

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/2194
29 September 1952

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH-
FRENCH

Seventh session

LAND REFORM

Progress report of the Secretary-General

1. The present document describes the steps taken by the Secretary-General and by the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in response to the resolutions on land reform adopted by the General Assembly (resolutions 401 (V) and 524 (VI)) and by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 370 (XIII)).^{1/} It is submitted in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 524 ((VI). When this paragraph was adopted by the General Assembly it was understood that a report on the activities of governments in response to the Assembly's and the Council's recommendations concerning land reform measures would not be available until 1954, when the analyses called for in paragraphs 8 and 10 of Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII) are due.
2. In response to paragraphs 8 and 10 of Council resolution 370 (XIII), the Secretary-General made arrangements with FAO to participate in two undertakings which also involve the co-operation of ILO and UNESCO. One of these concerns the drafting of "a single questionnaire addressed to governments" which is designed to obtain "information on progress in land reforms, including legislation and other measures adopted and on any other obstacles to the adoption of such measures and any suggestions that governments may have concerning international action to promote land reforms". The second undertaking concerns the analysis of

^{1/} The Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 370 (XIII) after a discussion of the report on Land Reform (United Nations Publications, Sales No. 1951.II.B.3) which the Secretary-General prepared in co-operation with FAO.

"the results obtained in various countries through agricultural co-operation" toward meeting "the requirements of technical and economic progress in agriculture while preserving the rights and freedoms of the individual", and "bringing out the possibilities offered from every standpoint by the co-operative system in this field".

3. The questionnaire will be despatched to governments during October 1952 with the recommendation that replies should be made to the Secretary-General by mid-1953. All governments, irrespective of the stage of their economic development, are being earnestly requested to reply to all relevant questions. The information which will be received from countries which are relatively advanced with respect to land reform measures should prove valuable for the sound formulation of conclusions and recommendations on the elimination of defects in agrarian structure which may exist in the less advanced countries. Upon the receipt of replies from governments, it is planned to analyse the information and to prepare the required report to the Council. The analysis and the preparation of the report are again planned as a co-operative enterprise between the Secretary-General and FAO, with the assistance of other interested specialized agencies. The secretariats of the regional economic commissions, as well as that of FAO, will stand ready to assist governments upon their request in the preparation of materials called for by the questionnaire.

4. The report on agricultural co-operation will be based on a plan of work which has been drawn up after extensive discussions with the specialized agencies concerned. As presently planned, the report will examine the contribution which co-operative organization has in the recent past made to technical and economic progress in agriculture and will consider the potential contribution which such organization might reasonably be expected to make in the light of the existing obstacles. The report as presently envisaged will cover briefly the major forms of co-operative enterprise and their development in different regions, and will give attention to the development of different types of co-operative organization as well as to the support given by governments to co-operatives in various countries.

5. A joint study of the fiscal problems of agriculture has also been initiated by the Secretary-General in co-operation with FAO. This study is being carried on in accordance with Council resolution 378 (XIII), section I, paragraph 2 (c). A first report, dealing chiefly with the structure and economic effects of the taxation of land, land produce and land income, will be submitted to the next session of the Fiscal Commission.

6. All three regional economic commissions have indicated a keen interest in the economic problems of agriculture in their respective regions. With the collaboration of FAO, joint agricultural units have been established both in the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe and in that of the Economic Commission for Latin America, and a similar unit is to be set up in the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. All three commissions have engaged in studies on agricultural credit and other agricultural problems related to land reform or problems of agrarian structure.

7. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, at its eighth session, adopted, on 5 February 1952, a resolution^{2/} requesting the Executive Secretary, in co-operation with the specialized agencies, to give high priority to the study of specific measures for agrarian reform in the perspective of the economic development plans of the countries of the region.

8. The Economic Commission for Latin America, at its fourth session, adopted a resolution^{3/} in which it urged the governments to study the problem of land tenure with a view to the better utilization of the land, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 401 (V) on land reform. The Committee of the Whole of ECLA approved, in February 1952, the report of the Working Party which had studied the 1952-53 work programme of the Commission, in which interest was expressed in a conference on agrarian problems tentatively projected for 1953; this meeting is to be held jointly by the Government of Brazil and by the United Nations and FAO.

9. Recognizing that land reform measures must be supported by sound systems of land and tax administration, the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, together with the secretariat of ECAFE and the Fiscal Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, is studying the possibility of a conference on land administration including land tax administration, to be attended by experts from the ECAFE region. The conference is expected to take place in the latter part of 1953, and is designed to analyse, evaluate and compare the various systems of land administration and land tax administration in use in the countries of Asia and the Far East. It is expected that such an exchange of experience and techniques will facilitate the improvement of these systems and thus contribute to the implementation of land reform policies.

2/ E/2171.

3/ E/2021.

