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**Chairman: Mr. G. F. DAVIDSON (Canada).**

**Programme of concerted practical action in the social field of the United Nations and the specialized agencies (A/2430, chapter IV, section I, A/2474, A/C.3/L.348) (*continued*)**

[Item 66]\*

1. Mr. AZMI (Egypt) recalled the circumstances in which the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 496 (XVI).<sup>1</sup> The Council had had before it as a working document the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.5/291), which Mr. Georges-Picot, Assistant Secretary-General, Departments of Economic Affairs and of Social Affairs, had introduced most ably and which all the members had praised warmly. It had also had before it a resolution of the Social Commission and a draft resolution, and opinions on both texts had differed. Several amendments had been submitted, including a Polish amendment which had given rise to long debate. The Council had finally adopted resolution 496 (XVI)—a compromise which had not really satisfied any delegation.

2. He had therefore thought that the least satisfied delegations would take the opportunity of re-opening the question at a meeting of the Third Committee and had been surprised at the submission of a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) which was not based on any general debate and did not relate to the substance of the question. Although paragraph 2 of the operative part implied approval of the programme, the text was nebulous and evaded the issue. The Egyptian delegation had therefore joined with the Saudi Arabian delegation in submitting some amendments (A/C.3/L.349).

3. The first amendment called for the deletion of paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348). There was no need to thank the Economic and Social Council for merely performing its duty by studying the programme and reporting on it to the Assembly. Moreover, the Council had submitted a compromise resolution which had satisfied no one. If the Assembly wished to express its thanks, it should also thank the Secretary-General, the specialized

agencies and the Social Commission. They had all helped the Council in its task.

4. With regard to the second amendment, he recalled that his delegation to the Council had asked for a separate vote on the words "with appreciation" and had voted against them. He considered that the opinion of States other than the eighteen members of the Council should have been sought before speaking of "appreciation".

5. The third amendment consisted of deleting the words "as appropriate", which indicated that the General Assembly was not interested in the question and referred it back to the Council, which would report to the Assembly if it saw fit to do so.

6. The amendments did not relate to the substance of the question, any more than did the draft resolution itself. He hoped that members of the Committee would speak on substantive problems and reserved the right to give his delegation's views on such problems at the proper time.

7. Mrs. CAMPA (Cuba) stated that her delegation was extremely pleased with the joint draft resolution and would vote for it.

8. The realistic denunciation in the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) of the ignorance, poverty and disease from which mankind was suffering removed any doubt of the urgent necessity for the United Nations to give all its support to social progress.

9. The Cuban Government considered that the programme of concerted practical action was the best method of eliminating the evils besetting mankind. Social questions were its principal preoccupation at the moment. Being aware of the interdependence of economic and social factors, it was trying to achieve concurrent progress in the two fields. It had set up new organs, such as the National Executive Commission of Local and Rural Social Organizations (Comisión Ejecutiva Nacional de los Patronatos Locales y Campesinos), which were successfully extending the network of by-roads in order to connect the most distant rural areas with the consumer centres. That economic measure was also related to social questions because it facilitated the transport of elementary educational hygienic equipment from urban centres to the outlying areas. From the point of view of co-operation, it was a progressive measure, because the State, individuals and municipalities each bore an equal share of the cost of building the roads, which were essential to any social action.

10. Another problem with which the Cuban Government was actively concerned was rural housing, in view of its effect on the morale, education and health of the peasants. The Commission for the Supervision and Improvement of Rural Housing (Comisión de Supervisión y Mejora de la Vivienda Campesina) was doing active work in building and improving sanitary conditions and at the current rate of progress would com-

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

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixteenth Session, 734th meeting.*

pletely revolutionize the life of the Cuban peasant in a few years.

11. The Government was working actively to eliminate poverty, prostitution and other scourges, which unfortunately still existed, despite legislative provisions, although they were constantly losing ground.

