common programmes. The importance of the conference was obvious and his delegation thought it appropriate to point out that it would be the first time that use had been made of the powerful influence of the non-governmental organizations in one of the most important fields of United Nations activity, which was directly related to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

19. Mr. MATTHEW (India) thought that, while the Economic and Social Council had made progress in many spheres, some of its decisions had been regrettable. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 637 C (VII) and 738 (VIII), the Commission on Human Rights had prepared two draft resolutions concerning international respect for the right of peoples and nations to self-determination and had recommended the Council to transmit those resolutions to the General Assembly (E/2573, para. 335). The Council had decided (Council resolution 545 G (XVIII)) to return the recommendations to the Commission, which would have the effect of delaying their adoption for at least two or three years. The Indian delegation was of the opinion that the Council should have transmitted the draft resolutions to the General Assembly, which had expressed its concern on several occasions at the slow progress of work on the question of self-determination. As had occurred at its sixth session, the Assembly might find itself compelled to consider the substance of the question without awaiting the comments of its subsidiary organs; that procedure would probably take up a great deal of its time and it was therefore a matter for regret that the Economic and Social Council had not officially referred to it the proposals drafted by the Commission on Human Rights.

20. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had successfully carried out the work assigned to it, except where the drafting of the single convention was concerned. Such an instrument was vitally needed and it was to be hoped that the Commission would complete its preparation during its next session. Like the majority of members of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Economic and Social Council, the Indian delegation considered that a United Nations narcotics laboratory would be extremely useful. The Secretary-General's note (A/C.3/573) gave all the necessary information on the practical aspects of the proposal. It was apparently desirable for the laboratory to be situated in the same place, and preferably in the same building,

as the Division of Narcotic Drugs; if the latter was transferred to Geneva, the laboratory would have to be situated there.

21. India wished to express its appreciation of the magnificent work being done by the United Nations Children's Fund, which was a striking example of the international economic and social co-operation envisaged in Articles 55 and 56 of the United Nations Charter. It was assisting 78 countries and territories, the majority of which were not Members of the United Nations. The mass health campaigns undertaken with its assistance had provided almost 120 million mothers and children with protection against the most serious contagious diseases. Over 15 million persons had benefited by the feeding programmes carried out thanks to the low-cost skim milk made available by the United States Government. The Fund had supplied equipment for the construction of milk-processing plants, the output of which would permit free distribution to 4 million mothers and children a year. With its help, DDT factories and penicillin laboratories had been set up in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Egypt and Chile; valuable assistance had been given to 5,500 maternal and child welfare centres. All that had been done with a budget of under \$20 million, which proved that substantial results could be achieved with limited resources, if they were used wisely and economically. The Indian delegation was particularly happy at the election of Japan to the Executive Board of UNICEF. The Board thus included among its members, who were all on an equal footing, three States non-members of the United Nations. General Assembly resolution 802 (VIII) had added to the responsibilities of UNICEF and had made its financial needs more pressing. The position of the world's children called for a further expansion of its activities and the Indian delegation accordingly appealed to Governments to continue and increase their contributions.

22. India had submitted a draft resolution on the establishing of a World Children's Day (A/C.3/L.436). A similar proposal had been submitted by Uruguay (A/C.3/L.434) and he hoped that it would be possible for the two delegations to agree on a single text.

23. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) said that she attached the highest importance to the activities of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, which were attempting to find positive solutions to basic human problems. Her own country, whose economic and social development was in full swing, was to participate for the first time in the work of the Council, to which it would bring its full and whole-hearted co-operation.

24. The work of the United Nations Children's Fund was of special importance, because it was designed to promote the health and well-being of mothers and children; the help it had given to under-developed countries would in itself be sufficient justification for the existence of UNICEF, whose work was worthy of the highest praise. Its services to sick and under-nourished children were of great humanitarian significance and were to a large extent the key to the building of a healthy and prosperous world. Her Government had always co-operated with UNICEF and had made contributions to it totalling some \$300,000. The United Nations Children's Fund should be called upon to expand its programmes and to continue its assistance to the particularly needy countries of Latin America; Governments and private contributors should similarly

be called upon to continue to give firm support and solid financial backing to the Fund. Her delegation also urged members of the Committee to give unanimous approval to the proposal for the institution of a World Children's Day, on which subject two draft resolutions had been submitted, one by Uruguay (A/C.3/L.434) and the other by India (A/C.3/L.436). She wished, finally, to congratulate the Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Pate, on his devotion to the humanitarian cause to which he was giving such effective service.

25. The Commission on the Status of Women was one of the organs of the Council which had made the most successful efforts to carry out its task. It had drafted the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which had so far been signed by thirty-nine countries and ratified by fifteen. The Convention was the most outstanding achievement so far in the sphere of human rights; at its next session, the Commission was also to consider the draft convention on the nationality of married women. It was noteworthy that the Commission's activities had attracted considerable attention from the public and also from Governments, which each year included in their programmes the main reforms recommended by the Commission; in that connexion, she wished to thank the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Labour Organisation for their co-operation. The Commission's work was stimulating Governments to take practical steps to make the political equality of women a reality in their countries. The Colombian Government had just introduced a bill with that end in view and the Peruvian Parliament was studying a proposal for constitutional reform. As Chairman of the Commission, she wished to emphasize that, if the Commission had the esteem and respect of public opinion, that was due to the devotion and co-operative spirit shown by the representatives participating in its work and the valuable and untiring help of the United Nations Secretariat.

