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## CONTENTS

## Page

## Agenda item 12:

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters II, III, IV and V) (continued) . . . . . 145

Draft resolution on the activities of the regional economic commissions (concluded) . . . . . 145

## Agenda item 29:

Programmes of technical assistance:

(a) Report of the Economic and Social Council (continued) . . . . . 146

General debate (continued) . . . . . 146

Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

## AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters II, III, IV and V) (A/3613, A/3661, A/C.2/L.333/Rev.2) (continued)

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS (A/C.2/L.333/REV.2) (concluded)

1. Mr. FIGUEROA (Chile) noted that the controversial passage had been eliminated from the new text of the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/C.2/L.333/Rev.2) and accordingly withdrew his own amendment (A/C.2/L.344).

2. Mr. ABDESSELAM (Tunisia) said that he would not press for a vote on the amendment submitted by his delegation (A/C.2/L.345), as the changes it proposed were now embodied in the new version of the draft resolution.

3. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to new amendments to the Czechoslovak draft resolution, submitted by the United States (A/C.2/L.341/Rev.2).

4. Mr. JUDD (United States of America) said that in drafting its amendment, his delegation had tried to take into account the comments made both during meetings and during unofficial discussions. He hoped that the new text would be generally acceptable to the members of the Committee.

5. Mr. PSCOLKA (Czechoslovakia) said that, in the spirit of co-operation apparently motivating other members of the Committee, his delegation would accept the amendments submitted by the United States. He pointed out, however, that in certain respects the new text did not entirely meet his country's main objective as defined in paragraph 3 of its original proposal. He hoped that the new text, as amended by the United States, would be unanimously adopted and would encourage the regional commissions to continue their work along constructive lines.

6. Mr. KRIVEN (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the aim of the Czechoslovak draft resolution was to ensure a fuller use of the opportunities for action open to the regional economic commissions, in conformity with their terms of reference and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Those commissions had already achieved a great deal, but their work had so far been purely regional in scope; such a situation was normal, as the primary task of the commissions had been the economic rehabilitation of the countries with which they were directly concerned. However, present conditions made for ever-increasing interdependence between different areas of the world, and it would clearly be impossible for the regional commissions to continue their work without mutual co-operation. Admittedly, as the representative of Mexico had pointed out, their attention should mainly be focused on their own regions, but that was no reason why they should adopt an isolationist attitude which might not only impair their own usefulness but also hinder world economic progress.

7. Matters such as the development of international trade, price-fixing, the exploitation of natural resources, the use of atomic energy, the improvement of agricultural methods and of levels of living, and the exchange of information should undoubtedly be regulated by consultation between the regional commissions. Interregional co-operation was vital if the differences between highly developed and under-developed countries were to be eradicated. Furthermore, interregional co-operation could but help to create an atmosphere of confidence between peoples and to safeguard the maintenance of peace.

8. For all those reasons, the delegation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic would vote in favour of the Czechoslovak draft resolution.

9. Mr. RAJAPATIRANA (Ceylon) was glad to note that, thanks to the goodwill of the delegations concerned, certain controversial points had been eliminated and the Committee now had before it a draft resolution which had some chance of being generally accepted.

10. Mr. HAYTA (Turkey) said that his delegation would support the Czechoslovak draft resolution, as amended by the United States.

11. Mr. THOMSON (Australia) was gratified by the spirit of co-operation shown by the various delegations which had taken part in drafting the resolution. In the interests of unanimity, the Australian delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution. It would do so despite the fact that it had some difficulty in accepting certain parts of the resolution, which laid particular stress on the expansion of world trade, whereas by definition the regional commissions should be primarily concerned with regional problems. He doubted whether interregional trade consultations,

which would have discriminatory implications, would be of much ultimate value and recalled that they were not favoured by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE).

12. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/C.2/L.333/Rev.2), as amended by the United States (A/C.2/L.341/Rev.2).