/10. A seminar

10. A seminar on rural welfare dealing with several of the subjects listed in paragraph 5(c) of Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII) is to be held in Brazil early in 1953. The United Nations has for some time past provided technical assistance to governments at their request in fields which are closely related to land reform and which bear on the general economic and social betterment of agricultural populations. A report on agricultural credit in Guatemala drawn up by ECLA in June 1950 led to the dispatch, at the request of the Government of Guatemala, of a joint United Nations-FAO mission of two experts to assist the Government for several months in the spring of 1951 in organizing a new system of lending to farmers known as "supervised rural credit". Under this system, loan applications are considered in terms of the farmer's plans for using the money, and an application is the occasion for giving technical advice to the farmer on a variety of subjects. This procedure assures that the loan will be effectively used to foster increased agricultural production, and improves the prospects of repayment. Among the first seminars to be organized as part of the advisory social welfare services were two regional meetings which took place in the summer of 1947 in Medellin and Montevideo, and which, although they dealt with broad social problems in the Latin American region, also specifically included rural welfare among the topics discussed. A seminar on social welfare, including rural welfare, was held in Beirut in the summer of 1949 at the invitation of the Lebanese Government, and was attended by representatives of the Arab countries in the Middle East. It was followed in 1950 by a similar meeting held in Cairo at the invitation of the Egyptian Government and devoted to rural welfare, considered to be among the most important aspects of social welfare in a region with a predominantly rural population. The problems of basic education, village planning, administration and training in rural areas, social aspects of rural welfare, rural health and hygiene, co-operatives in rural areas and the economic, agricultural and industrial aspects of rural development were discussed. Experts from the Arab countries in the region and from the FAO, WHO, UNESCO and ILO participated with government representatives in drawing up integrated and comprehensive plans for improving rural standards.

11. In carrying through programmes of technical assistance to under-developed countries and territories, the work of the participating organizations of the Technical Assistance Board frequently impinges on the large question of land reform.

/There can

There can be no doubt that measures of land reform, as recommended in Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII), would help and complement many kinds of technical assistance at present being provided under the Expanded Programme. But the participating organizations operate exclusively in response to requests received from governments, and there has been only one request for help in undertaking measures of land reform, a request made by the Government of Brazil to FAO. For this reason, TAB is able to report only a limited advance in this field of work, though its participating agencies would give high priority to requests of this kind sent in by governments. When, later on in the year, the Executive Chairman of TAB undertakes the detailed programme reviews required of him under his new terms of reference,^{4/} it will be possible for the Board to assess more clearly the ways in which assistance related to land reforms can be dovetailed into the present programmes of technical assistance, as further requests are received from governments in this particular field.

12. The remainder of the present document is based on materials supplied by ILO, FAO and UNESCO at the request of the Secretary-General, and briefly summarizes the steps taken by those organizations in response to General Assembly resolution 524 (VI) and Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII).

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

13. The Governing Body of ILO, at its 117th session, in discussing the Economic and Social Council resolution on land reform, associated itself with the Council and the General Assembly in recognizing the importance of land reform; placed on record its willingness that ILO should co-operate with the United Nations and other specialized agencies concerned on the lines indicated in General Assembly resolution 524 (VI); and decided that the resolution should be communicated to those organs of ILO having an interest in matters relating to land reform. It further recommended that high priority should be given to technical assistance on land reform questions coming within the competence of ILO, and asked the Director-General, when making proposals for the agenda of future sessions of relevant ILO committees and conferences, to submit specific suggestions regarding suitable items bearing upon the question of land reform.

^{4/} E/2238, paragraph 12(a).

14. The Fifth Conference of American States members of ILO adopted a resolution on land reform. This resolution, among other things, called on the governments to focus special attention on the efficient use of land resources as a paramount factor in economic development and on land reform as a positive means of providing security of employment, of checking rural exodus, of increasing productivity and real incomes, and of raising standards of living in the countryside. The Conference noted that many important aspects of the problem of land reform fell within the purview of ILO, and associated itself with the wish that ILO should make its full contribution in action undertaken in this field.

15. ILO participated in an inter-agency meeting on land reform convened by FAO in Rome in April 1952 and referred to in paragraph 21 below; it also contributed to the framing of the single questionnaire to be sent to governments on progress in and obstacles to land reform, referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

16. ILO is continuing to study the most effective means of contributing to an examination of the whole range of problems associated with agrarian reforms which have an important bearing upon the conditions of life and of work of agricultural workers.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

