



UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/8074  
21 September 1970  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

Twenty-fifth session  
Agenda item 42

SECOND UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE

Letter dated 21 September 1970 from the Permanent Representatives of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We should be grateful if you would arrange for the joint statement by the delegations of the socialist countries on the second decade of development and social progress to be circulated as an official document of the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, under agenda item 42.

The text of the statement is attached.

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STATEMENT

BY THE DELEGATIONS OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES - THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA, THE BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, THE CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, THE UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC AND THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS - TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON THE SECOND DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The economic and social development of many countries in the present-day world is characterized by unevenness and deep-rooted contradictions. The immense concentration - in the hands of financial groups and monopolistic associations - of financial resources and material values created by the labour of millions of people is preventing society from exercising systematic pressure to ensure that resources are used in the interests of all its members. The grievous consequences of colonial domination, together with existing forms of exploitation and financial oppression of many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America by monopoly capital, are condemning these countries to a position of inequality in international economic relations, and are widening the gap between them and the industrially-developed capitalist countries in the matter of economic and social development. The whole complex of difficulties involved in economic and social development makes it necessary for each country and the entire international community to adopt substantial and practical measures to accelerate national development and improve international co-operation.

The socialist countries, which are rapidly developing their national economies on the basis of a progressive socio-economic structure for society and unified plans for economic and cultural development in the interests of all members of society, are making a substantial contribution to the improvement of international economic development. The socialist countries have always shared the conviction that the difficult social and economic conditions in which hundreds of millions of people on earth are still living are an intolerable phenomenon in the present-day world. In particular, the socialist countries view with profound understanding the difficulties which the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are encountering in building up their economies and realizing social progress.

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The socialist countries therefore support in principle United Nations measures which contribute to the elimination of this phenomenon. They are constantly providing active support for United Nations decisions aimed at the implementation of progressive measures for the economic and social development of all peoples. Our countries have always expressed their readiness to make a practical contribution to the realization of the humanitarian purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. At the present time, too, the socialist countries support the idea and the objectives of the Second United Nations Development Decade, which can become an important factor in the improvement of international economic relations; but for this it is essential that the programmes for the Decade should be based on principles which will ensure a genuine acceleration of social and economic development.

1. The Second United Nations Development Decade can make a universal and substantial contribution to the cause of economic and social development, only if decisive measures are taken to improve the international situation. The Second United Nations Development Decade must therefore be a decade of important advances in the field of general and complete disarmament, the destruction of stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and the means of delivering them, the elimination of foreign military bases and the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes. The resources released as a result of general and complete disarmament both in the developed and the developing countries can provide the genuine prerequisites for solving a number of serious social and economic problems, particularly the problem of financing regional, inter-regional and global projects whose implementation would make it possible to raise the standard of living of hundreds of millions of people on earth.

2. It is essential to bear in mind that the practical results of the First United Nations Development Decade (1961-1970), taken as a whole, are insignificant. This is due to the fact that the programmes of the Decade were implemented in conditions in which the exploitation of the developing countries by the developed capitalist countries not only failed to cease but was, on the contrary, intensified; in which the gap between the levels of economic development in these two groups of countries widened; in which the arms race continued, thousands of millions were diverted for military purposes and

aggressive wars were unleashed by the imperialist Powers in Indo-China and the Middle East. Imperialist circles continued, as before, to obstruct progressive reforms in the economies of the developing countries in every possible way; and this is the main obstacle to social and economic progress in these countries.

3. The absence of substantial achievements in the implementation of the programmes of the First Decade does not mean that efforts to give effect to the provision in the Charter of the United Nations concerning the organization of "international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character" should not be made. In the coming decade mankind will, as previously, be faced with the task of eradicating poverty, hunger and disease everywhere, eliminating racial discrimination and segregation, ensuring equal political, economic, social and cultural rights for all members of society, abolishing unemployment, guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, providing housing for all who need it and further developing educational, health and social security schemes accessible to all sectors of the population.

