

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

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Chairman: Mrs. Lina P. TSALDARIS (Greece).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Calamari (Panama), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters VI and VII) (A/3848) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mrs. LEFLEROVÁ (Czechoslovakia) pointed out that her delegation had always been keenly interested in the activities of the Economic and Social Council. The development of international co-operation in the fields of science, culture and education was an important factor in promoting friendly relations among nations. The Czechoslovak delegation wanted definite measures to be adopted in those fields and it had therefore requested that the question of the peaceful coexistence of States should be included in the agenda of the thirteenth session. Measures should be taken to direct the efforts of Governments and of United Nations organs, in particular of the Economic and Social Council. She expressed gratification concerning the steps recently taken by the Economic and Social Council (resolutions 663 I (XXIV) and 695 (XXVI)) and the General Assembly (resolution 1164 (XII)). She was awaiting with interest and confidence the results of the study which UNESCO was to make on exchanges and co-operation among peoples in the fields of science, culture and education, and she hoped it would subsequently be possible to prepare an international convention on the subject. The Czechoslovak Government had taken a series of steps to encourage mutual exchanges in the fields of art and science with many countries and to contribute thus to strengthening understanding among peoples.

2. In the social field, the Economic and Social Council was perhaps not utilizing all the means available to it to settle the various problems before it. For several years now, the same items had been recurring on its agenda, to the detriment of certain other questions of equal importance. For example, the question of social security urgently required study. Much progress had been made in Czechoslovakia in the social field and the Government was anxious to adopt measures to raise standards of living, to protect health and welfare and to increase the leisure time of the working population.

3. The Czechoslovak delegation was pleased with the

good results obtained by the Commission on the Status of Women, in whose work it had participated, but it felt that the Commission should be more energetic in its campaign for equal rights. Czechoslovakia, for example, gave women their rightful place in both economic and political life.

4. The Czechoslovak Government was following the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with interest, and with its assistance, was taking many steps to improve the condition of Czechoslovak children. In 1959, Czechoslovakia would make a contribution of 250,000 crowns to UNICEF.

5. Miss ADDISON (Ghana) noted with satisfaction the number and variety of the activities of UNICEF. In Ghana, the results achieved with the help of the Children's Fund and the World Health Organization (WHO) had been most encouraging, particularly in maternal and child welfare, and in the anti-malaria, anti-yaws and anti-leprosy campaigns. The Government of Ghana, which had given \$14,000 to UNICEF, intended to complete its contribution shortly and would continue to co-operate with UNICEF in every way it could.

6. The delegation of Ghana wished to congratulate Afghanistan upon its decision, taken at great sacrifice, to prohibit the production of opium.

7. In the field of human rights, the United Nations, as it prepared to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, could be proud of the work accomplished. Nevertheless, much remained to be done. When the eight independent African States had met earlier in the year at Accra, they had reaffirmed their devotion to the principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Declaration and pledged themselves to combat racial discrimination in all its forms with all the means at their disposal. In many areas of the world, and particularly in Africa south of the Sahara, the situation was far from satisfactory. The Third Committee should redouble its efforts to ensure respect for human rights throughout the world. It should do its utmost to complete its work on the draft Covenants. However, legal action in that field was not enough and there was cause for gratification in resolution 683 B (XXVI), in which the Economic and Social Council recommended that Member States should promote widespread teaching of the principles of the Declaration.

8. In Ghana, women enjoyed full political rights and had equal opportunities with men for education, professional work and access to economic life generally. However, in other countries, women still had to struggle for recognition of their rights and she hoped that all members of the Committee would give them moral support and the encouragement they needed.

