

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE, 1170th
MEETING

Thursday, 7 December 1967,
at 11 a.m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Agenda item 41:

United Nations Development Decade: report of
the Secretary-General (continued) 343

Chairman: Mr. Jorge Pablo FERNANDINI
(Peru).

AGENDA ITEM 41

United Nations Development Decade: report of the
Secretary-General (continued) (A/6703 and Corr.1,
chap. III; A/6824, A/C.2/235, A/C.2/L.984/Rev.1,
A/C.2/L.992, E/4362 and Corr.1, E/4376)

1. Mr. AHMED (Pakistan), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/L.984/Rev.1, said that the revised text contained a number of amendments suggested by various delegations during the consultations which had taken place the previous day. At the suggestion of the USSR delegation, the words "... and its resolution 2158 (XXI) of 25 November 1966 on permanent sovereignty over natural resources" had been added at the end of the first preambular paragraph. The sponsors had been unable to accept any amendments to the fourth preambular paragraph, which was already in essence a compromise text, since its wording had been taken from the ninth preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 2218 A (XXI). The words "... and with due regard to safeguarding their economic interests", had been added at the end of the fifth preambular paragraph at the suggestion of the USSR delegation.

2. Several amendments had been made to operative paragraph 2 in order to take account of the views expressed by a number of delegations, including those of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, but unfortunately some delegations were still not in a position to support the paragraph. For reasons of style, the words "the executive heads of the members of the United Nations family of organizations" had been replaced by the words "the organizations in the United Nations system". The words "concrete measures that could be taken both by international organizations and by developing and developed countries" had been replaced by the words "appropriate measures that international organizations and developing and developed countries might respectively consider taking". Lastly, at the suggestion of the USSR delegation, the words "with due regard to safeguarding the economic interests of the developing countries" had been added at the end of the operative paragraphs.

3. In operative paragraph 3, the words "Governments of" had been deleted before the words "Mem-

ber States", and in order to cover a point raised by the representative of Romania, the words "to take appropriate steps" had been replaced by the words "to consider taking appropriate steps".

4. Mr. MARTIN WITKOWSKI (France) said that his delegation was one of those which still had some doubts about operative paragraph 2. He therefore suggested that the words "appropriate measures that international organizations and developing and developed countries might respectively consider taking" in that paragraph should be replaced by the words "appropriate means of harmonizing measures that could be considered by international organizations, on the one hand, and by developing and developed countries, on the other".

5. Sir Edward WARNER (United Kingdom) said that his delegation, which had voted against parts of General Assembly resolution 2158 (XXI) and had abstained on the resolution as a whole, felt that the reference to that resolution in the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.2/L.984/Rev.1 upset the balance of the preamble. General Assembly resolution 2158 (XXI) did not mention the United Nations Development Decade and was not strictly relevant to the draft resolution under consideration. His delegation would therefore like to see the reference to resolution 2158 (XXI) counterbalanced by a reference to other, more relevant General Assembly resolutions, and wished to propose that the words "and other resolutions, such as its resolution 2087 (XX) of 20 December 1965 on the financing of economic development" should be inserted in the first preambular paragraph after the words "Development Decade".

6. Mr. BRADLEY (Argentina) recalled that his country had abstained in the vote on General Assembly resolution 2158 (XXI), both in the Second Committee and in plenary. Consequently, his delegation, which had been unable to take part in the consultations mentioned by the representative of Pakistan, could not logically support the revised draft resolution A/C.2/L.984/Rev.1) now that a reference to resolution 2158 (XXI) had been inserted in the first preambular paragraph. It therefore wished to be deleted from the list of sponsors.

7. Mr. LUBBERS (Netherlands) expressed the hope that those delegations which, like his own, would have preferred the revised draft resolution A/C.2/L.984/Rev.1) to contain a stronger expression of sympathy for the idea of a charter of development, would accept the fourth preambular paragraph in a spirit of compromise, in view of the fact that that idea, together with many related issues, would be discussed fully at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly.

8. The CHAIRMAN suggested that further consultations should be held on the revised draft resolution, with a view to preparing a text acceptable to all.