12. One of the most recently created Government institutions was the National Finance Society (Sociedad Financiera Nacional), an independent credit institution, the main purpose of which was to promote economic development by facilitating the total or partial financing of public works. It included a Mortgage Service which provided the low-income groups with the greater part of the capital required for the construction of cheap houses by means of very-low-interest and long-term mortgages.

13. All those economic measures helped to promote purely social measures, which, in turn, furthered the economic measures. Among the social measures was the recent establishment of an important institution, the National Organization of Children's Dispensaries (ONDI, Organización Nacional de Dispensarios Infantiles). The wife of the President of the Republic was at the head of that organization and its services extended throughout Cuba. There were also emergency aid organizations which gave assistance to the homeless and to victims of cyclones and excessive rains. They had proved their worth during the recent floods. Other noteworthy social institutions were the Organization for the Rehabilitation of Persons Disabled from Birth, by Accidents or by Infantile Paralysis (Organización para la Rehabilitación de Inválidos por Nacimiento, por Accidente y por Poliomiélitis), hospitals for children, old people and invalids and the Medical Research Foundation, which determined the appropriate diet for the population of Cuba.

14. The Cuban delegation's purpose in describing such achievements was not to make an impression, but merely to show that progress had undeniably been achieved and to express its keen desire to participate in all social-economic and economic-social measures which might further the material and spiritual progress of the peoples. Although results might be slow, faith in the United Nations should not be lost. Even if the discussion only resulted in the adoption of two or three resolutions, the resolutions would clarify the situation and would be an earnest of progress.

15. Mr. MAYO (United States of America) said that the new administration in the United States of America attached great importance to social matters and had set up a Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The United States delegation considered that one of the most important tasks of the United Nations was that incumbent on it in the social field, under Article 55 of the Charter. The Organization had done work in that field since the beginning and in 1952 the General Assembly had adopted resolution 535 (VI), inviting the Economic and Social Council to prepare a programme of concerted practical action. The Council had based its deliberations on the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* and on the Secretary-General's report on the programme (E/CN.5/291). It had finally adopted a specific programme and its principal conclusions were contained in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of Economic and Social Council resolution 496 (XVI). The United States delegation approved of that programme and had joined with other delegations in submitting a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348).

16. With reference to the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349), he recalled that their authors could not see why the General Assembly should thank the Economic and Social Council, especially as most of the work had been done by the Secretariat. However, the General Assembly had decided, by a large majority vote of 44 to none, with 6 abstentions, to invite the Council to deal with the question. It was therefore an act of common courtesy to thank the Council and, indirectly, the Secretary-General, the Secretariat, Member States, the specialized agencies and the Social Commission.

17. With regard to the second amendment, the Committee did not have before it the Secretary-General's voluminous report (E/CN.5/291), but only his note (A/2474), which could be studied rapidly. The sponsors of the joint draft resolution had chosen the words "takes note with appreciation" with great care. They had foreseen that some representatives might not wish to take responsibility for the report and that any delegation might find in it a passage which it could not endorse; they had therefore decided on a compromise between the word "approves" and the words "takes note of".

18. He could not understand the purpose of the third amendment. If the words concerned were deleted, the General Assembly would be asking the Council to report to it even if it had nothing to report. The third amendment was therefore in contradiction with the first two and, in any case, he could see no need for any of them.

19. Mr. TUNCEL (Turkey) said that his country would support the social activities of the United Nations, which it regarded as among the most important of the tasks in which the Organization engaged. The programme of concerted practical action had been drawn up as a result of the continuous efforts made, in particular, by the social services of the Secretariat, on the basis of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* and the programme of practical action drawn up with the collaboration of the specialized agencies concerned. To that end the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 496 (XVI).