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

13. Mr. JUDD (United States of America) said that as the Czechoslovak delegation had accepted the United States amendments, he had been able to vote in favour of the draft resolution. It should, however, be clearly understood that the new resolution did not represent an attempt to force action upon the regional commissions, for example with respect to the question of interregional trade consultations which had so far been rejected by two of the commissions. Moreover with respect to the general question of interregional activities, the commissions were essentially forums for examination of regional economic problems and could not take the place of the Economic and Social Council.

14. Mr. ARKADEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) welcomed the fact that the Czechoslovak draft resolution had been unanimously approved by the members of the Committee. In the opinion of the Soviet delegation, the regional commissions should adopt a more constructive attitude. None could dispute the value of the work done by those commissions in the past, but they manifestly suffered from several important defects which should be corrected. They still did not include among their members a number of countries which played a significant part in the economic life of the world. The participation of the People's Republic of China, of the Mongolian People's Republic, of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, of Korea and of the German Democratic Republic would certainly make the regional commissions concerned considerably more effective and more universal in character. The regional commissions sometimes tended to disregard proposals made to them in their own interest: thus, the Economic Commission for Europe had received from the USSR a proposal for an All-European Agreement on Economic Co-operation,<sup>1/</sup> but had as yet taken no practical steps to bring it into being, although European economic co-operation largely depended on the conclusion of such an agreement. The USSR and some of the under-developed countries had repeatedly stressed in the regional commissions the need for action to lift all restrictions on international trade, to secure the fixing of more equitable prices and for promoting the industrialization of the under-developed countries by providing them with capital equipment and by giving their nationals training, especially technical training. Those questions did not take their rightful place in the work of the regional commissions. The new resolution therefore represented a highly constructive and encouraging step, particularly if the regional commissions took into account the comments made on the proposal in the Committee and drew the necessary conclusions.

15. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) praised the conciliatory spirit which had enabled the sponsors of the draft

resolution and of the various amendments to draw up a text acceptable to all the members of the Committee. The Sudanese delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution in the hope that it would hasten the establishment of an economic commission for Africa.

16. Sir Alec RANDALL (United Kingdom) agreed with the comments of the representatives of the United States and Australia. There was nothing in the newly-adopted resolution which could be construed as diverting the attention of the regional commissions from their principal tasks or as making any change in their status or functions.

17. Mr. TURPIN (France) stressed that the resolution, as approved, did not require the regional commissions to extend their field of action. While they could certainly not disregard world problems, they could best contribute to the solution of those problems by studying them from a regional standpoint.

18. Mr. ADAM (Ghana) said that the very loftiness of the United Nations ideals showed that they were ultimately meant to benefit all the nations of the world. The Committee's decisions, even if they applied primarily to the Members of the United Nations, must indirectly affect all peoples, including those of Africa which did not belong to the Organization.

19. He wished to thank the delegations of Czechoslovakia and the United States for stressing the need to improve the economic situation of the under-developed countries.

20. Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium) said that he agreed with the French representative's interpretation of the functions of the regional commissions. The responsibility for ensuring liaison between the various regional commissions lay with the Economic and Social Council.

#### AGENDA ITEM 29

##### Programmes of technical assistance:

(g) Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3613, A/3661, A/C.2/196) (continued)

##### GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

21. Mr. PSCOLKA (Czechoslovakia) said that the year 1956 had marked the turning point in the history of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. The new planning system adopted would ensure greater satisfaction of the wishes and needs of the countries concerned and better results throughout. It constituted a further step in the promotion of international co-operation.

22. It was only natural for the less-developed countries to attach great importance to programmes of technical assistance designed to foster their economic development. It should not be forgotten, however, that those countries also took an active part in the execution of those programmes, both by providing experts (more than 25 per cent of the experts engaged in the past year had been nationals of recipient countries) and by financing a part of the local expenditure. In that connexion, the Czechoslovak delegation believed that the amount paid by a Government towards the local living costs of experts should be regarded as an additional contribution, and be shown as such in the balance sheets of the Technical Assistance Board (TAB), whenever it exceeded that Government's pledged

<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-Fourth Session, Supplement No. 6 paras. 366-373.

contribution to the Expanded Programme. That system should apply not only to projects in individual countries but also to regional projects, as in the latter case the host country rendered appreciable assistance to the other participating countries. Such a procedure would demonstrate that technical assistance was a collective effort and a form of mutual aid. In that connexion, experience had shown that the utilization of the so-called inconvertible currencies raised no real problem and that some of the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 623 B III (XXII) were unjustified.

