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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.353) (*concluded*)

[Item 66]*

1. Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) stated that the item under discussion was closely linked with other questions previously examined in the Third Committee and had often been considered in the Social Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.
2. At the fourteenth session of the Economic and Social Council, the USSR delegation had pointed out the paramount importance of fundamental social questions affecting millions of workers in the majority of countries. Those questions included the extension of social security measures, unemployment, old age, disability and sickness insurance measures, and maternal and child welfare measures; the promotion of greater accessibility of education for the broad masses of the population and the introduction in the States Members of the United Nations of free compulsory primary education for all citizens without any distinction as to race, sex, language, religion, property status or social origin; the ensuring of greater accessibility of medical services for the population without distinction on any of the above-mentioned grounds; increased construction of housing accessible to the broad masses of the population. Special attention had been drawn to the need for improving the situation with respect to health, education and social welfare in the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories.
3. The aforesaid problem did not exist in the Byelorussian SSR, where they had been completely settled through the application of the Byelorussian Constitution and the legislation in force. Despite the enormous destruction wrought by the German invaders, the material and cultural level of the people was rising steadily in the Byelorussian SSR. The number of manual and office workers employed in all branches of the Byelorussian economy was increasing, as was the production of consumer goods; an extensive programme of housing construction, town planning and the construction of peasants' dwellings was being carried out, while the network of schools, technical schools, uni-

versities and cultural, educational and health institutions was being further expanded and improved.

4. In a number of capitalist, colonial and dependent countries, however, the social conditions of the masses of the people were at a very low level and were steadily deteriorating, as was borne out by many United Nations documents and by statements made by representatives of those countries in various organs of the United Nations. The USSR representative's amendments (A/C.3/L.354) to the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.353) set out a comprehensive programme of practical measures in the social field designed to bring about considerable improvements in those conditions.

5. *The Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) stated that in the United States only 22 per cent of the population aged sixty-five and over were beneficiaries under the scheme of assistance for old people. The documents of the international conference for the defence of social rights, held in Vienna in 1953, showed that in France less and less money was being appropriated for the social needs of the population. For example, the list of persons entitled to relief in France covered less than one-fifth of the total number of wholly unemployed. That alone revealed that the French representative's enthusiastic allegation that the social situation was satisfactory in a number of countries was not in accordance with the facts.

6. Because of their military preparations, ruling circles in the capitalist countries were steadily reducing the already very small allowances and pensions for unemployment, sickness and old age, while the continual rise in prices and the depreciation of the currency were reducing the real scale of expenditure on social insurance, which had already been curtailed. So far as social insurance was concerned, stagnation and retrogression were to be observed in a number of countries, since it was obvious that social insurance could develop successfully only under a peace economy.

7. The facts she had adduced showed convincingly that the United Nations, its Member States and the specialized agencies should be seriously concerned at the difficult social conditions existing in a number of countries. Earlier resolutions adopted in United Nations organs had to some extent taken note of that situation but had made no proposals which would really improve the programme of concerted practical action in the social field of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, as many previous speakers had pointed out.

8. Under Economic and Social Council resolution 496 (XVI), all practical measures to implement social programmes were made the responsibility of the local authorities, thereby relieving governments of the responsibility for carrying out social reforms on a national scale. The United Nations should point out that the State and the employers should constitute the principal source of funds for carrying out measures in the social

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

field, including social insurance and social welfare, education, health, and maternal and child welfare. Social insurance should be guaranteed by law to all who earned their own livelihood. Social insurance should provide at least a minimum living standard and relief without any distinction as to national origin, sex, age or religion.

9. The Byelorussian delegation therefore considered that the USSR representative's proposals would considerably improve the resolution by making it possible to put into effect a comprehensive and effective programme of concerted action in the social field. Her delegation would support the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.353) if the USSR amendments were incorporated in it.

10. Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq) deplored the fact that the Economic and Social Council's resolution (496 (XVI)), however valuable, was wholly inadequate for the purposes originally contemplated. She had naturally not expected that a programme could be formulated immediately or that social action, dealing as it did with society influx, could be final; yet she could not but be discouraged by the failure of the United Nations to show a more imaginative approach. The *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* had been defective in parts, but it had given an impressive picture of conditions, bleak enough to warrant its eloquent introduction and the urgent concern of the United Nations. The General Assembly had accordingly asked the Secretary-General, in consultation with the heads of the specialized agencies, to report on a programme of concerted practical action, with special attention to the under-developed countries. Unfortunately, the Assembly had tied the Secretary-General's hands by specifying that he had to work in the light of previously established criteria and priorities, without prejudice to criteria established in the economic field, and in the light of policies already established by the specialized agencies. The virtual impossibility of drawing up a dynamic programme had also been due to the fact that the specialized agencies had constitutional arrangements and established policies independent of the General Assembly and that there was no really effective co-ordination of policy at the higher levels. Although the Council had agreed with the Secretary-General that a redirection of policy was needed, that had proved impossible owing to the fragmentary policies which had developed since 1946 under pressure of various emergencies. When the Social Commission had been asked (Council resolution 434 (XIV)) to study the report and make recommendations, the Council had attached so little importance to that work that it had not even permitted the Commission to hold a special session. The Social Commission had also been hampered by the same limitations as had previously bound the Secretary-General. Indeed, success would have been possible only if there had been a central authority able to appraise international action in the social field as a whole.

11. The United Nations was not yet equipped to take a steady view of so large a matter as international social action. It was to be feared that no common language had yet been evolved by which the differing concepts of international social responsibility could be understood by all countries, a barrier more likely to be insurmountable than any financial difficulties. As in domestic social action, especially in countries with limited resources, so in international action, special interests often collided and the truth that the interests of one group were the interests of all had not yet been realized. Her

delegation had been disappointed because it had believed that there were enough common needs and aspirations to warrant the hope that it would be possible to draw up a dynamic programme. The programme set forth in resolution 496 (XVI) of the Economic and Social Council had been a compromise. It was, however, a praiseworthy effort and might be expanded and improved. She would support the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.353), but she failed to see how it had attacked the substance of the problem.

12. It had been argued that the General Assembly's power to reconsider plans carefully worked out by experts was a structural flaw in the United Nations; but such flaws were inherent in all democratic institutions. She was not advocating reconsideration, although she welcomed such proposals as that submitted by the Soviet Union. Although the application of the programme was the responsibility of the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly was responsible for expressing its views on the proposed techniques and principles, since success depended very largely on the kind of support obtained from the governments. As the Assembly could not relinquish to the Council all interest in the development of the programme, the joint draft resolution should have been couched in more definite terms.

13. The general principles stated were most welcome, especially those recognizing the interrelation of economic and social factors and the necessity of working out projects which would reach the greatest possible number of people. Community development projects had been given a perhaps unwarranted importance. In themselves they could hardly be a great stimulus unless they were used as demonstration or pilot projects providing a simultaneous approach to economic, educational and health projects. She was sorry that the Council had not retained that idea, as put forward by the Social Commission.

14. Paragraph 10 of resolution 496 (XVI) introduced an innovation; her government had it under consideration.

15. Mr. SCHMELZ (Czechoslovakia) said that social standards were deteriorating in a great number of capitalist countries, and especially in the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, owing to the armaments race which was being carried on by certain capitalist Powers. Resolution 496 (XVI) of the Economic and Social Council did, it was true, tackle some social problems, but it was sadly deficient when it came to the specific practical problems enumerated in the USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.354). The Council resolution did little to remedy the contradictions between the purposes and principles of the United Nations and existing critical social conditions.

16. In Czechoslovakia social benefits were guaranteed in the Constitution and by law and fully enjoyed, as the facts showed.

17. The improvement of social conditions by international action was the most important responsibility laid upon the United Nations by the Charter. The USSR amendments would promote the purposes set forth in the Charter and make more specific a resolution on a problem of the utmost urgency. They could be applied easily. He would support them and welcomed the incorporation of the Afghan representative's oral amendment in the joint draft resolution.

18. After a brief discussion, in which Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon), Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico) and

Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) took part, the CHAIRMAN declared the debate closed and asked those delegations which wished to do so to explain their votes before the voting took place.

19. Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico) said that he would vote for the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.353) and for paragraph 3 (d) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.354). Mexico, having achieved its independence only comparatively recently, wished to affirm its solidarity with any sympathy for the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The other paragraphs of the USSR amendment, however, would restrict the scope of the draft resolution and one of them would eliminate from resolution 496 (XVI) the emphasis on fundamental education and encouragement of scientific training and research. Mexico had felt the benefit of fundamental education. Furthermore, the idea of introducing "free compulsory primary education for all citizens" was inapplicable to Mexico and doubtless to other countries, since it excluded children, who were not citizens, and aliens. Such education had already been introduced in Mexico and was not restricted to citizens; children and resident aliens automatically had access to it also.

20. Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon) felt that paragraph 3 (d) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments tended to restrict the application of the draft resolution, in the case of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, to the three fields of action mentioned, and to deprive those territories of the benefits listed in paragraphs 8 (g) and (h) of Council resolution 496 (XVI). He would, however, support a proposal to add the words "both self-governing and non-self-governing" after the words "under-developed countries" in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, if it were not too late to submit further amendments; the wording would thus be brought into conformity with that of General Assembly resolution 535 (VI).

21. The probably unintentional effect of the anti-discrimination clauses in the USSR amendment would be to empower the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies to make compliance with the clauses a prerequisite for the grant of assistance. That would constitute interference in the domestic jurisdiction of States and he would accordingly vote against the USSR amendments.

22. Mr. AMAN (Sweden) felt that a list of forms of discrimination would inevitably be incomplete; as the French representative had pointed out, political discrimination was not included in the USSR list. The terms of paragraph 8 of Council resolution 496 (XVI) clearly applied to all categories of persons, and likewise to Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories equally with other countries. He therefore considered the USSR amendments superfluous and would vote against them, while supporting the draft resolution.

23. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) said that he would abstain from voting on paragraphs 3 (b) and (c) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments because the terms of resolution 496 (XVI) were more realistic. Appropriate social action in those Member States which had not yet instituted social security and free compulsory primary education should be begun on a practical scale and reviewed in the light of results. The Charter, and the numerous resolutions adopted by United Nations organs, made plain the desire of the Member States to extend social services to their whole populations without discrimination, so far as was practically possible.

24. He would vote for paragraph 3 (d) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments, in order to bring resolution 496 (XVI) into conformity with Assembly resolution 535 (VI); paragraph 6 of the former resolution should likewise be amplified to mention the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories.

25. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Lebanese representative's suggestion to add a reference to the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories to paragraph 2 of the draft resolution would serve the purpose he had in mind.

26. He disagreed with the Swedish representative's view that his amendment was superfluous. In education there was evidence of discrimination on the score of race, as the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* showed. In capitalist countries there was also discrimination on the ground of sex, in that, the higher the branch of education, the smaller the proportion of women students. There was also linguistic discrimination; the constitutions of some countries denied education and citizenship to persons unable to use the official language of the country.

27. Mr. CASTRILLO (Bolivia), supporting the draft resolution and paragraph 3 (d) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments, expressed his delegation's sympathetic feelings towards the populations of the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, and felt that to place emphasis on education, health and social welfare in the draft resolution would not be superfluous.

28. The CHAIRMAN stated, in reply to the Lebanese representative, that no more amendments could be accepted, but that there was nothing to prevent a delegation from submitting an amendment to the Committee's draft resolution when it was placed before the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

29. He put to the vote paragraph 3 (a) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.354) to the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.353).

Paragraph 3 (a) was rejected by 27 votes to 10, with 14 abstentions.

30. The CHAIRMAN put paragraph 3 (b) to the vote.

Paragraph 3 (b) was rejected by 27 votes to 7, with 17 abstentions.

31. The CHAIRMAN put paragraph 3 (c) to the vote.

Paragraph 3 (c) was rejected by 25 votes to 11, with 15 abstentions.

32. The CHAIRMAN put paragraph 3 (d) to the vote.

33. Mr. PAZHWAK (Afghanistan) and Mr. MUFTI (Syria) asked for a vote by roll-call.

A vote was taken by roll-call.

Iceland, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Bolivia, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala.

Against: Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of

America, Australia, Belgium, China, Denmark, France, Greece.

Abstaining: Israel, Lebanon, Peru, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, Brazil, Canada, Chile.

Paragraph 3 (d) was adopted by 28 votes to 13, with 10 abstentions.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the adoption of a sub-paragraph of the USSR amendment, the preamble to that sub-paragraph would automatically constitute the new paragraph 3 of the joint draft resolution. It also followed that point 2 of the USSR amendment, with the substitution of the words "with the addition thereto" for the words "with the additions and amendments thereto", should be included in the existing paragraph 3 (b) of the joint draft resolution, after the words "Economic and Social Council".