It was so agreed.

9. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/L.992 on behalf of the co-sponsors, and announced that India and Iran had joined the list of sponsors. The sponsors were proposing that the General Assembly should designate 1970 as International Education Year, because they believed that human history was, in the words of H. G. Wells, "a race between education and catastrophe". At present, there was no assurance that education was winning, but it could win if the nations of the world mobilized their educational resources sufficiently. The sponsors believed that a well-conceived and carefully planned international education year could give a powerful stimulus to that cause. Both rich and poor countries were now devoting more resources to education than ever before, but the results were still glaringly inadequate. Of the world's population, 40 per cent—and in some regions 80 per cent—were illiterate. Many schools and universities, maintained at great cost, were becoming obsolete in both method and subject-matter and were largely irrelevant to the concepts and skills which developing nations desperately needed.

10. The problems had, of course, been recognized for years. In 1962, the Secretary-General had stated, in his report entitled United Nations Development Decade: proposals for action, that educated and trained people were always the chief, and in the longer run the only, agents of development.^{1/} Proceeding from that premise, he had proposed ambitious educational targets, and to help developing countries meet them, various United Nations agencies had created new educational projects and facilities. For example, UNESCO and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) had established the International Institute of Educational Planning, the ILO had established the International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training, the General Assembly had established the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, IBRD had begun to invest in educational facilities, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had undertaken educational projects. In addition, contributions to international education had been made from many other sources. For example, over two years ago his own Government had established a task force to recommend a long-range plan of world-wide educational endeavour, and in particular to assist the developing countries' educational efforts.

11. Despite all those measures, the international community still had not fully mobilized all its resources in the world-wide war on ignorance. The educators of the world possessed a vast unexploited wealth of experience and ideas about effective education which had not yet been put to work where it was most needed. At the proposal of President Johnson, an International Conference on the World Crisis in Education had been held in the United States in October 1967 under private auspices. The

Conference had been attended by 170 distinguished educational leaders from fifty-two countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas, and the Director-General of UNESCO had been one of the leading participants. The Conference had proposed that 1970 should be designated as International Education Year, in the belief that such an observance would mobilize energies and inspire world-wide action that would give the subject the priority it deserved.

12. In his delegation's view, the International Education Year should take up such major issues as the following: how could teaching be made more efficient and productive through better management and the use of new technological developments, such as television and communications satellites? How could the new technology be used to accelerate the growth of literacy, without which democracy itself was virtually impossible? How could schools co-operate in community development programmes to improve the quality of rural and urban life? Where educational resources were very limited, what was the most appropriate and democratic method of making them available to gifted students without regard to wealth, class, sex or race? What kinds of international co-operation were most critically needed in the educational sphere? How could each country's educational system give the most vigorous support to that country's development?

13. In order to deal effectively with such questions, his Government believed that the International Education Year should be planned and executed on the broadest scale by educators, national leaders, economic development officials, manpower experts, employers, labour unions and others. A programme developed in that way could have most beneficial effects, particularly in bringing about a closer understanding between educators, on the one hand, and those concerned with national development and society in general, on the other. Without education, a country could not heal the sick, feed the hungry or house the homeless. Similarly, sick, hungry and homeless children could not be educated. Close co-operation between educators and those responsible for development was therefore essential to the success of national development programmes, on which the future of mankind largely depended.

14. Education was essential for development, but his delegation did not view it solely in that light. True education imparted meaning and inspiration to the individual's life. It was essential for a free, just and democratic society. It built understanding, tolerance and friendship among all groups and creeds and nationalities, and could thus make a great contribution to the cause of peace. The need for education transcended all differences in political or economic ideologies. In that spirit, the sponsors commended the draft resolution to the Committee.

15. Mr. BERTRAND (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the Director-General of UNESCO welcomed the proposals contained in draft resolution A/C.2/L.992. The fact that the proposal for an international education year had been made in the context of the second development decade gave it added scope and significance. If the draft resolution was adopted in plenary, the

^{1/} United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.II.B.2, p. 25.