20. His delegation agreed with the principle stated in paragraph 7 (a) of that resolution, stressing the interrelated character of economic and social factors. Those two factors were indeed inter-connected. Not only did every social question have an economic aspect, but economic questions also had social aspects. His delegation was therefore glad to note that in paragraph 8 the Council recalled its resolution 451 A (XIV) on priority economic programmes. It was stated in the introductory part of the paragraph that, in drawing up social projects, resolution 451 A (XIV) would be taken into account and there would be no prejudice to the priorities established in the economic field. It was therefore obvious that economic development and social progress would go hand in hand, in order to ensure a balanced improvement of living standards. His delegation approved of the projects listed in paragraph 8. The programme was only a beginning and might be improved; the Council was to be commended for having chosen the path of caution and having limited projects to the available resources. His delegation was particularly interested in the meetings on an experimental basis mentioned in paragraph 10, by which regional international collaboration might enable a common solution to be found for common problems, and it was sure that the Secretary-General, assisted by the specialized agencies, would ensure their success.

21. Chapter IX of the Council's report (A/2430) showed that the additional costs of the programme would amount to \$US5,000. The Turkish delegation thought that the programme heralded social activities on a large scale, which would certainly be successful, especially with goodwill and assistance from Member States.

22. Mr. GONZALEZ MONTALVO (El Salvador) said that his delegation would vote for the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) as it stood. If the programmes of social activities in which foreign experts participated were to be satisfactory, however, they should be based on agreements clearly specifying that under-developed countries would not be liable for the experts' subsistence allowances, as they always had to meet other considerable expenses in carrying out the programmes. That position was motivated by a recent resolution of the Technical Assistance Board, in which an attempt had been made to compel countries receiving technical assistance to cover the whole of the experts' subsistence allowances. The result was frequently that, as the experts were paid more highly than senior officials of the country concerned, the under-developed countries had to bear such a heavy burden that it often prevented them from deriving benefit from the technical assistance programmes.

23. Mr. VENKATARAMAN (India) said that his delegation supported the joint draft resolution. The conclusions of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* had shown the extent and seriousness of the social problem. The League of Nations had undertaken programmes of social assistance when needed, in action against drug addiction, for instance, and against epidemics crossing national frontiers. But Article 55 of the Charter laid down that the United Nations should promote higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development. While the major Powers were becoming increasingly conscious of their responsibilities towards the under-developed countries, the latter were increasingly eager to raise their standards of living and to take their share of the world's wealth. The convergence of those two trends had forced the United Nations to ponder the acute problem of poverty, disease and ignorance and to draft a programme of concerted and practical social action in order to raise standards of living.

24. General Assembly resolution 535 (VI), the Social Commission's resolution<sup>2</sup> and Council resolution 496 (XVI) should be looked at in that context. The Council had thoroughly considered the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* and the Secretary-General's report on the programme (E/CN.5/291). It had laid down some general principles in paragraph 7 of its resolution, listed priorities in paragraph 8 and determined the immediate objectives in paragraph 9. It was the Committee's duty to see whether paragraph 9 fitted the principles and priorities set forth in the preceding paragraphs and whether it would enable the goals it set to be attained. The answer depended on the experiments of each State in community development.

25. Community development projects in India had been given absolute priority. The Government was energetically and enthusiastically organizing their application, as it was convinced that they were the key to the health of the underfed and ignorant rural masses.

Agriculture in India, the people's main resource, used hopelessly out-of-date methods, brought inadequate returns and failed to attract the young. The same situation seemed to prevail throughout the world, as the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* showed. The rural masses could not be changed by propaganda, publicity or pamphlets. Practical demonstration was the only possible method of education.

26. India had undertaken fifty-five community development projects for the benefit of twelve million persons in more than 165,000 villages. Each project dealt with about 300 villages, with a population of 200,000 in all, farming 150,000 acres. Each village would be supplied with two surface or tube wells; adequate drainage facilities; agricultural extension services, one extension worker dealing with five villages; veterinary services; construction of cheap rural housing; construction and upkeep of roads; primary schools; and a community centre. Under the plan the employment structure would be as follows: agriculture, now engaged in by 70 per cent of the population, would absorb 50 per cent; agricultural labour and pump and tractor attendants, 10 per cent; cottage industries, 12 per cent; light industry and retail trade, 13.5 per cent. From fifteen to twenty-five of the villages would be grouped in a *mandi*, and four or five *mandis* would make up a development block. It was anticipated that the community development projects would become financially self-supporting after a year or two. Much stress was laid on self-help: the local inhabitants had to contribute voluntary labour in building roads and housing and in repairing wells and reservoirs. Such projects were very popular in India. Their total cost was estimated at 383,800,000 rupees. Under the Technical Co-operation Agreement, the United States Government contributed 40 million rupees, 22 million of which were regarded as a loan. About 6,500 skilled workers were needed to carry out the projects. The Indian Government had opened five training centres with financial help from the Ford Foundation.