17. The Food and Agriculture Organization's interest in land tenure and the related aspects of the agrarian structure derives from the objects of the organization as defined in its constitution, and work on those subjects had thus been part of the ordinary programme of FAO long before the first Economic and Social Council resolution. For example, by the end of 1950, a series of studies on the land tenure systems of various countries had been attempted; a study on the consolidation of fragmented holdings and a general paper on essential steps in national agricultural development had been published; local studies on agricultural credit had been made (some of which have been published); papers on land settlement and resettlement for agriculture and on agricultural credit for the small farmer, which contain much material relevant to the subject, had been written (these have since been published); and a study of the land tenure systems in relation to agriculture development had been drafted. This work under the ordinary programme continued throughout 1951 and still continues. Technical meetings on agricultural co-operatives have been held in the Caribbean area and in the Far East, and a regional meeting on land utilization, which touched on some aspects of the agrarian

/structure

structure, has been held in Ceylon. At the beginning of 1952, field work on agricultural credit under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance was in progress in Libya, Iran, Honduras and Jamaica, and on agricultural co-operatives in Mexico (Fundamental Education Centre) and Thailand. A regional training centre on co-operatives in the Near East and a seminar on agricultural credit in Latin America are in preparation. A study has also been begun, in collaboration with the Fiscal Division of the Secretariat of the United Nations, on the effect on agricultural development of rural taxation and other aspects of fiscal policy (see also paragraph 5 above). The effect of the 1950 resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly was thus not so much to stimulate FAO's interest in defects in the agrarian structure as to enable added emphasis to be given to the subject in the organization's annual programmes.

18. The first action taken by FAO arising directly from the 1950 resolutions of the United Nations was its collaboration with the United Nations in the preparation of the report presented by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its thirteenth session.^{5/} The next, and from the point of view of FAO, the most important, step was the full discussion of the subject which took place at the sixth session of the Conference of FAO in 1951 and resulted in a comprehensive resolution (No. 8) and the grant of additional funds which allowed the Director-General considerably to expand his programme of work. This expanded programme falls into two parts, a programme of study and a programme of action. The first is regarded by FAO as an essential preliminary to the second because of the great complexity of the subject and the extent to which the issues are misunderstood or clouded by political, ideological or sentimental approaches. The programme of studies is, indeed, to be regarded as a preliminary one intended to clarify issues and to appraise in general terms the characteristics of different types of tenure and their effect on different agricultural situations. The studies will consist of two related series of documents, the first including a bibliography, a paper on definition of terms and their translation and a few general studies on methodology and general principles, and the second in the form of functional monographs analysing, on the basis of existing knowledge, the characteristics of the main types of land tenure and the problems to which they give rise. Work on the bibliography and definitions is already well-advanced. Work on several of the

5/ Land Reform, United Nations Publications, Sales No. 1951.II.B.3.

other studies has already begun, and preparations have been made for others to commence in the near future. These preliminary studies are regarded as essential, both for the briefing of experts engaged in the practical parts of the programme, and to assist governments approaching the problem to do so from a sound and practical point of view.

19. The second part of the programme consists of practical work to be carried out mainly within the territories of member countries. It is expected that much of this work will fall under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, but clearly the extent to which the work can be done will depend ultimately on the desires of member countries and on the requests for assistance received. This practical work is of three kinds: country studies, regional seminars and demonstrations or experiments. The country studies are intended to be analyses of agrarian situations derived from data collected in the field, accompanied, if required, by recommendations for action. The regional seminars are intended to provide an opportunity for free discussion and the pooling of knowledge as well as for a certain amount of expert instruction. The first of these regional seminars will be held early in 1953 in Latin America, and will combine the subject of land tenure with those of land use and of plans for agricultural development.

Demonstration and experimental projects are expected to develop out of the country studies or out of the discussions at the regional seminars. The extent and success of this practical programme must inevitably depend on the interest and co-operation of member governments.

20. FAO is sharing jointly with the United Nations in the preparation of the questionnaire on land reform and the study on co-operatives which the Secretary-General was requested to issue under Economic and Social Council resolution 370(III), and considerable joint discussion has already taken place on these matters.

21. FAO has also taken the initiative in arranging a meeting in Rome on 22-24 April 1952, which was attended by representatives of the international agencies interested in land reform. The subject of this meeting was the co-ordination between their several programmes of work.

/UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

22. UNESCO considers that it can contribute to the international action recommended by the General Assembly (524(VI)) and the Economic and Social Council (370 (XIII)) in the following ways:

(1) Through its efforts to promote the development of education in rural areas, UNESCO can help governments and the competent international organizations to establish conditions in which land reform can be undertaken and carried out with a reasonable prospect of success;

(2) UNESCO can help governments, in co-operation with the competent international organizations, to undertake scientific sociological, legal and administrative research into procedures of land reform and the effect of such reform on rural populations.