23. Since it was clear from the Annual Report of TAB (E/2965 and E/TAC/REP/103) that, although contributions had increased, present funds were insufficient to meet all requests for technical assistance; it seemed entirely illogical to refuse certain countries, such as the German Democratic Republic, the right to contribute to the Expanded Programme, especially as other countries had expressed a desire to receive the assistance which the German Democratic Republic was prepared to offer.

24. Although it was true that the inadequacy of funds in relation to the increased requests for aid presented a serious problem at the present time, that States just admitted to the United Nations particularly needed assistance and that projects under way in other countries could not be suspended, the Czechoslovak delegation did not think that it was wise to try to solve those difficulties by abandoning the idea of new projects in Europe in 1958. Technical assistance should be given to those who needed it most, without any discrimination between different countries or different parts of the world. The step contemplated by TAB (E/TAC/65) would be contrary to the very spirit of the Programme.

25. Czechoslovakia was not a recipient country, but it would continue to contribute to the Expanded Programme and had undertaken to contribute 500,000 crowns to the Special Account in 1958. In addition, the Czechoslovak Government would organize a seminar on flood control, drainage and irrigation in the spring of 1958, as it had for the past few years, for the benefit of hydrologists and experts in hydraulics from the under-developed countries. It would bear all the expenses involved in carrying out that project.

26. In conclusion, the representative of Czechoslovakia emphasized the great importance of the United Nations technical assistance activities, through which under-developed countries could obtain the help they needed without any loss of political independence.

27. Mr. CHAUVET (Haiti) recalled that in 1948 the Haitian delegation had submitted the first draft resolution on technical assistance to the General Assembly. It had also been the first to request the despatch of a United Nations technical assistance mission—the "Rosenborg Mission". Negotiations at that time had been rather difficult, since some Governments had feared that the sending of foreign officials to their countries would encounter insurmountable psychological obstacles. However, the example of Haiti had inspired confidence and had been immediately followed by forty-six Member States. Today, the number of requests had outstripped the funds available to the Expanded Programme.

28. The progress made in Haiti as a result of United

Nations technical assistance had been so great that it was intended to revise the five-year plan, which was already largely out of date, and to replace it by a much more ambitious plan. However, the work of the United Nations was still limited to the despatch of experts, in some cases with demonstration equipment. The experts made a thorough survey of resources and attempted to co-ordinate agricultural and industrial development, which were the cornerstones of economic prosperity. It should never be forgotten, however, that the future of the under-developed countries depended on the extent to which their own nationals participated in their economic activity.

29. Although the United Nations had already accomplished a great deal in the matter of technical assistance, much still remained to be done. Some of the action it had taken was out of keeping with the scale and urgency of the under-developed countries' needs. Two-thirds of the human race were still denied the benefits of scientific progress and the gap between the rich and poor countries was as wide as ever, a situation which contained the seeds of hatred and rebellion. Technical assistance was and should be a tangible demonstration of international mutual aid and human solidarity. Even the harshest critics of the United Nations, who were reluctant to regard it as anything more than an arena for oratorical combat and intrigue, were compelled to pay tribute to the practical achievements of technical assistance, which alone could enable the under-developed countries fully to exploit their physical and spiritual resources and to escape the contagion of that epidemic which he would describe as the "destructive madness" of the atomic age.

30. However, it was necessary to give greater consideration than at present to the degree of development of the under-developed countries and to provide more substantial assistance to those countries with the lowest standard of living. Similarly, special attention should be given to countries which were receiving little or no assistance under bilateral schemes. Statistics would show the urgent need for following up those two suggestions, to which he attached special importance.