27. Thus the community development plan in India complied with all the principles set out in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of Council resolution 496 (XVI).

28. The small groups to plan concrete programmes, referred to in paragraph 10, should not be restricted to senior officials representing the governments, but should be extended to admit any person whom the governments concerned might propose. He would not, however, submit any amendment to that effect.

29. In concluding, he wished to commend the International Labour Organisation, to which the Indian people owed much. The trade union movement in India had not won either the eight-hour day or legislation on the minimum wage in industry or agriculture by its own efforts, but India's association with ILO had enabled it to rank with nations with a progressive labour legislation. The International Labour Organisation had helped India to draft the Employees State Insurance Act and was currently studying productivity in certain industries. The Employees Provident Fund Act recently adopted by the Indian Legislative Assembly would give retirement pensions to more than 14 million workers. India believed that, at a time when the world was driven by conflict, hope should be placed in the economic and social development of the masses.

30. Accordingly, he would vote for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) and against the amendments thereto (A/C.3/L.349).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 7, annex III.

31. Mr. HSIA (China) said that he would not speak on the general principles. The Chinese delegation had already expressed its views in the Economic and Social Council and the Social Commission; it had been one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on which Council resolution 496 (XVI) had been based.

32. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Directors-General of the specialized agencies concerned in the preparation of the remarkable report on the programme of concerted practical action, were, however, to be congratulated. He was glad to note that, according to the authors of that report, there did not appear to be any significant gaps in the international social programmes. He endorsed the conclusion that priority should be given to improvement of techniques, achieving full governmental and popular co-operation, and to obtaining new resources. The first fell largely within the competence of the international organizations; the other two lay almost wholly with the States concerned.

33. He wished to bring out two important points about resolution 496 (XVI). First, the Economic and Social Council had been able to make a clear distinction between the general principles to be applied, the projects on which action should be concentrated and the practical methods to be used. Thus, order and clarity had been introduced and would be of great help for future progress. Secondly, the steps recommended in paragraph 10 were particularly sound. The meetings would prove very useful. In many countries, including China, there were national committees concerned with the administration of the technical assistance programmes, the members of which would certainly profit from consultation with representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and the specialized agencies on the improvement and extension of their current social programmes.

34. The desired progress could not be anticipated overnight. The problems were not new and no one could hope to solve them alone; concerted action was required. The Economic and Social Council was playing an essential part as a co-ordinating factor; it should be commended and encouraged. The Chinese delegation would accordingly support the joint draft resolution.

35. Mr. ZDANOWSKI (Poland) said that social and economic factors were to a high degree interdependent and that social progress was dependent on the existence of a healthy economy. Thus, the standards of living of various peoples were being seriously threatened by the armament programmes of their governments.

36. In the United States of America, for example, 73 per cent of the budget had been devoted to military expenditure in 1952, and only 13 per cent to social expenditure. At its 72nd Congress, the American Federation of Labor had expressed concern that appropriations for social services for 1953-54 had been cut by 29.8 per cent and had pointed out that the funds provided were insufficient to give the working population proper protection against unemployment or to ensure a decent standard of living for the aged. The situation of the Negroes, who were victims of discrimination, appeared to be even worse. The Department of Commerce had itself admitted that 70.6 per cent of the Negro population of the United States was below the subsistence level as compared with 31.9 per cent of the white population. In the economically developed countries in the United States' political orbit, the situation was similar. The International Conference for Social Security had noted that in France the health

insurance fund was 90,000 million francs short. In the United Kingdom the Government had largely abolished the supplying of free medicines. In Italy there was terrible poverty. On 26 July 1953, the *New York Times* had reported that there were 869,000 Italian families which never had meat or sugar and that, of the total of partly or completely unemployed, 30 per cent had been unemployed for over a year and 53 per cent had never been in employment.