9. Mr. ASIROGLU (Turkey) noted with satisfaction the remarkable work of UNICEF in maternal and child welfare. The number of beneficiaries, which had been

30 million in 1956, had risen to 40 million in 1957 and would certainly exceed 50 million in 1958. The aid provided by UNICEF, which before 1951 had largely gone to European children, was now increasingly benefiting the children of the under-developed countries. The fight against disease was still successful. His delegation was happy to note that there was close collaboration between UNICEF, the specialized agencies and the United Nations Secretariat and that steps had been taken to make such co-operation even closer. In his view, success depended largely on co-ordination with economic and social development programmes. The financial situation of UNICEF was somewhat disquieting; the members of the Committee should urge their Governments to try to increase their contributions to the Fund. The Turkish delegation, for its part, would make such an effort.

10. With regard to international control of narcotics, the report of the Economic and Social Council was not very encouraging. Traffic in large quantities of narcotics had continued in 1957. To combat that situation, the competent authorities should impose severe penalties on offenders and co-operate closely with the authorities of other countries concerned. Technical assistance, too, was an effective weapon in that field, because drug addiction was also due to social and economic causes. Control should be exercised not only in producer countries, but also in countries of transit and consumption. His delegation was happy to note that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had completed the draft of the proposed single convention on narcotic drugs and hoped that the convention would soon come into effect. It congratulated the Government of Afghanistan on having courageously prohibited the production of opium.

11. Considerable progress had been made in the field of human rights, as was apparent from chapter VII of the Council's report (A/3848), but the task must be energetically pursued if the ideals laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were to become a reality.

12. Mr. CHALAPATHI RAU (India) expressed appreciation, in general, of the manner in which the Economic and Social Council addressed itself to the questions dealt with in chapters VI and VII of its report.

13. His Government attached very great importance to the long-term programmes of maternal and child welfare and it had been gratified to find that the Executive Board of UNICEF was interested not only in the immediate but also in the more distant future. The activities of UNICEF, which had considerable economic and social influence, were constantly expanding, and it was very encouraging to find that the under-developed countries were increasingly turning to UNICEF for assistance. Yet, if UNICEF was to be in a position to discharge all its obligations, it must be supplied with the necessary financial means. In that connexion the United States Government was to be commended for increasing its contribution from \$10 million to \$11 million. His delegation was happy to recall that in 1958 India had increased its contribution to the Children's Fund by 12 per cent and it hoped that all Governments would do their utmost to help UNICEF in carrying on with its fine work, which had already done so much to bring all the peoples of the world together.

14. The report of the Permanent Central Opium

Board ^{1/} was very encouraging in certain respects, and his delegation had been very gratified that diversions from the licit to the illicit market were now insignificant. Nevertheless, as a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, it fully realized that there was still a great deal to be done in that field, and it accordingly attached very great importance to the proposed single convention on narcotic drugs. The Government of India congratulated the Afghan Government on the self-denial it had shown in prohibiting the production of opium. The United Nations, the Governments of all countries and private agencies should provide that country with all the technical and financial assistance required to overcome the economic difficulties resulting from its courageous decision.

15. Turning to chapter VII of the Council's report, he recalled that as a result of the combined efforts of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the non-governmental organizations concerned and several States, some of which were not Members of the Organization, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was becoming more and more widely known in the world; the tenth anniversary of the Declaration should be marked by a wider dissemination, particularly in the schools, of the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.

16. The Yearbook on Human Rights was a very useful document serving the cause of international co-operation; it was therefore to be hoped that as the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights were given effect, the Yearbook would improve in quality, without losing any of its usefulness.

17. In India, women had the same rights as men in all spheres; his delegation was therefore happy to note that seventy countries recognized the right of women to elect and be elected.

18. The number of cultural exchanges between India and various countries in all parts of the world showed the considerable importance which the Indian Government attached to international co-operation in education, science and culture. In his delegation's view, the study which UNESCO was to prepare under Council resolution 695 (XXVI) would facilitate international exchanges and would thus serve the cause of peace, just as, inter alia, the two United Nations conferences on the peaceful uses of atomic energy had done.

