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Chairman: Mr. S. Amjad ALI (Pakistan).

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapter IV, sections I to V) (A/2172, A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.320) (continued)

[Item 11]*

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mrs. ROSSEL (Sweden) said that her delegation's views on the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) and the obvious need for future action in the social field had been presented fully in the Economic and Social Council. She considered it logical and obvious that great emphasis should be laid on adequate financial and social planning. Every activity planned by a United Nations body should be based on programmes prepared by the government concerned, in order that it might become an integrated part of the social welfare system of the country. All action from sources outside the country should be limited in scope and duration, and the effectiveness of such action would depend upon its co-ordination with governmental and voluntary activity within the country.

2. Since the beginning of United Nations activity in the social field, Sweden had placed its experience and expert knowledge at the disposal of United Nations organs and of the Member States. Her country had received a large number of fellows and students; it appreciated the exchange of knowledge and experience which the fellowship arrangements had made possible, and hoped that those arrangements would be continued. She regretted, however, that no experts in the social field had been recruited in Sweden, which could offer the services of a number of such experts.

3. As regards the joint draft resolution on the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (A/C.3/L.320), of which her delegation was a sponsor, she observed that as a result of her own close personal contact with UNICEF she had been greatly impressed by the efficiency and flexibility of its opera-

tion and its ability both to meet emergencies and to adapt itself to long-range activities. Her Government took a great interest in the constructive work done by UNICEF and hoped to be able to continue to contribute to that work in the future.

4. Mrs. KHOKHOL (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) noted that so far the Economic and Social Council had devoted most of its time to questions of secondary importance, virtually ignoring such essential world problems as equal pay for equal work, unemployment and old-age insurance, and the provision of health services for all without discrimination. The *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* represented the first effort to deal with those problems. Although incomplete, it presented much interesting general data, particularly concerning the deplorable economic and social conditions prevailing in the capitalist countries.

5. The situation in those countries was a discouraging one. Medical services were unavailable to many persons owing to the high cost involved; the achievements of modern medical science were not being satisfactorily applied to the needs of the people. She cited figures which showed that in the United States of America particularly, the armaments race was being reflected in inadequate and steadily decreasing budgetary allotments for educational purposes, while allocations for military expenditure were rising to fantastic heights. A similar situation was to be found in the United Kingdom.

6. Moreover, real wages and purchasing power were falling in those countries, unemployment was increasing, and the burden of direct taxation was growing steadily heavier. The price of food had risen until meat had become, in the United Kingdom, an almost unattainable luxury to many workers.

7. In many of the countries which belonged to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization the health of the people was being affected by inadequate nutrition. The report stated that basic food rations in many countries were insufficient; as a result a new prevalence of

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

diseases due to malnutrition had been noted. Infant mortality rates were alarmingly high and increasing in some countries of Latin America and elsewhere; in Turkey, which had the highest rate of any country, the Turkish Minister of Health had himself noted that of 800,000 children born in 1951, 400,000 had died. Increased rations of milk would help to protect the health of both children and adults, but milk was virtually unobtainable in many of those countries. Such were the catastrophic consequences of the armaments race in the capitalist countries, where the standard of living was gradually and steadily falling.

8. The housing situation was also acute in many areas, although the report endeavoured to hide the extent to which the situation was deteriorating as a result of discriminatory practices and huge expenditures for rearmament. *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* had only recently published graphic stories of the appalling housing situation in Harlem, where families were paying high rents to live in basement dwellings in which the lack of proper facilities made the spread of infectious diseases inevitable. Rents in the capitalist countries often were as high as 25 per cent of the worker's wages; in contrast she pointed out that in the Soviet Union rents, which were regulated by the Government, could not be higher than 10 per cent of the worker's monthly wage. The report was particularly discouraging as regards the position of plantation workers in Latin America and Africa; such workers were often housed in ill-kept barracks, in which families lived herded together with insufficient space, little privacy, and virtually none of the basic facilities necessary to prevent the spread of disease. The situation in the rural areas of under-developed countries was also revealed to be highly unsatisfactory.