37. In the under-developed countries which felt the effects of the armaments race conditions were appalling. In the Middle East there was no maternal or child welfare of any kind. According to the International Conference for Social Security, in 1951 there had been 400,000 deaths for 800,000 births in Turkey. The situation in the Latin-American States was no better. The proportion of the population benefiting from social security was extremely small: 1.5 per cent, for instance, in Venezuela, 3.8 per cent in Mexico and 6.7 per cent in Cuba. There could be no improvement in the social security situation in those countries until their economy was suitably developed, and they ceased to serve only as a field of economic expansion and a source of cheap raw materials for their powerful neighbours.

38. When sovereign States were so backward there seemed little point in dwelling on the state of social security in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In Morocco there was one doctor per 45,000 inhabitants in the towns, and one per 120,000 persons in the country. There were similar figures for almost all African territories under Belgian, French or United Kingdom control. The social situation in the capitalist countries, the under-developed countries and the Non-Self-Governing Territories was thus far from satisfactory.

39. Poland presented a very different picture. Article 58 of the Constitution proclaimed and guaranteed the right to work, and unemployment was unknown. Article 59 recognized the right to rest, article 60 the right to medical protection and assistance and article 61 the right to education, while article 66 guaranteed complete equality of the sexes. There were provisions to ensure that those articles did not remain a dead letter. In practice every Polish citizen was covered by social security and received appropriate benefits. Contributions were paid by the employer, whether the State or a private undertaking. Each year, as the national income rose, the benefits enjoyed by the population increased in scope and value. Thus, maternity benefits had recently been raised, day-nurseries and hospitals were increasing in numbers, and facilities for treatment and convalescence were available to the sick in ever greater numbers. In 1953, 24.2 per cent of the budget was devoted to the social services, an increase of 6 per cent over 1952; the sum involved was 24,000 million zloty, or about 1,000 zloty per inhabitant. Poland owed those benefits to a peaceful policy and healthy economy. Nothing could better characterize the situation in the capitalist world than the observation made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the introduction to the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) to the effect that more than half the population of the world lived in conditions which, from every point of view, were deplorable.

40. For all those reasons the Polish delegation had submitted a draft resolution (E/L.544) at the sixteenth session of the Economic and Social Council calling attention to a memorandum concerning the International Conference for the Defence, Improvement and

Extension of Social Insurance and Social Security held at Vienna in March 1953 and attended by 266 representatives from 59 countries. The Vienna Conference had drawn up a programme dealing with the principles of social security and the standards to be fixed, the problem of agricultural and forestry workers—a particularly underprivileged category—and social security in colonial territories. The programme was worthy of consideration by the United Nations and might be of service in the future work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The Council had rejected the Polish draft resolution and had adopted resolution 496 (XVI), which had serious shortcomings. Indeed, the Council had altered for the worse the original draft transmitted to it by the Social Commission; against the wishes of the Polish delegation, it had eliminated a particularly important passage. In the resolution adopted, for which the Polish representative to the Economic and Social Council had been unable to vote, social insurance was mentioned only incidentally and in purely declarative fashion. The text of the resolution did not correspond to its title, since it contained no practical items and failed to take into account the real situation of the workers. It would require radical alteration. The joint draft resolution did not meet that need; and the Polish delegation accordingly could not support it.

41. Mrs. PINTO DE VIDAL (Uruguay) supported the draft resolution. It was perfectly normal to take note with appreciation of the programme of practical action adopted by the Economic and Social Council. The wording of the text conformed with the wishes of all the nations which had taken part in the San Francisco Conference. The specialized agencies, most of which had come into being since 1945, had contributed greatly to the progress achieved, which would have to continue steadily if the world was eventually to attain the aims set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. It should at all events be recognized that a first important step had been taken.