19. Mr. TOSCANO (Italy) spoke of the interest his country took in the activities of UNICEF, the great usefulness of which it had had occasion to appreciate. He hoped that the Children's Fund would be able to carry out all the projects it was contemplating for the immediate future. Italy warmly supported the efforts to improve co-ordination between UNICEF and WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Bureau of Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, because the usefulness of such collaboration was self-evident. In that connexion, it should be recalled that the Fund was to collaborate in carrying out a UNICEF-WHO anti-tuberculosis campaign project to be started in Somaliland in January 1959. He reaffirmed his country's willingness to give UNICEF all possible assistance.

^{1/} Permanent Central Opium Board, Report to the Economic and Social Council on the Work of the Board in 1957 and Addendum (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1957.XI.3 and Addendum).

20. His delegation was happy to note that the Economic and Social Council had asked the General Assembly (Council resolution 683 F (XXVI)) to hold a special meeting on the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1958 and it hoped that the Third Committee would complete its study of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights in order to make an individual and striking contribution to the planned celebrations.

21. With regard to the teaching of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Italian National Commission for UNESCO had, with the support of the Government, organized a series of special courses for teachers.

22. His delegation favoured the convening of a second conference of non-governmental organizations interested in the eradication of prejudice and discrimination.

23. He congratulated the Afghan Government on its decision to prohibit the production of opium.

24. Mrs. KOLOZS (Hungary) thought that the items before the Third Committee were such that it should be able to make a valuable contribution to the lessening of international tension. The Hungarian delegation would do its utmost to promote such an aim.

25. The Hungarian Government was grateful to UNICEF for the help given to Hungarian children at a time of great difficulty, and would contribute as much as it could to the great humanitarian work of that body.

26. Her delegation had taken part in the preparation of the proposed single convention on narcotic drugs and took the view that all States, whether or not they were Members of the United Nations, should be allowed to accede to the Convention, subject to any reservations they thought necessary. The Government of Afghanistan had made a courageous decision in prohibiting opium production and mankind had a moral duty to ensure that Afghanistan should not thereby suffer any economic loss.

27. Her delegation would speak at greater length on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/3828/Rev.1) when the Third Committee dealt with that item of the agenda, but she wished to stress that the Hungarian Government, which was concerned over the position of Hungarians who had left their country as a result of the events of the autumn of 1956 and now wished to return there, had already asked the High Commissioner to make it possible for them to do so.

28. The Hungarian delegation recognized the value of the proposed Convention and Recommendation concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation, in spite of certain shortcomings in them. The delegation also believed that it would be useful to draft another international convention regarding economic discrimination in the field of education, in particular, which constituted a serious problem to which insufficient attention had been given. In Hungary, where the Horthy régime had left a large legacy of reactionary practices, the problem had been solved; for example, as a result of an increase in the number of educational institutions, the number of workers' and peasants' children attending schools or universities was now proportionate to the size of the social class from which those children came.

29. There should be a detailed discussion of the articles of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights, but none the less the question of freedom of information merited a fuller study than had yet been made of it. The draft convention was of such importance for international understanding that it should be brought to completion as soon as possible.

30. The Commission on the Status of Women was doing valuable work, and there were grounds for congratulation that in an increasing number of countries women were being accorded the same rights as men. It should be remembered, however, that a mere legal recognition of women's rights was not enough, and that it should be applied in practice. That had, in fact, been done in Hungary, where all the reactionary laws in force under the Horthy régime had been annulled; the principle of equal pay was recognized and applied, and the number of women workers was continually increasing. Nevertheless, although women had access to the same work as men, they tended to predominate in certain types of work which suited them better, such as teaching and dispensing. Under the Horthy régime 44 per cent of unskilled and semi-skilled workers had been women, whereas now the figure had been reduced to 29 per cent. In contrast, there had been a considerable increase in the number of women on the voting register, in government services, in the liberal professions and in educational institutions. Measures taken by the Hungarian Government to help working mothers included the establishment of seasonal crèches and nursery schools where women agricultural workers could leave their children during the summer. With regard to retirement age, she could not agree with the view taken by the majority of the members of the Commission on the Status of Women, since it would not be in the interest of women that the retirement age should be the same for them as for men. Her delegation supported the Economic and Social Council's decision (resolution 680 C II (XXVI)) to invite the Commission on the Status of Women to make a further study of that important question.