26. Mr. NUÑEZ (Costa Rica) said that his Government considered that the matters dealt with in chapters IV and V of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2686) were of particular importance. It regarded freedom as the prerequisite for the full development of the human person; attainment of freedom implied not only respect for traditional civil and political rights, but the maximum satisfaction of essential needs. That was the basis of the concept of the common good, which imposed two basic duties upon the State—to develop production in the interest of all and to guarantee adequate social security. For that reason, his Government was seeking to increase the national income and to ensure its equitable distribution. With a growing realization of the social nature of economic activity, the desire for gain would give way to desire for service and an economy of plenty would come into being for the benefit of all mankind.

27. The Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary organs already had remarkable achievements to their credit in promoting the well-being of the people of the whole world. His Government was particularly grateful to the United Nations Children's Fund, from which it had received assistance to the total value of over \$370,000 since 1949. As the Ecuadorian representative had reminded the Committee, the Fund had given help to Costa Rica and Panama in connexion with the natural disasters from which those countries

had recently suffered; he wished to thank the Uruguayan delegation and the Third Committee for the initiative they had taken in that regard. The technical guidance and advice given by UNICEF on the organization of those operations were as valuable as its financial assistance; the representatives of UNICEF stimulated the community spirit wherever they went and thus promoted the cause of true democracy, which was based on the dignity of the human person. A mission from the Executive Board had visited several under-developed countries in Latin America during the current year; it had been particularly welcome in Costa Rica. In that connexion, he wished to express his country's appreciation of the work of Miss Shaffer, chief of the UNICEF Area Office for Central America and the Caribbean. The procedures suggested in paragraphs 578 to 609 of the Council's report (A/2686) were well adapted to the task to be performed and, if followed, would help to remove a number of regrettable uncertainties. In that connexion, however, the serious problem of financing had to be faced. The United Nations Children's Fund needed a regular budget and the possibility might perhaps be considered of holding an annual conference of plenipotentiaries for the pledging of contributions, similar to that held for technical assistance purposes; Governments should regard UNICEF as a permanent institution, in whose operations they should all participate in a spirit of universal solidarity.

28. Costa Rica had recently been elected a member of the Population Commission; it would do its utmost to contribute to the work of that organ.

29. Chapter V, section VII, of the Council's report dealt with allegations regarding infringements of trade-union rights. It was the duty of States to help workers' and employers' organizations to settle disputes by means of conciliation. An atmosphere of true freedom was required for the efficient functioning of that system. It sometimes happened that employers or the public authorities themselves hampered the action of the trade unions. In the former case, it was for the State effectively to guarantee trade-union freedom by means of appropriate legislation; in the latter case, when a Government was trying to make use of trade unions to further its own policies, it was for the United Nations to reaffirm the essential principles of the Charter and of the Convention (No. 87) concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise adopted by the International Labour Organisation at San Francisco in 1948. In 1950, the Governing Body of the International Labour Office had set up a Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission on Freedom of Association, the establishment of which had aroused great hopes. Unfortunately, the machinery provided had one defect: the consent of the Government concerned was required before an inquiry could be instituted. If that Government refused its consent, it was incumbent upon the ILO to publish a document containing the complaint submitted, the reply of the Government concerned and any relevant comments, the publication of the document being intended to serve as a warning to the parties concerned. It would be desirable for the ILO to inform the Economic and Social Council whether any inquiries had actually been carried out, whether Governments had refused to authorize any of them and whether in that case the proposed document had been published. Any infringement of trade-union rights was in fact derogatory to the dignity

of the human person. The free world had to reaffirm the principle of freedom of association and by its example and protests enforce respect for it.

30. The Costa Rican delegation hoped that the Economic and Social Council would continue its work with the same zeal and determination as in the past, in the interests of the peoples of the whole world and in conformity with the principles defended by the United Nations.

31. Mrs. PRIETO (Cuba) recalled that her country's term as a member of the Economic and Social Council would expire during the current year. It would retire from the Council in the knowledge that it had made a modest, but sincere, contribution to the work of that important United Nations organ.

32. She wished to pay a tribute to the work of the United Nations Children's Fund. She noted with great interest the allocation of funds, particularly for maternal and child welfare, and hoped that it would be possible to extend the programmes of UNICEF, which already covered 5,500 centres where such services had previously been inadequate or non-existent. The development of those activities and the mass health campaign could not but make a substantial contribution to social progress, which was one of the essential purposes of the United Nations. The chief of her delegation had reaffirmed the principle that the protection of the health of peoples was indispensable to the improvement of their living conditions. Cuba was a country with very advanced social legislation, and a high proportion of its budget was devoted to services designed to raise the living standard of the population; her delegation was therefore prepared to support any motion in favour of the United Nations Children's Fund. It was not possible, however, for Cuba to make any financial contribution to UNICEF, since all its available resources were already devoted to measures for maternal and child welfare at the national level.