31. Moreover, the Haitian delegation thought that more use should be made of scholarships and fellowships, which were extremely helpful to the economic development of under-developed countries. Such scholarships and fellowships should involve no costs to the recipient countries or to their holders. At the same time, TAB should institute a new programme for training internes, under which nationals of under-developed countries would be sent to study for limited periods in highly industrialized countries in order to obtain a knowledge of industrial skills and methods. Internes would be selected from among skilled workers and would be under thirty years of age. Their number should not exceed twenty for each under-developed country and the period of their internship would be one or two years. They would be permitted to work in an industrial establishment at the prevailing local wage for their trade. The United Nations would lay down their conditions of employment through the national authorities of the host country. In no case, naturally, would internes remain in the host country after the expiration of their internship for the purpose of taking up employment. Their travelling ex-

penses would be borne by the United Nations. If well received, the new scheme might be based on the multi-lateral convention on student employees of 17 April 1950 between the Brussels Treaty States.

32. Sir Alec RANDALL (United Kingdom) said that his Government had pledged £800,000, the equivalent of \$2,240,000, to the Special Account for 1958, and that after the United States his country was still the second largest contributor to the Expanded Programme. Further evidence of the United Kingdom's interest in technical assistance was to be found in the number and quality of the experts it made available to many other countries and in the training facilities if offered to fellowship holders from abroad. He would also like to express his Government's gratitude for the valuable assistance given under the Expanded Programme to territories under British administration.

33. Stressing the advantages of the new system of country-programming, he said that adoption of that new method had led many of the countries concerned to set up central services exclusively concerned with technical assistance matters, and to co-ordinate their own economic development plans with the technical assistance projects undertaken in their countries. The new system had the additional merit of encouraging co-ordination between the Expanded Programme and other international technical assistance programmes such as the Colombo Plan. TAB and the participating organizations were to be congratulated on the speed with which they had adapted their techniques to the system of country-programming.

34. His delegation considered that the evaluation of programmes did not need to be a costly or complicated operation, and that account should be taken of the views expressed by the Governments concerned. He congratulated TAB on having conducted a critical survey of the Programme with scrupulous objectivity and on having stressed the main problems in order to facilitate their solution. It was obvious that failures had been mainly due to the present lack in some countries of adequate administrative and technical services, but that difficulty would certainly be overcome in the future. If the technical assistance programmes were to succeed, it was necessary for Governments to make as great a contribution as possible to the projects undertaken in their countries. As the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) had suggested, TAB might also undertake an evaluation of regional projects and the work of training centres.

35. His delegation was glad that TAC had adopted a resolution concerning extension of the use of what had been called the "Burma Plan", whereby Governments were provided with technical assistance on a reimbursable basis on request; that system had given good results in many countries.

36. With regard to the outposting of certain programme officers of TAA to Latin America, he wanted to know, first, whether such a partial regionalization of the Programme might not diminish the advantages of centralization, particularly from the point of view of overall direction and recruitment; secondly, whether the new arrangements were more or less costly than the previous arrangements, and finally, whether or not the new arrangements had accelerated the machinery for meeting requests for technical assistance from the

Governments of Latin America. Those were matters of importance, and they would be even more important if the question arose of extending the new system to other areas.

37. Mr. HALIQ (Saudi Arabia) said that his country was one of the very rare countries which was financing its economic development almost exclusively from its own resources: it had a token association with United Nations technical assistance and its modest financial contribution to the Expanded Programme was matched by its modest requests for assistance under the Programme. It was nevertheless from the point of view of the economically less developed countries that he proposed to discuss the work done and the results achieved by the United Nations in the sphere of technical assistance. He welcomed TAB's attempt to evaluate the achievements and shortcomings of the Expanded Programme. TAB's annual report reflected the confidence of those administering the Programme, a confidence which was to some extent justified by the successes reported: out of several hundred projects undertaken, only forty-seven were below expectations and, of those forty-seven, two-thirds only were considered failures or partial failures; similarly out of 2,346 experts recruited, only twenty-eight had been considered unsatisfactory for various reasons. In his opening statement (471st meeting) the Executive Chairman of TAB had mentioned the friendly reception given to TAB's report by the Technical Assistance Committee. It went without saying that the General Assembly in turn would follow the example of previous years and approve the work done, despite the duplication of effort, the rivalries between the participating agencies and other disadvantages implicit in any bureaucratic system because the management of the Programme in its present form gave rise to little serious criticism. But the underlying purpose of the Programme and the principles on which it rested should be reviewed, more particularly in the light of the needs of developing countries.