9. The authors of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* had tried to explain the deplorable conditions prevalent in the capitalist countries by the excessive growth of population. They had been infected by the supporters of the neo-Malthusian doctrine, currently fashionable in those countries, who suggested a reduction in population and, hence, tried to justify mass annihilation through aggressive war. An American writer had even suggested that United States aid to Indian families should be confined to those willing that all male children except one should be sterilized. A French author of the same school ascribed shortages, hunger, bureaucracy and even revolution to the over-production of human beings. The doctrine had been put forward simply to divert attention from the real reasons for the miseries of capitalism. Stalin, writing recently on the economic problems of socialism in the USSR, had stated that the basic economic law of capitalist countries inevitably produced increased poverty and misery. Its basis was the guaranteeing of maximum profits by the exploitation of workers at home, by the enslavement and looting of other peoples, especially in the under-developed countries, and by the militarization of the economy.

10. The Netherlands representative had rightly stated that industrialization in the more advanced countries had produced a lowering of moral standards. A society based upon the profit motive was bound to become increasingly amoral or immoral, with the resultant growth of criminality.

11. The exploitation of man by man had been abolished in the USSR and in the peoples' democracies. The basis of that society was socialism and the endeavour to promote education, mutual co-operation, friendliness and socialist morality. The facts about the socialist countries demonstrated the fallacy of neo-Malthusianism. The application of socialist principles to urban and rural areas brought increased production and an increase in the ability of the working people to work more intensively. Under such a system over-population was not to be feared. A radical change in methods of work had been brought about by a food supply that was more abundant than any previously known, resulting from the combination of improved technology and irrigation in the rural areas.

12. In the Ukraine, despite two foreign invasions, more corn, beet sugar and oats were produced than in France and Italy together, and three times as many tractors were being built there as in those countries. Conditions in the USSR and the peoples' democracies were being continuously improved, since their budgets were designed for the needs of peace, not war. The increase of *per capita* income in the Ukrainian SSR—57 per cent in the cities and 60 per cent in the countryside—over the pre-war figure reflected higher living standards throughout the country. It had thus been possible to devote more than two-thirds of the Ukrainian budget during the past three years to education, health and social and cultural activities. Governmental subsidies of all sorts to private citizens had amounted to 60,000 million roubles in that period. New housing projects covered 8,800,000 square metres. Under the current five-year plan twice as much housing had been supplied as under the previous one. Housing, medical care, maternity care, rest homes, kindergartens and crèches had all increased to more than the pre-war level, despite the almost universal destruction during the Second World War. School attendance for seven years was universal, free and compulsory for seven million children. Within two years the period of attendance would be for ten years. There were 500,000 students in the institutes of higher learning and 500,000 students had graduated from universities and technological institutes since the end of the war. There had been no unemployment in the Ukrainian SSR for a very long time, and the number of the employed was constantly increasing. Owing to friendly relations with the other socialist peoples and to concentration on peaceful objectives, the Ukrainian SSR had not only been reconstructed but had advanced far beyond the pre-war levels.

13. The *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* was unsatisfactory from all points of view; it was based on an incorrect analysis and did not give adequate reasons for the economic and social evils prevalent in capitalist countries.

14. The Economic and Social Council should in its future work endeavour to approach social problems in a more practical way, in greater detail and along lines more consonant with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

15. The Argentine draft resolution (A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1) was too vague and would not be useful.

16. Mr. VAN GOETHEM (Belgium) associated himself with the other representatives who had com-

mended the Economic and Social Council for its work in the social field, as set out in chapter IV of its report (A/2172).

17. Particular attention should be paid to the statement in paragraph 417 that any division between economic and social matters would henceforth have to be regarded as merely reflecting two different ways of looking at one and the same thing. That was an obvious fact, but it should in future be taken as an accepted rule by those who had to consider the problems as a whole. Every social problem was bound up with an economic problem, but, conversely, economic progress should not be detached from social progress.

18. It should also be emphasized that no practical results could be achieved in the matters with which the Council was concerned, unless the individual States were fully conscious of their responsibility to collaborate internationally. The primary responsibility was always incumbent on the States. The problems were so vast that the means available internationally to deal with them were sometimes almost paltry, so that the broadest possible collaboration was essential. A readiness to co-operate and powerful support from all States concerned were the prerequisites.

19. The representative of France had alluded (465th meeting) to a certain scepticism about the United Nations prevalent in some quarters. It was sometimes due to ignorance; public opinion should be better informed. But it might sometimes also be due to the adoption of projects that appeared exaggerated and obviously impracticable. The Belgian delegation accordingly agreed with those who wished for a clear indication of objectives likely to be achieved; they should be limited objectives, attainable with the available means and likely to have tangible results.

