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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) (*concluded*)

[Item 11]*

GENERAL DEBATE (*concluded*)

1. Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq) deplored the fact that the short time at the Committee's disposal had precluded it from giving chapter IV of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2172) the attention it deserved, particularly since the submission of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) should have led the Committee to participate directly in the preparation of a new programme of social activities. Although various technical organs and specialized agencies were responsible for planning, administering and giving effect to such programmes, it was for the Third Committee to define their form and scope. If it failed to do so, decisions which by their nature involved matters of principle might be influenced by purely technical considerations. The General Assembly itself should decide whether the technical reasons for the omission of social security, health and education from the Social Commission's programme were sufficiently strong.

2. Since the expansion of those activities depended on the Third Committee's decision, none of them could reach full growth without its participation. The Secretary-General had reviewed the advisory social welfare services programme during its first five years and had found it useful; the Social Commission had recommended an early increase in regional services for less-developed areas on the basis of European experience; and the Economic and Social Council had requested the Secretary-General to continue to emphasize that field of work. The services had been established exclusively for Europe, and the initial appropriation for their expansion beyond Europe had been unreasonably small

for the size of the territory the programme would have to cover. Neither the Social Commission's recommendation nor the Council's request could be effectively carried out unless the Third Committee took action to enlarge the scope of those activities.

3. Although the Economic and Social Council had decided at its thirteenth session that the economic and social activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies need not be financed solely out of the regular budget, some mental reservation about their value was limiting their scope more effectively than any budgetary restrictions. Some delegations seemed to fear that international assistance might duplicate or replace what should be national effort; others were somewhat sceptical of the practical value of such programmes. The fears and doubts, although unexpressed, were discouraging the imaginative approach of which the technical bodies concerned had originally shown themselves capable.

4. Had there been a fuller debate on the preliminary report, such doubts and fear might have been shown to be groundless and the Committee might have been able to give the technical organs concerned specific instructions and have requested them to prepare a new programme of international social action broad and concrete enough to cope with the problems described in the report. That description provided ample justification for laying even greater emphasis on General Assembly resolution 535 (VI).

5. The fact that the Social Commission would not be holding a special session to deal exclusively with the programme of concerted action to be undertaken in the light of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* was to be deplored. It appeared as the last item on the Social Commission's agenda at its forthcoming session; but it was to be hoped that the Commission would bear in mind the General Assembly's great interest in the subject. Such a programme could not be limited to technical assistance alone. A more dynamic approach should be sought; it would muster all

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

the resources of the United Nations and also induce national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to give their fullest co-operation.

6. It should be remembered that the peoples who comprised 68 per cent of the world's population, but produced only 18 per cent of its income, were those who possessed the richest natural resources. They would not starve while they owned such resources unless their capacity for self-help had been somehow undermined. To believe that a relatively small application of technical assistance and self-help could cure the situation described in the preliminary report was sheer wishful thinking. It would be unrealistic, too, to expect those to whom such conditions had become utterly intolerable to wait patiently while the democratic process evolved means of achieving progress. Whether the force that broke the vicious circle was a destructive or a constructive one was for the United Nations to determine.

7. It was hard to see any justification for the fear that international action might replace national effort, since at best the former would be insignificant compared to the vast problems to which it was applied. Yet, such action had a psychological value far surpassing its practical use; it would stimulate the capacity for self-help. The social activities of the United Nations were almost the only method the Organization had of influencing individuals. Although there was indeed, as the report stated, increasing recognition that 2,400 million people had somehow to contrive to live together, that would be possible only if millions of individuals themselves recognized that that was not only imperative, but for the first time in history, feasible through collective action by the United Nations.

8. Her delegation wished to express its appreciation of the work performed in the social field and in the preparation of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* by the United Nations Secretariat and the specialized agencies, and it associated itself fully with the statement made by the Syrian delegation in that connexion (468th meeting).

9. Mr. ABDEL GHANI (Egypt) considered that the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* was an extensive and exhaustive study of the social problems prevailing in the world.