It was so decided.

35. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked for a separate vote on the part of the draft resolution containing his amendment. He would be obliged to abstain from voting on the remainder of the draft resolution because it would be inadequate if three of the USSR amendments were excluded.

36. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that a vote could not be taken twice on the same text.

37. He put the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.353), as amended, to the vote.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 38 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.

38. Mrs. PINTO DE VIDAL (Uruguay) said that she had voted for the draft resolution because it endorsed the Economic and Social Council's programme, which corresponded with the social progress achieved in her country.

39. Mr. MENESES PALLARES (Ecuador) said that he had been obliged to vote against paragraphs 3 (a), (b) and (c) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments because the substance of those provisions was covered in Council resolution 496 (XVI). The principle of non-discrimination was proclaimed in the basic instruments of the United Nations and it was therefore absurd to suspect that a programme of social action drawn up by the Organization would condone any discrimination whatsoever. He had voted for paragraph 3 (d) for the same reasons as the Mexican representative.

40. Mrs. CAMPA (Cuba) also agreed with the Mexican representative's explanation of his vote. Her delegation had voted against paragraphs 3 (a), (b) and (c) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments because the programme laid down in Council resolution 496 (XVI) was more realistic and comprehensive than that proposed by the USSR delegation. Paragraph 3 (d), however, was a useful addition to the draft resolution and her delegation was pleased to be in a position to support the altruistic initiative of a country which said it had nothing to gain from the programme concerned.

34. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the delegations which had secured the adoption of one of his delegation's amendments and hoped that the implementation of that text would raise the prestige of the United Nations in the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories.

42. He had abstained from voting on the draft resolution because three of his delegation's amendments,

which were important, had been rejected. Nevertheless, he would have voted for the part of the draft resolution which included his amendment and for the part containing the Afghan oral amendment accepted by the sponsors.

43. Mr. DUNLOP (New Zealand) stated that his delegation had been prepared to support the draft resolution in its original form, but had felt throughout the debate that the majority of the Committee was unwilling to consider the programme in detail and preferred to leave that to the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies. It had therefore voted against the USSR amendments and had finally abstained from voting on the draft resolution because one of the amendments, which had not been thoroughly discussed, had been adopted.

44. Mr. VENKATARAMAN (India) said that he had voted for paragraph 3 (a) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments because the Indian Constitution specifically condemned discrimination of any kind. He had, however, abstained from voting on paragraphs 3 (b) and (c) because his delegation felt that it was impracticable to extend such far-reaching reforms immediately to under-developed countries. He had voted for paragraph 3 (d) in the firm belief that it was a special responsibility of the United Nations to improve conditions in Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories. Finally, he had voted for the draft resolution as a whole because, although inadequate, it represented a step forward.

45. Mr. ZDANOWSKI (Poland) recalled that his delegation had announced its inability to vote for the original draft resolution (A/C.3/L.348), because there were big gaps in it. The amendments to the draft which had resulted in the draft resolution adopted by the Committee had not improved it sufficiently and the fact that some of the specific and useful amendments proposed by the USSR delegation had been rejected had caused the Polish delegation to abstain from voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

46. Mr. KOS (Yugoslavia) pointed out that the substance of paragraphs 3 (a), (b) and (c) of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments was fully covered in Economic and Social Council resolution 496 (XVI) and agreed with other representatives that much material and other assistance was needed by under-developed countries before the compulsory measures implied in the USSR amendments could be carried out. It was essential to bear in mind that the resources were scanty; the first three sub-paragraphs of the text proposed in point 1 of the USSR amendments were therefore purely declaratory and the Yugoslav delegation had voted against them. Paragraph 3 (d), however, fell within the scope of the draft resolution, since it proposed the improvement of conditions, rather than full and immediate implementation, and his delegation had voted for it, although it agreed with the Lebanese representative that the improvement concerned should not be limited to health, education and social welfare.

47. Mr. PAZHWAQ (Afghanistan) stated that he had voted for the draft resolution because it embodied some of the basic principles of the United Nations, and laid stress on special consideration for the needs of under-developed countries. He hoped that other United Nations organs would take the Committee's decision in that connexion as a basis for action in their specific fields.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.