31. Mr. SAMY (United Arab Republic) said that his Government attached particular importance to the achievements of UNICEF. In addition to UNICEF he wished to congratulate WHO, FAO and the Bureau of Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat for the fine work they had done together. The United Arab Republic had received help from UNICEF for certain projects. As a result of such help new dairies would shortly be opened at Aleppo and Damascus. Great progress had been made in the field of community development and mother and child welfare; UNICEF had provided drugs, vitamins, soap and basic equipment for urban and rural health centres, which continued to increase in number. Nineteen centres, linked with the Health Demonstration and Training Centre at Qalyub, had been established with the co-operation of WHO. Two-hundred and fifty collective health centres under the Ministry of Social Affairs would for the first time be provided with locally trained staff, as a result of the opening in 1955-1956 of the Higher Institute of Public Health. The Government of the United Arab Republic looked forward to the execution in the near future of the bilharzia-eradication programme announced by the representative of WHO at the recent session of the UNICEF Executive Board, in September 1958 and undertook to do everything in its power to ensure the success of the programme. Nor would his

Government easily forget the help UNICEF had given to the Arab refugees from Palestine; through that help 30,000 hungry mothers and children had been provided with milk and other foods between 1952 and 1956.

32. He had had the privilege of representing his country on the UNICEF Executive Board, and had thus been able to follow at first hand the efforts made on behalf of children. All nations could share in the common undertaking and, forgetting their own selfish concerns, help to carry out a programme which, although it could not fully meet all urgent needs, was the fruit of an honest co-operation in which they could take a well-founded pride.

33. With regard to the section of the Council's report concerning the International control of narcotics, (A/3848, chap. VI, sect. III), he paid a tribute to the Government of Afghanistan for its decision to prohibit opium production. He hoped that programmes of technical and financial assistance would help Afghanistan to overcome the economic difficulties that would result from the loss of that source of revenue.

34. With regard to the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, his Government had established a committee, with members representing various ministries, the Press, broadcasting and higher education, to draw up programmes and make recommendations on ways of making the importance of the aims of the Declaration more widely known and appreciated. In that connexion he paid a tribute to the representative of the Philippines, Mr. Brillantes, for the way in which he had carried out the duties of Chairman of the Committee established under Economic and Social Council resolution 651 B (XXIV).

35. He concluded by expressing regret that the Council's report tended to give more emphasis to economic than to social questions, since the two groups of problems were but the two sides of the same coin.

36. Mr. KETRZYŃSKI (Poland), referring to chapter VII of the Council's report, said that several international instruments affecting human rights were at the drafting stage and that they should be brought into force as soon as possible. He was thinking more especially of the draft Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation and the proposed convention on discrimination in education. The Council should take the necessary steps. On the other hand the Polish delegation noted with satisfaction the Council's decision to organize at Geneva in 1959 a second conference of non-governmental organizations interested in the eradication of prejudice and discrimination (resolution 683 E (XXVI)). He hoped that, in the future, the Council would give due consideration to the case of persons who had been the victims of so-called scientific experiments in Nazi concentration camps during the war and who, up to now, had received no compensation.

37. The principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights found expression in the social policy of the Polish People's Republic. During recent years Poland had devoted itself systematically to making parallel progress in the social, economic and cultural fields. The tenth anniversary of the Declaration would be a suitable opportunity for reviewing the progress made and for preparing the ground for new measures.