10. It was however one-sided, since it confined itself to illustrating the problems and rarely mentioned national and international measures to improve social conditions. His delegation therefore noted with satisfaction the Economic and Social Council's decision (Council resolution 434 A (XIV) to issue for publication in 1954 a supplementary report dealing with the positive aspect of the question. Information from official sources and the co-operation of the specialized agencies would enable the Secretariat to produce an accurate and impartial document. The Egyptian delegation thought that the forthcoming report should be confined to social measures and reforms which had already been accomplished, and should not refer to plans and programmes which might never be carried out.

11. His delegation regretted the Council's decision (Council resolution 434 A (XIV) to issue the next edition of the report in 1956. That decision had been taken

on the assumption that social conditions changed more slowly than economic conditions, a report on which was submitted to the General Assembly every year. The Egyptian delegation did not share that view. Social conditions were changing with unprecedented speed, especially in the under-developed countries, where great efforts were being made to give the masses social justice.

12. That view had been fully confirmed by the events which had taken place in Egypt in the past four months and which had rendered much of the information in the report on that country out of date. A radical land reform had resulted in the broader distribution of landed property and had drawn the different classes of the population closer together. Minimum wages had been fixed at reasonable rates for industrial and agricultural workers, just regulations had been established for settling labour disputes and the land tenure system had been improved in favour of poor tenants. Similar social reforms were being enacted in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which he had visited recently, and in many other under-developed countries. The desire for reform was so strong that social changes were sometimes more speedy than economic changes. Unlike Europe, which had achieved its social conditions through three centuries of war and revolution, many countries were accomplishing the same fundamental changes peacefully in a single generation.

13. In view of those considerations, and of the fact that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, two of the specialized agencies which had co-operated in preparing the report had decided to hold their assemblies every two years, the Egyptian delegation considered that the Economic and Social Council should reconsider its decision and ask the Secretariat to submit its reports at two-year intervals.

14. The report emphasized the importance of dealing with social matters on a regional basis, by dealing with three regional areas in its last three chapters. A region in the social sense did not necessarily mean a geographical area. Two neighbouring countries might be widely divergent from the social point of view, since social structure depended on ethnic, historical, cultural, linguistic, religious and spiritual factors which could not be replaced by mere geographical considerations. The report rightly stressed the unity of the Arab and Moslem countries of the Middle East; it was to be hoped that the United Nations would take that unity into account in extending assistance to the Middle East and in the representation of that region in United Nations organs. In that connexion, he noted with satisfaction the election of Iraq to membership of the Social Commission.

15. The Egyptian delegation would support the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.320) on the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and the Afghan amendment (A/C.3/L.321) to it. The Children's Fund was giving Egypt valuable assistance in combating epidemic diseases of children. It had provided capital equipment for a local DDT production plant, which would be the chief source of supply of insecticides for a projected five-year insect-control plan. It was estimated that some seven million children and

young persons would be protected by the spraying campaign against malaria. The Egyptian delegation was also grateful to the Executive Board of UNICEF for a grant of \$US125,000 for a dried milk plant in Egypt and for extending its emergency allocation of \$US200,000 for the Palestine refugees for another year.

16. With regard to section IV of chapter IV of the Council's report (A/2172), the Egyptian delegation approved of convening a world population conference in 1954 and considered that it should be sponsored by the United Nations in collaboration with the interested specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

17. In connexion with section III, he referred to his country's efforts to combat illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and to the work and achievements of the newly created Anti-Narcotics Bureau of the Arab League. The new Egyptian Government was fully aware of the gravity of the situation and was drafting a bill to increase penalties for smuggling, peddling and addiction.

18. With reference to Economic and Social Council resolution 436 D (XIV), on illicit trafficking by the crews of merchant ships and civil aircraft, his delegation did not consider that the required information concerning merchant seafarers and members of civil air crews who had been convicted of offences against narcotic laws was adequate. Further details should be requested, such as the offender's photograph, fingerprints and identification marks.

19. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) said that the excellent social work performed by the United Nations should be given the wide publicity it deserved. It was the most important branch of the Organization's activities, and increased public knowledge of it would do much to restore belief and confidence in the United Nations.