42. In paragraph 2 of the operative part of resolution 496 (XVI) the Economic and Social Council called attention to the progress made in dealing with grave social problems; it could not be gainsaid that real improvements had already been achieved. Nevertheless much remained to be done, and in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the operative part the Council had underlined the measures needed in the programmes undertaken; none would challenge the need for the measures mentioned. In paragraph 7 the Council had listed the general principles to be applied by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the specialized agencies; in paragraph 8, the projects on which the programme of action should concentrate; and, in paragraph 9, the practical methods and techniques to be used. There appeared to be nothing to criticize in those paragraphs. Paragraph 10 offered the Secretary-General an opportunity of action which was particularly worth while and from which excellent results could be expected. The text of resolution 496 (XVI) was most satisfactory, and the Economic and Social Council well deserved the congratulations it was proposed to address to it.

43. The Uruguayan delegation would accordingly vote for the joint draft resolution in its original form without amendment.

44. Mr. COATON (Union of South Africa) said that in connexion with the programme of concerted practical action, the Union of South Africa was faced with a

difficulty that had been mentioned on previous occasions. Official and voluntary agencies in South Africa had not yet had time to consider in detail the documents which had been submitted to them, in particular those relating to the sixteenth session of the Economic and Social Council. In the circumstances, the South African delegation was unable to express a final opinion on the matter, and would make some preliminary observations only.

45. In the first place there was a real need for co-ordination of effort. It was essential to avoid the dispersal of effort and lack of balance. Programmes had to be practical and reasonable. Ill-considered enthusiasm should be avoided; it should be borne in mind that excess in anything was a fault. He was therefore glad to note that, according to the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.5/291), there was no unnecessary duplication in the social action of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

46. Furthermore, it was pointed out in that report that the solution of the problems which remained depended largely on the Member States. He agreed with that view and had been astonished to see that the Economic and Social Council had found it necessary to go beyond the conclusions of the report and to deal in detail with certain points. He challenged, not the intrinsic value of the decisions embodied in resolution 496 (XVI), but the timeliness of that text. It might have been better to await the reactions of the governments to which the report had been transmitted.

47. The South African delegation was unable to support the joint draft resolution since under it the General Assembly would approve a resolution for which there was no clear need and which, moreover, the South African Government had not had time to study. He would accordingly abstain from voting.

48. Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq) said that, in the Social Commission, the delegations sponsoring the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348) had shown a keen interest in the problem under discussion and had taken a constructive part in the debate. She would therefore have expected those delegations to insist on a thorough discussion of the question by the General Assembly itself. Instead, they had submitted a draft resolution under which the Third Committee would take a purely passive position and merely take note of the programme adopted by the Economic and Social Council. The great work undertaken by the General Assembly following the publication of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* deserved fuller consideration.

49. It had certainly not been the intention of the sponsors to prevent the Third Committee from discussing the substance of the question, but in proposing to invite the Economic and Social Council to consider "as appropriate" further practical measures which might be undertaken and to report "as appropriate" to the General Assembly, they implied that the Assembly attached only secondary importance to the problem. There was no doubt however, that, in view of the vital importance of the programme of concerted practical action, it was for the General Assembly, in which the sixty States Members of the United Nations met, to take direct responsibility for work in that field.

50. The Iraqi delegation accordingly hoped that the Third Committee would consider the substance of the Council's resolution, criticize and appraise the programme outlined, on the success of which the very future of the United Nations depended, and try to find

ways of improving it bearing in mind the need to ensure the rational use of available resources.

51. She reserved the right to state her views on the programme itself at a later stage, and hoped that, after the discussion on substance had been held, the Committee would have before it a draft resolution containing concrete provisions; for the time being she was unable to support the draft resolution as it stood.