4. In drafting the United Nations programme document for development during the 1970s, it is not enough merely to produce a simple list of quantitative indicators. This document must contain an extensive programme of political, social and economic measures of a progressive nature, which can be implemented at the national and international levels with a view to solving the most acute social and economic problems facing the world.

Since, as is known, economic growth does not in all circumstances automatically lead to an improvement in the social position of all members of society, it is extremely important that the results of economic development envisaged in this programme should to an ever-increasing extent be designed to solve social problems and, primarily, to improve substantially the position of the workers in developing countries.

5. In the forthcoming decade, each developing country will naturally have to solve specific and urgent social and economic problems in accordance with its own needs and possibilities. These problems must be reflected in national development plans and programmes. To ensure that development objectives can be

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realized as successfully as possible, it is essential for all countries to adopt detailed national plans (programmes) early in the 1970s.

6. Practical experience shows that neither national plans nor any development programmes prepared under United Nations auspices can guarantee real progress in the field of social and economic development, unless their execution is accompanied by decisive and consistent implementation of genuinely practical measures, such as:

the implementation of radical social and economic reforms designed to eliminate obstacles hampering the development of productive forces, and to guarantee the consolidation of national sovereignty and the protection of natural resources in the interests of national development;

the perfection of budget and tax legislation in order to bring about a radical change in the system for the distribution of the national wealth, as an important factor in the mobilization of efforts in the interests of development;

the creation and consolidation of the State and co-operative sectors of the economy, the introduction of a planned basis for economic management, the exercise of effective pressure on the private sector and the subordination of that sector to the national interests;

the creation of vitally important sectors of national industry as a reliable source for the accumulation of resources, the provision of mass consumption goods for the population, and the production for export of a certain part of the country's output;

the adoption of effective legislation regulating the activities of foreign private capital and subordinating it to the objectives fixed in national development plans;

the adoption of measures to prevent effectively any capital drain;

the annulment of all inequitable economic treaties, agreements and individual commitments which restrict national sovereignty, particularly sovereignty over natural resources;

the creation of conditions for the training of national highly-skilled personnel, and the implementation of measures to stop the brain drain;

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the introduction of State-wide planning in the economic and social fields, which - as is clear from the example of an ever-increasing number of States - is demonstrating its possibilities as a reliable instrument of development, although the extent to which these possibilities can be utilized differs considerably, depending on the social and economic structure and particular characteristics of individual countries.

7. Experience of economic and social development in a number of countries clearly demonstrates that the mobilization of domestic resources and efforts is of decisive importance for the successful implementation of development programmes. Co-operation among developing countries regionally and interregionally is also a significant factor for the achievement of development goals. The importance of employing domestic resources and mutual co-operation in every possible way to attain rapid economic development rates has been vividly illustrated by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, which in an extremely brief period of time have achieved economic independence and a high level of development.

8. One of the major tasks of the Second United Nations Development Decade consists in associating the great majority of the population in the solution of the urgent problems of socio-economic development. In every country there is a need to secure the active utilization of human resources in expanding social production so as to attain faster economic growth rates, a process which occurred in many developed countries at early stages in their development.

The formulation of a demographic policy in any given country should be independently undertaken by its Government in the light of the specific circumstances and with the support of the broad national public. Methods of influencing population growth rates should be applied in keeping with principles of humanity and respect for the fundamental rights and dignity of man.

9. The vital importance of the role of domestic resources does not by any means imply that the needs of developing countries for external sources of financing should be ignored. However, such sources as economic and technical assistance, loans and credits from States and loans from international financing

institutions should play a subordinate role, supplementing but not supplanting domestic resources. Furthermore, external resources for developing countries should be granted in keeping with those countries' national interests. External economic aid should not serve to implant neocolonialist forms of economic exploitation and financial oppression; it should be granted with no strings attached and without interference in the domestic affairs of the countries concerned.

10. Within the external financing sphere, any United Nations programme document on development should heavily accent international trade, and the starting point in determining practical measures should be the principles of international trade relations and trade policy and other forward-looking decisions adopted by UNCTAD. The socialist countries are prepared to further the normalizing and growth of international trade between all States regardless of their social and economic system, on the basis of equality and mutual advantage, thereby promoting an increase in the export potential of the developing countries.