23. UNESCO's activities in connexion with fundamental education relate chiefly to rural areas. They concern both children and adults. By their very nature they necessitate constant collaboration with the United Nations, the ILO, FAO and WHO. By mutual agreement fundamental education has been defined as follows: "Fundamental education is that kind of minimum and general education which aims to help children and adults who do not have the advantages of formal education to understand the problems of their immediate environment and their rights and duties as citizens and individuals, and to participate more effectively in the economic and social progress of their community."

24. UNESCO's first step was to define the problems which exist in this sphere of international action by means of a series of regional conferences and seminars.

25. To this end a conference attended by the representatives of eight Asian and Far Eastern countries was held at Nanking in 1947, under the auspices of UNESCO and the Chinese Government; a similar conference was held at Mexico City in the same year. In 1948 a regional seminar on education in Latin America, at which seventeen countries were represented, was convened at Caracas by the Organization of American States and UNESCO jointly. Following a recommendation adopted at this seminar, a further seminar on literacy and adult education was held at Quitandinha (Brazil) in 1949. The same year a seminar on rural adult education, at which fifty-six countries or territories were represented, was held at Mysore (India).

/26. UNESCO's

26. UNESCO's activities include the dissemination of improved methods and techniques, the production of teaching material and the training of specialized staff. Its operations are carried on principally within the framework of the system of associated projects and the scheme for the establishment of a network of international fundamental education centres.^{6/}

27. The system of associated projects consists of a network of national enterprises of fundamental education linked with UNESCO with a view to promoting the international exchange of information and stimulating local experiment. At the present time the system includes forty-six projects organized by seventeen Member States.

28. UNESCO assists in the training of specialists in fundamental education, who will return to work in their own countries, by the establishment of national and international centres intended to provide a model for the States in the region for the carrying out of national mass fundamental education campaigns.

29. The first such centre, which serves Latin America, has been in operation at Patzcuaro, Mexico, since May 1951. It was set up with the help of the Mexican Government and the Organization of American States and with the co-operation of the ILO, FAO and WHO. The first students came from nine Latin American countries (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico and Peru). The centre's activities have been expanded in order to extend the benefits of the centre to other Latin American States members of UNESCO.

30. An agreement was signed on 25 April 1952 between the Egyptian Government and UNESCO for the establishment during the current year of a second fundamental education centre at Sirs-el-Layan, in the Menouf region (Egypt). It will serve Egypt, Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

31. Side by side with the establishment of international centres, UNESCO is organizing or assisting the national training centres established within the framework of the system of associated projects or the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance.

32. UNESCO has, for example, helped to organize a demonstration centre for fundamental education in the agricultural settlement at Minnerya, Ceylon, the Marbial Valley Project, in Haiti, begun in 1948, and a demonstration centre for fundamental education at Dineh, in Liberia. In Syria, UNESCO experts are working

^{6/} These activities are described in detail in UNESCO's latest report to the United Nations, submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its fourteenth session (E/2225).

to set up a training centre for specialists in fundamental education in rural areas.

33. UNESCO also envisages a training programme for the granting of a number of individual scholarships and a "group training scheme" to give young students specialized training in fundamental education.

34. UNESCO is also carrying out a long-term programme for the progressive generalization of free compulsory primary education.

35. Because of their educational value and their encouragement of a spirit of initiative and mutual help among rural communities, agricultural co-operatives provide valuable support to the development of fundamental education. With the co-operation of the ILO, instruction on the organization of co-operatives has therefore been included in the programmes of the regional fundamental education centre for Latin America and of a number of national centres such as the Haiti centre. In 1950 UNESCO published, in consultation with the ILO, a monograph entitled "Co-operatives in Fundamental Education".

36. Following resolution 370 (XIII) adopted by the Economic and Social Council and approved by the General Assembly, the Executive Board of UNESCO has included in the draft programme for 1953/1954, which will be submitted to the next session of the General Conference (November 1952), certain projects under which various branches of the social sciences would contribute to the study of questions relating to land reform.

37. The following resolutions are accordingly submitted to the General Conference:

"Member States are invited to undertake surveys of the conditions governing the land reforms which they have already carried out or are contemplating, together with the effects of such reforms, and to transmit the results of these surveys to the Director-General (Resolution 3.241)."

"The Director-General is authorized, in co-operation with the United Nations and the other specialized agencies, to encourage scientific studies of the legal and administrative procedures of land reform and of the social effect of such reform upon the rural population (Resolution 3.242)."

38. In accordance with the second resolution, UNESCO proposes to participate in the analysis of the replies to the questionnaire provided for by resolution 370(XIII)

of the Economic and Social Council and, if the General Conference agrees, it will undertake, in close conjunction with the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned, a number of studies with regard to: agricultural co-operatives from the point of view of the rights and freedoms of the individual; the repercussions from the sociological point of view of the agrarian structure on rural populations; and, in the legal sphere, the way in which various national legal systems deal with land questions. UNESCO will entrust this latter study to the International Committee of Comparative Law.