52. Mr. EL GHATIT (Egypt) said that under resolution 535 (VI) the Economic and Social Council had been invited to examine in detail the social activities undertaken by the United Nations and the specialized agencies and to take the necessary action to ensure that efforts and resources were effectively concentrated on those social problems the early solution of which could be promoted through international action, especially in the under-developed countries, both self-governing and non-self-governing, taking into account that action to promote social development should go hand in hand with action to promote economic development. In accordance with that resolution, and in the light of the findings of the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 434 A (XIV) under which, instead of taking practical action, it had invited the Member States and the specialized agencies to submit to it their suggestions and recommendations in connexion with the drawing-up of a programme of practical action and had requested the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies to prepare a report in 1953 containing any suggestions they thought useful. The Council had obviously not carried out the categorical instructions it had received.

53. The Council had not gone any further in resolution 451 (XIV) when it had established an order of priority; it had stated that the programmes mentioned had not been classified by relative importance but by subject-matter, and had added that the programmes were interdependent and mutually complementary and that the list had been drawn up subject to the consideration that one overriding objective should be kept in view, namely the economic and social development of the under-developed areas. The Council had thereby left the door wide open for the differences of interpretation which the words "interdependent and mutually complementary" would inevitably provoke.

54. In pursuance of Council resolution 434 A (XIV), a conference of the competent officers of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies had been held at Geneva in December 1952. The conference had sketched the broad outline of a programme, stating that the wide diversity of conditions and policies in the various countries and Non-Self-Governing Territories considerably limited the usefulness of a general programme to be applied in accordance with a rigid and fixed plan established in advance for all countries and territories. In an attempt to interpret the General Assembly's request for the concentration of efforts and resources upon those social problems the early solution of which could be promoted through international action, the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the specialized agencies had recognized that that criterion was important but was far from being the sole or principal criterion. The conclusions they had reached were set forth in paragraphs 857 and 858 of the report by the Secretary-General concerning the programme of concerted practical action in the social field (E/CN.5/291).

55. On the basis of that report the Council had adopted the resolution before the Committee (496 (XVI)), which was set forth in the note by the Secretary-General (A/2474).

56. There was certainly no question of disparaging the contribution made by the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies, nor of belittling the importance of the Council's work. Nevertheless, a study of the Council's resolution (496 (XVI)) and report (A/2430) showed that the Council had strayed considerably from the letter and the spirit of General Assembly resolution 535 (VI). Therefore, although the resolution contained a detailed plan and provided for certain practical measures, his delegation would be unable to do more than take note of it, at all events until such time as the substance of the resolution and programme had been examined. His delegation had therefore joined with Saudi Arabia in submitting an amendment to the draft resolution: a resolution thanking the Council or noting its resolution "with appreciation" implied a favourable judgment of the work undertaken, and it was proper to determine beforehand to what extent the resolution in question was in conformity with the spirit and the letter of the General Assembly's resolution.

57. Mr. TARSISSE (Yemen) said that his delegation had already explained the importance it attached to the programme of concerted practical action in the social field.

58. The defects of the draft resolution were corrected by the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.349). He personally would not have insisted on the omission of paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft resolution, but if the amendment were put to the vote in its entirety he would support all its provisions.

59. His country was fully prepared to co-operate with the specialized agencies and to apply the Council's decisions, but it was its earnest desire that there should be no discrimination between countries in regard to the granting of assistance in the social field. In that connexion he observed that Yemen had not as yet received assistance from the United Nations in the social field.

60. Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico) said that his delegation would support the draft resolution since it felt that the programme prepared by the Economic and Social Council had much to commend it. He would abstain from voting on the amendments submitted by Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

61. In regard to the Polish representative's remark that, in Mexico, only 3.8 per cent of the workers were covered by social insurance, he pointed out that social security had been introduced in Mexico only five or six years previously; it could therefore be claimed that real progress had been made in a few years.

62. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) held that the discussion should not centre on the draft resolution that had been submitted, but on the pertinent documentation; the most important documents were the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation*, Council resolution 451 A (XIV), the resolution adopted by the Social Commission, and Council resolution 496 (XVI).