20. Every country looked at problems from the point of view of its own interests and often contributed to international bodies solely in order to obtain special advantages. That was human and intelligible enough, and indeed legitimate, provided that it was not based on an unduly short-sighted outlook. Such an attitude might disregard the fundamental community of aim which all nations shared. The existence of a common aim had been demonstrated clearly by the interdependence evident in all fields, and made international collaboration a necessity. A realistic view of that kind might well help to encourage those who undertook the often thankless task of initiating international projects. The advantage each individual country ultimately and indirectly derived from any economic and social progress elsewhere should be fully stressed. When ignorance and disease had been reduced, there would be greater hopes for a lasting peace. The Belgian Government would continue to give its whole-hearted support to the international solution of social problems in that spirit.

21. He had no objection to the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1) and would enthusiastically support the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.320) on the work of UNICEF. At the 466th meeting the Australian representative had described the commendable work of UNICEF in detail and the Belgian delegation fully agreed with his presentment.

22. Mrs. HARMAN (Israel) said that the Third Committee bore a heavy responsibility since it had not

only to define human rights and formulate universal principles, but also to initiate programmes of action leading to the eventual eradication of human misery and degradation. The *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*, on the preparation of which the Secretariat was to be congratulated, gave the Committee for the first time a comprehensive picture of the enormous task before it. The report had certain inevitable gaps and shortcomings, but those would be remedied in future reports, and were relatively unimportant. What mattered was the devastating portrayal of social conditions in the world as a whole, a world where millions still died in infancy, millions lived in a state of semi-starvation, millions were handicapped by illiteracy and ignorance. There was little wonder that the backward peoples clamoured for assistance and little doubt that the more privileged peoples would have to give it to them.

23. The need for such assistance was an acknowledged fact; the Economic and Social Council quite rightly laid emphasis on self-help and designed its various assistance programmes with that end in view, since ultimately every people was the master of its own destiny. Her delegation was therefore vitally interested in such programmes as the advisory social welfare services, fellowships, seminars, training schemes, pilot projects and the interchange of specialists. Knowledge and skill could not, however, be automatically transferred from one country to another, but had to be adapted to the standards, values and culture of the recipient country. Those who brought such knowledge should be careful not to assume an attitude of superiority towards peoples which might be unfamiliar with modern techniques, but which had great and enduring qualities.

24. Israel, which had absorbed some 700,000 immigrants in four years, was faced with the major problem of integrating its population, some of which had come from the most advanced and some from the most primitive countries in the world. Its educationalists were careful to preserve the indigenous skills, the arts and crafts, of the latter group, while at the same time teaching it to become a useful and productive part of a modern society. The influx of immigrants had also created a housing problem, and approximately \$US128 million had been allocated in the past three years for the construction of housing.

25. The problem was universal; according to the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*, it affected over 180 million families in both underdeveloped and advanced countries. The family unit was the basis of a stable society, and decent housing was a prerequisite for keeping the family together and for permitting children to grow up in proper surroundings. Unfortunately, investment in low-cost housing did not increase productive resources, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development would therefore not finance it directly. To promote housing construction it was necessary to make the maximum use of local materials, develop new construction techniques adapted to local conditions, and make barter agreements for the exchange of skills and building materials.

26. The Technical Assistance Administration was about to set up in her country three centres for demonstration and training in stabilized earth construction; a

major advantage of that technique was that anyone could be easily taught to take part in the building of his own home. The research experience gained by the centres, as well as training facilities, would be made available to other countries.

27. As regards barter of building materials, her delegation suggested that the Secretary-General might be asked to collect information from governments on the availability of surplus building materials with a view to exchange. The information might be coordinated by the Reference Centre of the Housing and Town and Country Planning Section, with special emphasis on regional exchanges.

28. She wished to associate her delegation, which was one of the sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.320), with the general acclaim and approval of the work of UNICEF, which had alleviated the lot of some 60 million children. Owing to the "matching" principle employed by UNICEF, services initiated with

its assistance were almost invariably continued by governments after the withdrawal of UNICEF. The children of her own country had received from UNICEF quantities of skimmed milk at a time of emergency, and were assured of a supply of uncontaminated milk through a milk conservation project set up with the aid of UNICEF.

29. Her delegation would gladly accept the Afghan amendment (A/C.3/L.321) to the joint draft resolution, in the conviction that the activities of UNICEF should be given the widest possible publicity.

30. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) appealed to all members of the Committee to co-operate in expediting the Committee's work so that it would be able, before the closing of the current session, to deal with all the items on the agenda, and in particular with the draft convention on the political rights of women, which was of vital interest to the women of the world.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.