20. Some delegations had used the debate to boast of the achievements of their own countries and to criticize what they regarded as the deficiencies of others. Yet the documentation before the Committee showed that the problems should be of common concern. Governments should rather state what they were willing to do for others than what they had done for themselves. The more advanced countries had a special responsibility in that connexion, since the peoples of the under-developed countries were quite aware of what was happening and what was intended. Those who wished to give the impression that they were eager to serve humanity must realize that the people they said they wished to benefit would only appreciate their sentiments when they received tangible evidence; but they would be genuinely appreciative if the promised help was forthcoming.

21. He fully agreed with what the Philippine representative had said in commendation of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*.

22. He would support the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1) on integrated economic and social development.

23. He would also support the joint draft resolution on UNICEF (A/C.3/L.319) on Afghan amendment

(A/C.3/L.321) to that draft resolution was self-explanatory and entirely in line with paragraph 3 of draft resolution G in the draft report of the Third Committee on agenda item 29 (A/C.3/L.300), already adopted by the Committee (442nd meeting). Too little publicity was given to UNICEF, the work of which was most praiseworthy.

24. Mr. ASFAHANY (Secretariat) thanked the members of the Committee who had commended the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*. The report had been the first attempt to deal with such a broad and complex subject. The Secretariat was fully aware that the report was far from complete. That was due to the facts that the basic information used had necessarily to be limited to what was available to the Secretariat in the course of its normal functions and that in many parts of the world no systematic compilation of facts concerning social conditions had ever been undertaken.

25. The Secretariat would bear most carefully in mind all the comments and criticisms that had been made and hoped that the inadequacies would have been overcome when the next issue was published.

26. Mrs. HARMAN (Israel), replying to the Syrian and Egyptian representatives under rule 114 of the rules of procedure, objected to the statement that, in studying social problems, regions should not be regarded geographically. In her general statement (467th meeting) she had stated clearly how important ethnical, historical, cultural, linguistic and spiritual considerations were in relation to social problems, but the geographical factor was clearly inescapable. Such evils as drought, epidemics or locusts crossed frontiers, irrespective of ethnical or cultural factors. The whole purpose of regional organizations was to deal with that element. The countries of Europe surely did not have a common history, culture, religion or language, yet Europe was regarded as a single region. In dealing with practical problems the geographical factor was almost always paramount.

27. Mr. MORALES (Argentina), replying to the representative of the Philippines, said he had never intended that his draft resolution should replace or in any way interfere with the implementation of General Assembly resolution 535 (VI), which was one of the most important resolutions in the social field ever adopted by that body. Despite the importance of the Assembly resolution, however, there were other aspects of the problem which merited attention. He agreed with the Philippine representative that the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* deserved far more detailed study than the Third Committee was able to give it. Unfortunately, before the adoption of resolution 535 (VI), the over-all social situation had never received proper attention in the United Nations.

28. He agreed with the view that reports on the world social situation should be published more frequently, as were reports on the economic situation. His draft resolution might serve to draw attention to that need. Various United Nations organs had produced excellent studies of economic problems, particularly of the under-developed areas; the Economic Commission for Latin America had, in that respect, made a magnificent contribution to the economic development of Latin

America. On the other hand, the Economic and Social Council, at its fourteenth session, had had before it for the first time an integrated report on the world social situation. Much remained to be done in the matters of public health, nutrition and housing; and there was a particular need for analysis of demographic problems, which were of the utmost importance. It was those needs which had led his delegation to submit its draft resolution.

29. It was not the moment for the Third Committee to take practical action as regards international social policy, in view of the preparatory work already being done on the programme of social action to be worked out in 1953. But it was important that social development should not be subordinated to economic development; the essential aim was to raise the standard of living of the peoples, and economic development was only one means to that end. The Argentine draft resolution emphasized the need for striking a balance.

30. Mrs. ROOSEVELT (United States of America), replying to the Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Polish and USSR representatives, observed that the charges made against her Government by those representatives had already been made in much the same form on many occasions during the past seven years. She had several times replied to the charges, point by point, presenting the true situation in her country, but her remarks had had no effect upon the speakers, who had continued to reiterate the same distortions of fact. She simply wished, therefore, to summarize briefly the facts which she had already presented a number of times.