63. He wished to single out from the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* two statements which he felt to be open to challenge. First, the report stated that there did not appear to be any significant gap in the substance of international programmes in the social field and that the extension of the work to

the under-developed areas had so far progressed satisfactorily. Until the supplementary report on national and international measures to improve social conditions, especially in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Trust Territories, was available, that statement was premature and unjustifiably optimistic. Secondly, it was claimed that there was no overlapping between the activities and programmes of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies; that statement was open to doubt in view of the multiplicity of the activities undertaken and the profusion of documents published. It could be wished that the Co-ordinating Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had expressed a similar opinion.

64. With regard to the conclusions of the report, he said that the co-operation of the governments and the peoples was undoubtedly necessary in the implementation of the vast programme elaborated by the United Nations, but that co-operation had to rest on a sound basis and be made possible by preliminary measures. If disputes between nations were not settled equitably, in accordance with the principles of the Charter, there could be no co-operation between governments, and any structure that might be built would be a mere façade. Similarly, co-operation between governments and peoples was possible only if the government concerned was truly representative of the people and acted according to its will. In that respect the case of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Trust Territories was particularly important.

65. In regard to the efforts to obtain new resources for social development, it was already clear that the available resources were not sufficient for the implementation of such vast programmes. It would therefore be better to be realistic and to avoid over-ambitious projects. It was moreover important to concentrate the limited resources available on tasks of primary importance for the realization of the principles of the United Nations Charter. It was also known that the principal contributing countries were not in a position to increase their contributions. Nevertheless, if social development was ultimately to lead to the establishment of a lasting peace, the countries most directly affected by the current international tension would have to make sacrifices and, since the problem was to obtain additional funds, a reduction of armaments would certainly be one way of attaining that objective.

66. Turning to Council resolution 451 A (XIV), he pointed out that in the list of priorities contained in the annex third or fourth place was given to certain programmes of an eminently social character. Moreover, the list did not include certain matters to which Syria attached paramount importance, such as the question of the Palestine refugees. It was hard to see on what basis the Council had established the list of priority programmes. The Syrian Government had not been consulted on the matter and could hardly be expected to endorse, by an over-simplified resolution, everything

that had so far been done by the subsidiary organs of the United Nations.

67. He pointed out that there was some difference between the texts of the resolution of the Social Commission and Council resolution 496 (XVI): the problem of the under-developed areas, which was included among the essential questions in the programme drawn up by the Commission, was only obliquely referred to in the preamble of the Council's resolution. Further, neither of the resolutions made any reference to the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories; it was astonishing, when that question was to be studied in 1954, that a programme claiming to be complete should entirely omit it. Lastly, it would be interesting to know exactly what was meant by the expression "groups in need of special care" in paragraph 8 (e) of the Council resolution.

68. For those reasons his delegation viewed the draft resolution with reserve. The exceptionable wording of the text was largely corrected by the amendments submitted by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which he would support. He wished to add, however, that the expression "keep... under review" in paragraph 3 of the operative part of the draft resolution was very weak having regard to the scope of the programme concerned and the importance of the part which the Council was called upon to play in that field. He suggested that the phrase might be replaced by the words "watch over".

69. Mrs. EMMET (United Kingdom) said that her delegation's position had been clearly stated both in the Social Commission and in the Economic and Social Council. She would therefore merely say that, in accordance with that position, she would abstain from voting either on the draft resolution or on the amendments, although she viewed the latter text with some sympathy.

70. Her delegation was anxious to ensure the co-ordination of activities in the social field and did not believe that the Council resolution would promote progress in that respect; on the contrary, her delegation agreed with those of Saudi Arabia and Egypt that the resolution was likely rather to lead to dissipation of effort. It would be better to concentrate on specific practical tasks than to undertake too vast a programme. She also regretted that the priority list in paragraph 8 of Council resolution 496 (XVI) did not correspond to the lists previously established, a situation that was likely to create confusion. She could also have wished that the resolution had followed more closely the findings of the excellent report by the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/291).

71. In conclusion, she stressed the necessity of adapting programmes to the degree of development of the communities concerned and pointed out that the success of technical assistance in the social field depended essentially on the initiative of the beneficiary governments.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.