Director-General would bring it to the attention of the governing bodies of UNESCO at the earliest opportunity, for UNESCO, as the specialized agency most closely concerned with education, would be called upon to play a leading role in its implementation.

16. Mr. GALLARDO MORENO (Mexico) said that his country supported all action designed to further the cause of education, and had itself made substantial efforts to that end, as was shown by the fact that it allocated 26 per cent of its national budget to education and only 6 per cent to defence. His delegation had therefore co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.2/L.992, for it considered that, as stated in the fifth preambular paragraph, education was of "fundamental importance" as a means of "improving mutual understanding and strengthening international peace".

17. Mr. BROMMELAND (Norway) said that his delegation believed that the mere designation of an international education year was not enough to promote the world advance in education the sponsors had in mind; as the sixth preambular paragraph indicated, they attached particular importance to appropriate planning of the activities to be undertaken during that year. The assurance given by the representative of UNESCO of his organization's support for the project was therefore extremely gratifying; its experience and specialized knowledge would be most useful in determining the practical content of proposed activities.

18. His country had learned from its own experience of the development process the importance of education at all levels. His Government made special provision in its bilateral assistance programmes for education and training; its recently issued guide lines for technical assistance programmes, in fact, specified that special consideration should be given to education and training. It therefore hoped that the designation of an international education year would encourage individual countries to intensify their efforts in that field.

19. The draft resolution, if adopted, would also make a practical contribution to the planning of a global strategy for development in the nineteen-seventies. If significant progress were achieved during the year, it would serve as a demonstration of what could be done in other spheres of development through proper planning and implementation.

20. Mr. HOUNTON (Dahomey) said it had come to be universally acknowledged that the development of human resources was essential to economic progress. The prosperity of the developed countries was, to a large extent, due to their possession of a sound educational system and one which was capable, as their economies expanded, of being adapted to new situations and new requirements. Only an educated people, in fact, could take advantage of modern technological and cultural progress.

21. Illiteracy was therefore incompatible with the economic and social development of a nation; it was a denial of a basic human right. In the developing countries, however, there were some 100 million illiterates, a situation which obviously jeopardized all their development efforts, since adequately edu-

cated and trained people were a prerequisite for the success of agricultural, population, health and other programmes. Only massive capital investment in education and training could meet the urgent needs of the developing countries and lay the foundations for the sound educational systems of the future.

22. The purpose of the draft resolution A/C.2/L.992 was to mobilize the support of all Member States and of the specialized agencies concerned for a massive concentrated effort to solve what had been called the international crisis in education. The success of the proposed international education year could have a decisive effect on the economic and social development of the poorer countries and would make a substantial contribution towards the objectives of the second development decade.

23. The importance his Government attached to education was indicated by the fact that one-quarter of its national budget was devoted to education. It was only in recent years, however, that teaching methods and curricula had been reformed to meet the need for a balance between academic and modern scientific and technological education. His Government was also co-operating with other African countries in the establishment of inter-State and regional institutions for higher education.

24. Mr. KAUL (India) said that his Government was keenly aware that its objectives in economic and social development could not be fully attained without the establishment of a satisfactory level of education for the entire population of the country. The gap between the standards of living of the rich and poor countries, in fact, directly reflected the gap between an educated population and one which included a high proportion of illiterate persons.

25. An adequate education was essential not only as a means of bridging the gap between developed and developing countries, but in order to give each region of the globe an understanding of the life, thought and values of other regions and peoples. Such an understanding, accompanied by opportunities for the citizens of all countries to acquire the liberal and technical education which was a prerequisite for development, would be needed if the objectives of the second development decade were to be attained.

26. His Government had been closely associated with the work of the International Conference on the World Crisis in Education to which the United States representative had referred and his delegation had accordingly been happy to become one of the sponsors of the draft resolution.

27. Mr. SADI (Jordan) said that his delegation welcomed the recognition in draft resolution A/C.2/L.992 of the value of education to the developing countries. He hoped, however, that the sponsors would consider including a reference to the importance of education in the formative years. His country's experience had shown that persons who had been poorly educated in their early years continued to perform less well than others at secondary and higher levels of education and scientific evidence supported that finding. He therefore proposed that the words "especially in the formative years" should

be inserted after the word "education" in the fifth preambular paragraph.