31. First, the Government and people of the United States of America did not want another world war; nor were they preparing for such a war. They were doing and would continue to do everything in their power to maintain international peace and security and to resist aggression.

32. Secondly, her delegation was well aware that social conditions in the United States of America were not perfect and that the standard of living of many families was far from satisfactory. She herself had spent much of her life endeavouring to help improve those conditions, and drawing the attention of the public to the evils of such practices as racial segregation.

33. Thirdly, although standards of health, education, social welfare, housing and race relations were not as high in the United States as its citizens could wish, they were much higher than some representatives would lead the Committee to believe. Those representatives had repeatedly cited long lists of figures to indicate how small a part of the federal budget of the United States was devoted to education, public health, and social insurance. In reply, she herself had often reminded them that in her country the major expenditures for such activities came not from the federal budget, but from the states, the counties, the cities and private sources. The USSR representative had stated that less than 1 per cent of the United States federal budget was devoted to education. The figure cited was correct, but the impression created was entirely false, since education in the United States was primarily the responsibility of the states, local communities and private institutions. In 1950-51 state and local govern-

ments in the United States had devoted 34.1 per cent of their total expenditures to education, and in addition, many millions of dollars had been spent by private institutions for the same purpose.

34. Fourthly, despite the many imperfections of the social system in the United States, she would prefer to live in an imperfect democracy with freedom, rather than in such a paradise as that described by the USSR representative, without freedom. For twenty years in her country, the Republican Party, a majority of the newspapers and millions of citizens had been criticizing the government; and for the next four years the Democratic Party, many newspapers and many other citizens would be criticizing the Republican administration. Yet no Republican politicians had been imprisoned or executed. No newspapers had been suppressed for opposing the government in power. Nor was anything of the sort likely to happen in the next four years to any citizen who disagreed with the Republican administration.

35. The people of the United States of America had done much in the past, and were still doing much, to correct the prevailing low standards and injustices. They would be doing more, were they not compelled by the aggression in Korea and the threat of aggression elsewhere to help strengthen the free world and preserve the peace.

36. Mr. TSAO (China) recalled that the Byelorussian and USSR representatives had spoken in glowing terms of social conditions on the Chinese mainland. It was unnecessary to refute those assertions in detail. He would therefore limit his reply to a formal protest against the false propaganda laid before the Committee by those representatives.

37. Mr. REYES (Philippines) thanked the Argentine representative for his explanation of the purposes of his draft resolution (A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1). It was clear that that proposal was intended to supplement, not to replace, General Assembly resolution 535 (VI), and the Philippine delegation would therefore support it.

38. Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq), clarifying her delegation's position concerning geographical classification of countries, observed that the Arab States, which enjoyed a fundamental unity despite their differences, were the ones which suffered most from the situation she had mentioned.

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY ARGENTINA
(A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1)

39. Mrs. BERGER (Canada) proposed a drafting change in paragraph 3 of the operative part of the Argentine draft resolution, whereby the words "to forward the growth of" would be replaced by the words "its efforts for increasing".

40. Mr. MORALES (Argentina) accepted that amendment.

41. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Argentine draft resolution (A/C.3/L.319/Rev.1), as amended.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 42 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY AUSTRALIA, BELGIUM, BURMA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, FRANCE, GREECE, HAITI, IRAN, ISRAEL, PHILIPPINES, SWEDEN AND YUGOSLAVIA (A/C.3/L.320)

42. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Afghan amendment (A/C.3/L.321) to the twelve-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.320).

The amendment was adopted by 35 votes to none, with 7 abstentions.

43. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the draft resolution submitted by Australia, Belgium, Burma, Dominican Republic, France, Greece, Haiti, Iran, Israel, Philippines, Sweden and Yugoslavia (A/C.3/L.320), as amended.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 42 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

44. Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico) explained that his country was unable to make any material contribution to UNICEF, but had expressed its wholehearted support of that agency by voting for the twelve-Power draft resolution. The Mexican Government was faced with serious problems relating to child welfare and used all its available resources to combat disease and malnutrition and to set up children's hospitals and clinics. Child welfare and public education constituted one of the largest items of the national budget.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.