38. Turning to the part of the Council's report con-

cerned with UNICEF (A/3848, chap. VI, sect. I), he recalled how Poland had suffered during the last war. As if it were not enough to lay waste the country, the Nazis had attacked its investment in the future—its children. They had closed or confiscated hospitals, day-nurseries and kindergartens, dispersed the medical staffs and prohibited the training of doctors, health experts and auxiliary staff. The part played by UNICEF assistance in mitigating the ravages of war and improving the status of children had been a very valuable one. The Polish Government, for its part, had done everything it could. In 1956, ten years after the war, the infant mortality rate had fallen to 71 per thousand as against 143 per thousand in 1932, a reduction of practically one half. The sums allocated to social and cultural services were twice those spent on national defence. That showed that Poland attached more importance to the protection of human life than to the accumulation of destructive armaments.

39. Poland would continue to do all it could to give moral and material support to the work of UNICEF; it had accordingly increased its contribution to the Children's Fund in the current year. He was, however, somewhat apprehensive about the suggestion that UNICEF should now extend its activities to include primary education. He shared the reservations which the representative of Canada had expressed about it (838th meeting). It was to be feared that the resources of UNICEF would be insufficient for such work. It would be preferable to concentrate before all else on the fulfilment of the current programme, which was still very far from completion, and to leave the responsibility for education as such to those organs which were better adapted to undertake that kind of work.

40. Mr. BRILLANTES (Philippines) recalled that his delegation had already spoken on the work of UNICEF (837th meeting). On the present occasion he would like to examine the other sections of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3848). Taken as a whole, chapters VI and VII had to do with the fight against the evils which afflicted society and imposed restraints on those rights and freedoms which were the essence of human dignity. In the latest report, chapter VI was concerned with various specific questions whereas the previous year it had given a general outline of the world's social situation, yet questions left out in the report for the current year had not been neglected, as they were considered in the report of the Secretary-General (A/3844).

41. So far as narcotic drugs were concerned, the Permanent Central Opium Board had had to face a delicate problem, when Afghanistan had asked to be recognized as an opium producer. The Afghan Government's decision to prohibit the future production of that drug had removed the difficulty.

42. He had been privileged to represent his Government on the Council Committee on the Tenth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The proposals submitted to the Council represented the most that could be achieved. He hoped that the resolution adopted by the Council (683 F (XXVI)), would be favourably received by Member States and by the specialized agencies.

43. In connexion with periodic reports and special studies (A/3848, chap. VII, sect. II), he drew attention to paragraph 478 concerning the work of the Committee of four members appointed by the Commission on Hu-

man Rights to undertake a study of the right of everyone to be free from arbitrary arrest, detention and exile. The Philippines was represented on that Committee and he could therefore quite properly express the hope that Member States would provide that organ with such information as it might need to enable it to carry out its task.

44. With reference to the procedure for dealing with communications concerning human rights, he observed that it had given rise to criticisms both in the Commission on Human Rights and in the Economic and Social Council (A/3848, chap. VII, sect. VIII). The problem was in essence a human one and political considerations should not be allowed to confuse it. The Philippines had agreed to take part in the work of the committee appointed by the Commission at its fourteenth session to re-examine the terms of resolutions 75 (V) and 275 (X) of the Council and to prepare recommendations on that subject. ^{2/} It was to be regretted that that organ had not yet met.

^{2/} See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 8, para 194, resolution 10 (XIV).

45. In resolution 1161 (XII), of which the Philippine delegation was one of the authors, the General Assembly had recommended that the Economic and Social Council, in co-operation with the specialized agencies, intensify its efforts in the study and recommendation of measures to effect a balanced and integrated economic and social progress. It was as a result of such progress that the evils afflicting society would disappear. The Philippines would therefore watch with interest the measures taken by the Council.

46. The Philippine delegation recognized the extent and complexity of the tasks which the Council had to undertake. None the less it had confidence in the experience, wisdom and devotion of the members of that organ, who were, it felt certain, capable of continuing the unremitting struggle for universal well-being and thereby strengthening the basis for a just and lasting peace.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.