Since primary commodities and semi-finished products are the major export items of developing countries, and in view of the unfavourable effects exerted on these items by the world capitalist market, decisive action should be taken in the 1970s to stabilize the export earnings of developing countries and substantially expand the markets for their commodities. To this end, the practice of concluding international stabilization agreements for major primary commodities should be widened, general non-discriminatory unilateral preferences should be granted to developing countries and all international trade restrictions, tariff and non-tariff, should be eliminated.

11. The developing countries have an incontestable right to receive compensation for material damage from the former colonial Powers and also from capitalist States which continue to exploit the human and natural resources of Asian, African and Latin American countries. Such compensation can be made in various forms and in different ways.

12. Any attempt to assert in any way a division of the world into a "rich north" and "poor south" is totally unjustifiable, since it implies that responsibility for the economic backwardness of the developing countries rests

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jointly with the colonial Powers, which plundered the peoples of those countries for centuries and to this day occupy neocolonialist positions, and the socialist countries, which are in no way involved in colonial and neocolonialist exploitation and have been consistently fighting for the political and economic liberation of developing countries.

In this connexion the obligation of an annual contribution of 1 per cent of the gross national product of economically developed countries to assist developing countries cannot apply to the socialist countries. These countries, based on their understanding of their international duty to the peoples of developing nations, are prepared to proceed with a substantial enlargement of their co-operation with developing countries in economic, technical and other fields and to do so in forms that have evolved through long practice and have gained the recognition of the developing countries themselves.

13. The socialist countries intend to continue their policy of extending comprehensive assistance to young independent States in order that they may overcome the economic consequences of colonialism, develop an independent national economy and speed up their rates of economic development. In giving aid they will continue to proceed on the basis of practical and economically sound proposals for co-operation in keeping with their possibilities and those of their partners among the developing countries. In particular, they are prepared to arrange for the liquidation of credits through purchases of goods from those countries, including finished and semi-finished articles and the articles produced by enterprises in the developing countries which have been built with the credits in question.

The socialist countries will, as before, employ such forms and methods of economic and technical co-operation with developing countries as accord fully with the socio-economic plans and programmes of those countries and as ensure respect for their national sovereignty and their unconditional right to be the full masters of their natural resources. The socialist countries are further prepared to expand support for the developing countries in the matter of training national personnel, and to render technical assistance in accordance with the principles outlined above.

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14. Any development programme, if it is to succeed, must become the vital concern of the people of each developing country. The task of the United Nations is to help the developing nations to draw up sound economic, social and cultural development plans and programmes which are responsive to the national interests and entail no interference in domestic affairs. The functions of the organ to examine progress in the implementation of such programmes should devolve upon the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which bears major responsibility under the United Nations Charter for the social and economic activities of the Organization. The Council should review implementation results both by individual developing countries and regionally and globally, and where necessary should refer appropriate matters for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly.

15. While firmly convinced that one of the great problems of the day is that of eliminating the backwardness to which many countries in the world are subject owing to colonialism and the neocolonialism of the imperialist Powers, the socialist countries also hold that the United Nations cannot ignore the socio-economic problems confronting the working people in developed capitalist countries - intensified exploitation, mounting unemployment, violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and increasing impoverishment and hopelessness of the poorer segments of the population.

Among the objective factors which lead to this same conclusion are the physical hazards which have appeared in developed countries due to the pollution of the human environment, the shortage of clean water for use by the population, the increasingly acute housing problem and complex demographic problems. The solution to these various problems cannot be put off indefinitely, since in the last analysis these matters influence the course of socio-economic development throughout the world, including the developing countries.

The socialist countries take the view that the coming decade should be a decade of substantial economic and social progress all over the world. Accordingly, any programme document drawn up in the United Nations should make provision, if only in the most general way, for these aspects of universal development. In accordance with the United Nations Charter, their formulation falls within the competence of the Economic and Social Council, which for this purpose is authorized to enlist the co-operation of other competent United Nations agencies.