33. With regard to chapter V of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2686), her country had constantly upheld the right of peoples to self-determination. Her delegation would like once again to reaffirm that principle, on the understanding that it also embraced the right of peoples to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources.

34. Under the Cuban Constitution, anyone practising discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or religion was liable to penalties under the criminal law. The Cuban delegation accordingly supported all measures designed to combat and eradicate discrimination in all its forms, wherever it might exist. It endorsed measures for the protection of minorities and the defence of their legitimate interests, provided that such measures did not grant minorities a privileged position liable to cause disputes. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had done excellent work, particularly at its sixth session, and had derived great benefit from the collaboration of the specialized agencies. Its future programme of action (A/2686, paras. 735 to 737) was very wide in scope and the Secretary-General's assistance would be extremely valuable.

35. Cuba was a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had done remarkable work under the chairmanship of the representative of the Dominican Republic, as was clear from the draft resolutions which appeared in the report on its eighth ses-

sion (E/2571)<sup>2</sup> and which had been approved by the Economic and Social Council at its eighteenth session (Council resolution 547 (XVIII)). She would confine herself to a few comments on two questions considered by the Commission: the status of women in private law and the nationality of married women. With regard to the first question, it was essential for the Commission on the Status of Women to continue its work and for Governments to reply to the questionnaire circulated to them in order to provide the Commission with accurate information on the status of women in all countries; the Commission would certainly attain its object in that sphere, as it had done in the sphere of the political rights of women and in certain matters relating to economic opportunities for women. With regard to the second question, the nationality of married women, a draft convention had been submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its seventh session and had subsequently been transmitted to Governments for their observations (Economic and Social Council resolution 504 B (XVI)). As few replies had been received from Governments, the Cuban delegation had not insisted on maintaining the draft and had submitted at the following session a new draft convention which had taken into account the various suggestions which had been made. That draft had been included in Council resolution 547 C (XVIII), and the Cuban delegation urged Governments to submit their comments on it as speedily as possible, to enable the Commission on the Status of Women to contribute to the solution of an urgent problem of concern to thousands of women throughout the world.

36. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) wished to draw the Committee's attention to one of the most vital activities of the Economic and Social Council, namely, the work of the United Nations Children's Fund. As the Argentine representative had pointed out, the problems with which the Council had to deal should be faced realistically, particularly when it was a question of aid to mothers and children. He noted that, according to the table in paragraph 572 of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2686), 22.3 per cent of the aid provided by UNICEF had been devoted to maternal and child welfare projects between 1951 and June 1954. Those projects were on a long-term basis and it was necessary to bear in mind that UNICEF was no longer merely providing emergency aid to countries which had suffered disasters. The United Nations Children's Fund was now established on a permanent basis and, as the Economic and Social Council had pointed out in its resolution 543 (XVIII), General Assembly resolution 802 (VIII) had created new prospects for promoting UNICEF child welfare activities, which should increasingly be directed towards a lasting solution of the problems afflicting children in distress. In that connexion, it should be noted that a solution which was applicable to one country was not always applicable to another: problems should therefore be tackled from a different angle in each country, bearing in mind the conditions peculiar to it. Social progress could not be conceived apart from the fundamental principles upon which human society was based. Those principles were now the chief concern of mankind; they had very frequently inspired manifestations of sectarianism, but where children and their suffering were involved, sectarianism should be thrust into the

<sup>2</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 6.



background. All efforts should be directed to helping undernourished and homeless children, who were exposed to all kinds of danger. Child welfare was an essential condition of progress; it was a characteristic of true democracy.

37. He recalled that the Uruguayan delegation had placed before the Committee a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.434) proposing the institution of a World Children's Day. He was happy to note that the Indian delegation had also proposed a draft resolution on that subject (A/C.3/L.436) and was sure that it would be possible to reach agreement on the two texts. He reserved the right to return to that question later.

38. He supported the Costa Rican representative's suggestion concerning the convening of conferences of plenipotentiaries; that would be a wise step, and it deserved consideration.

39. He wished to pay a tribute to the representative of the Dominican Republic not only in her capacity as

Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women, but also as a militant defender of women's rights, who had been striving for years to obtain recognition and respect for those rights in all countries. Although women constituted half the world's population, in most countries they were unable to make their voice heard on questions relating to social progress; for that reason, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the implementation of which would at last enable them to express their views, should be carefully examined by all Governments. In that connexion, he pointed out that the political rights of women had been confirmed by Uruguayan legislation for some years. In Uruguay, women had the right to vote and were eligible for election; equal pay for men and women was guaranteed by law and there were special laws relating to the protection of expectant mothers.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.