38. The representative of Finland had said that the list of technical assistance projects was impressive and that care should be taken to see that there was no dispersal of effort. The French representative, too, had emphasized the need for effective action on a limited front so as to avoid the risk of frittering resources away by constantly enlarging the scope of the Programme. His delegation shared those views.

39. The crucial point was to determine what was the real purpose of technical assistance. Was it a show place for the exchange of technical knowledge, a bureau for the placement of experts or a real contribution to the economic development of the underdeveloped countries? The Executive Chairman had said that his confidence in the future of the Programme was based on his appraisal of what it had already achieved first and foremost in terms of the improvement of living conditions in many countries and territories throughout the world. Suffice it to say that that was an extremely ambitious statement. He (Mr. Halig) could not help wondering whether it really applied to the fifteen or sixteen territories bordering on the Arabian peninsula. The Executive Chairman had said that he viewed the future with ambivalent feelings of confidence and anxiety: among the various reasons for anxiety, only one had emerged clearly from his statement and even then he had hastened to

add that his apprehensions about the effectiveness of the system of inter-agency activity which TAB represented had largely disappeared. There was no indication that those responsible for administering the Expanded Programme were conscious of the need to approach the question from a fresh angle and to appraise the nature of the technical assistance operation more boldly and imaginatively than hitherto. The Executive-Chairman had shown that he was not entirely unaware of the problem when he had spoken of "technical assistance as it is now known" and "technical assistance as it should be", the latter being the type of technical assistance which should be envisaged once the "frustration point" mentioned by Mr. Owen had been reached; in other words, the point at which sound advice, careful blueprints and well-organized training programmes seemed vain and profitless for lack of the means necessary to carry out an important scheme. That was the point at which an effort of imagination was required to find a solution which would really contribute to economic development. That solution did not lie in the establishment of a technical training college or an agricultural demonstration programme: it was not by competing with existing training centres and scientific institutions that TAB could be of most assistance and it should avoid the fields in which national authorities or bilateral assistance programmes were already operating. Admittedly the problem was not simple and it should be studied thoroughly by TAB, TAC and the other United Nations bodies concerned with technical assistance.

40. Such a study might reveal the need for a radical change in concepts and methods. In that connexion, he reminded the Committee of the example, already mentioned by the French representative, of the mission sent to survey the phosphate resources in Jordan. The United Nations had then had an opportunity of coming directly to the assistance of a small country without great natural resources. If the mission had taken a rather broader view of its role, it would have made

an extensive general study of the international phosphates market and its absorptive capacity and of the sources from which Jordan might have obtained assistance in financing the development of its phosphates industries; in brief it could have exerted a decisive influence on the country's economy. Such action, however, would require close collaboration between the various bodies set up by the United Nations; in the case in point, for instance, the mission would have had to obtain the assistance of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the International Finance Corporation. His delegation was convinced that TAB should concentrate on achieving concerted action. But that would not be possible without a reappraisal of the whole Programme.

41. In conclusion he said that his criticism was levelled in the most friendly spirit and was inspired by his devotion to a cause which he held in high esteem and in which he would like to see not only the symbol but the tangible proof of international co-operation.

42. Mr. TURPIN (France) wished to make a brief observation in connexion with the Saudi Arabian representative's statement. The Saudi Arabian representative had referred to the French representative's statements and had taken up the example of the mission sent to Jordan to survey the phosphates situation. While that mission might not have fulfilled the ideal requirements outlined by the French delegation, it had in any case been extremely useful. His delegation had taken that example to illustrate its criticism, but it had deliberately selected a project from among the positive achievements of the United Nations. His observation in no way detracted from the remarkable statement just made by the Saudi Arabian representative, which constituted a considerable contribution to the Committee's work.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.