28. Mr. AKSIN (Turkey) said the Committee had always recognized that education was a vital element in economic development and had emphasized the need for all development programmes to make provision for education and training. World history showed, in fact, that no country with a highly-educated population remained poor. Nevertheless, both the Governments and peoples of some developing countries continued to give insufficient weight to education as a development priority, since it brought no immediate tangible benefits. For such reasons, his delegation had been glad to become one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.992, which envisaged the implementation in 1970 of a programme of activities which would give education its proper place in the preparatory work for the second development decade.

29. Mr. BRADLEY (Argentina) said that his delegation's sponsorship of the draft resolution was an expression of his country's long-standing interest in the encouragement and expansion of education. Since his country achieved its independence, each successive Government had treated education as vital to the progress of the nation; schools had, in fact, been opened in the most remote areas long before the building of roads and railways.

30. The proportion of his country's national budget allocated to education continued to increase in order to provide the necessary support for free education at all levels, up to, and including, university level. Education was compulsory for all children up to the age of fourteen and facilities were provided for adult education. As a result, his country had had a very low illiteracy rate.

31. Mr. MURGESCU (Romania) said that his delegation agreed with all the representatives who had stressed the importance of education in the process of developing human resources, and welcomed draft resolution A/C.2/L.992. The document had, however, been made available too recently for his delegation to study its implications and receive instructions from his Government.

32. Moreover, his delegation doubted whether the current session of the General Assembly was the opportune time for the designation of an international education year. The Committee's decisions in regard to another agenda item (item 38) were likely to require a great deal of preparatory work to be done during the following year on a framework for a global strategy for development in the nineteen-seventies, and adoption of the proposal in the draft resolution before the Committee would amount to deciding in advance on one component of that strategy. Moreover, it was surely not advisable to designate 1970 as International Education Year without a prior examination of the proposal by the Economic and Social Council and before the detailed programme of activities referred to in operative paragraph 2 had been drawn up. His delegation therefore requested the sponsors to consider whether it might not be better to defer the proposed designation until the twenty-third session of the General Assembly, when all delegations would be in a position to review the matter thoroughly.

33. Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Philippines) said that as a result of the importance attached to education in the Philippines, where approximately one third of the national budget was allocated to public education, his country had attained one of the highest literacy rates in Asia. It was fitting that the year 1970, which would mark not only the end of the first United Nations Development Decade, but also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, should be designated as International Education Year, and that a programme of concerted national and international action to promote education and training should be established within the overall context of the second development decade. The programmes to be undertaken as part of the International Education Year would give added impetus to the mobilization of human resources, without which national development plans could not be effective. It was especially important that the world's young people should be adequately prepared for the challenges of the space age, and it was to be hoped that UNESCO and other specialized agencies concerned would place particular emphasis in their programmes for the International Education Year on the role of youth in tackling the problems of a highly industrialized world and in maintaining world peace.

34. Mr. KURIYAMA (Japan) said that the value of education had long been recognized in Japan, where it had had a great impact on economic and social development. His delegation fully supported draft resolution A/C.2/L.992, and looked forward to the submission of the progress report requested in operative paragraph 3. The designation of the year 1970 as International Education Year would be no more than a point of departure, and it was to be hoped that the programme of activities referred to in operative paragraph 2 would be a constructive and meaningful one.

35. Mr. FIGUEREDO PLANCHART (Venezuela) said that one of his Government's main objectives was to improve education at all levels so as to ensure the full utilization of human resources and the effective participation of the population in political, economic and social advancement. Whereas economic growth was limited at the initial stage of development by insufficient capital and at advanced stages of development by insufficient manpower, an important reason for the failure of countries at an intermediate stage of development to achieve higher economic growth rates was the sub-utilization of human resources. As a result of the ambitious educational programme in Venezuela, more than 1.8 million students had matriculated in 1966. Furthermore, the illiteracy rate, though still high, had been substantially reduced. The Venezuelan Government had recently undertaken to supply textbooks and additional educational material to all students in primary schools, and a substantial amount of such supplies had already been distributed in both rural and urban areas. Efforts were also being made to improve the quality of Venezuelan education, with particular emphasis on scientific and technical subjects, and to institute effective systems of evaluation and supervision.

36. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) agreed with the representative of Japan that the designation of 1970

as International Education Year should not be an end in itself, but a point of departure for the mobilization of international efforts to improve education and combat illiteracy throughout the world.

37. On behalf of his own delegation and the delegations of Uruguay, the United Republic of Tanzania, Sudan, Tunisia and Libya, he suggested that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.992 might wish to replace the words "which constitute the purpose of the International Education Year" in operative paragraph 2, by the words "which are to be inaugurated by the International Education Year".

38. Mr. VAZ (Uruguay) said that education was of paramount importance for economic growth, and no global strategy for development could be successful if the human resources that it was intended to benefit were not equipped to put it into effect. The conditions of political and social justice and freedom prevailing in Uruguay were largely due to the high educational standards of its people, and the Uruguayan delegation had been glad to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.992.

39. Mr. CAMEJO ARGUDIN (Cuba) said that, although his delegation sympathized with the aims of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.992, it was not convinced of the timeliness of the proposal or of the Committee's competence to endorse it. It therefore wished to reserve its position on the draft resolution. One of the most striking achievements of the Cuban revolution had been the attainment of educational progress, and particularly the complete eradication of illiteracy in a single year, designated as national education year. That remarkable result had been accomplished despite the shameful economic blockade maintained against Cuba by certain countries, whose representatives in the Committee nevertheless spoke eloquently of human solidarity.

40. Mr. POZHARSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the experience of the USSR had demonstrated the vital role of education in carrying out social reforms and eliminating economic backwardness. There could be no doubt that education must be given prominence in the second development decade and that it must be one of the main factors in any global strategy of development. It seemed, however, premature to decide that an international education year should usher in the next decade; while such a step might in fact prove desirable, the discussion of United Nations activities in the next decade was still at a preliminary stage and no clear picture of priorities or specific lines of action had yet emerged. It would therefore be advisable to defer a decision on the matter until the consultations referred to in operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution

A/C.2/L.992 had been completed. In that way, the risk that the concept of an "international education year" might prove to be an empty slogan would be avoided, and an appropriate decision could be taken on the basis of the consultations to be held by the Secretary-General. The sponsors of the draft resolution might therefore wish to redraft the operative part accordingly. The amendment to operative paragraph 2 suggested by the representative of Upper Volta merited careful attention; if that amendment were accepted by the sponsors, operative paragraph 1 could perhaps be deleted.

41. The views he had expressed were necessarily of a preliminary nature, since there had been insufficient time for thorough study of the very important draft resolution before the Committee. He hoped that a hasty decision would not be taken on the question of designating an international education year as it had been on the designation of the United Nations Development Decade.

42. Mr. DEVENDRA (Nepal) said that his country's progress in combating widespread illiteracy during the past seventeen years had made the Nepalese people aware of the great benefits that could accrue from education. The literacy rate in Nepal had risen sevenfold since 1953, and his Government was grateful for the generous assistance of the United States Government, without which that remarkable result could not have been achieved. The designation of an international education year could be a challenge to developing countries; it was to be hoped that they would adopt a realistic attitude and show a greater willingness to accept similar external assistance, with full safeguards for their national sovereignty. If the developed countries were prepared to provide the necessary assistance, developing countries would be able to make substantial progress in bridging the gap between the educated and uneducated strata of their population. The Nepalese delegation was confident that the International Education Year would provide an appropriate framework within which human resources could be fully utilized for development and education could be provided for those now denied access to knowledge.

43. Mr. MONTALVO (Ecuador) said that educational advancement was essential for the full utilization of human resources and the cultural development of peoples. The Government of Ecuador, which had set itself the goal of building one school every day, attached great importance to the improvement of education at all levels, and his delegation had therefore been glad to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.992.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

