

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TENTH SESSION

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Chairman: Mr. Ernest G. CHAUVET (Haiti).

AGENDA ITEM 24 C

Economic development of under-developed countries (A/2955) (continued):

(c) Programmes of technical assistance: report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2943, chapter III B, A/2994)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that he would offer a few comments on the question of technical assistance which the Committee was about to consider.
2. In some countries, there was a wide gap between employment opportunities and the steadily increasing number of inhabitants and, generally speaking, vast resources remained unexploited for lack of capital. As the Secretary-General had stated in the Economic and Social Council at its twentieth session (871st meeting), there was hardly any capital coming into those countries and emigration was virtually prohibited.
3. The development of the under-developed countries depended primarily on the contacts linking those countries with the outside world and on the influx of foreign capital. Any nation which isolated itself tended to prolong its economic stagnation. Hence, it was essential both to stimulate the exchange of skills by encouraging the sending of experts and by granting scholarships and fellowships to indigenous students, and to promote the flow of capital as much as possible. That was the task of the United Nations. Technology was a powerful factor in increasing productivity and it was urgent to apply it to economic development.
4. The technical assistance provided by the United Nations to the under-developed countries and the financial aid which they were soon to enjoy through the International Finance Corporation and the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED) would enable them to raise their economic and social standards. At that juncture, the problem of world equilibrium could be solved. In the meantime, the necessary steps should be taken without delay.
5. Mr. OWEN (Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board) said that there was no longer any cause for concern, as there had been for the past few years, regarding the smooth functioning of the

Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. Quantitatively and qualitatively, the assistance provided in 1955 would be greater than in any previous year. Seventy countries had contributed \$28 million of which 72 per cent had already been paid on 30 September. He was glad to announce that only 1 per cent of the contributions pledged in 1953 and 2 per cent of those pledged for 1954 were outstanding, a clear indication that the Expanded Programme was very much appreciated.

6. The outlook for 1956 was most satisfactory. The contribution covering an eighteen-month period pledged by the United States, which for 1956 would be on a 50 per cent matching basis, would make it possible to plan and execute a substantial programme. The size of the programme would, of course, depend on the contributions pledged at the forthcoming conference of participating countries. If the United States pledge was matched dollar for dollar, the Technical Assistance Administration (TAA) would have available \$31 million, but that implied an all-round increase of 20 per cent from all the other countries.

7. The experiment in country programming had been wholly successful considering the fact that the Technical Assistance Board (TAB) had had no Resident Representatives in many countries and that it had been the first time that officials of recipient Governments had been asked to plan their technical assistance needs on a priority basis. The experience acquired would make it possible to simplify the procedure in use and to improve co-operation between TAB representatives, the specialized agencies and the government departments concerned. The government officials in charge now understood very clearly what United Nations technical assistance meant for their countries and how it could be combined with other projects based on external help or domestic efforts.

8. The past twelve months had shown considerable improvement in the management of the Expanded Programme along the lines indicated by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The system of Resident Representatives had been developed and co-ordination of activities in the field improved. A new local costs scheme had been established and arrangements had been made for the use of common services between the participating organizations and other United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund and the regional economic commissions.

9. In its eighteenth report (E/2728 and Corr. 1), the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) had developed a revised definition of administrative costs to be introduced from 1 January 1956, and which was expected to contribute to greater uniformity and better control of costs.

10. In that connexion, he was glad to announce that the ratio of administrative costs to operational costs had been further reduced and was now below the limit suggested by the Advisory Committee.

11. The Board had been giving special consideration to the integration of the activities of the various international agencies under their regular programmes with comparable activities under the Expanded Programme. A preliminary evaluation study of the work of the Expanded Programme in six countries had been followed by another study based on a questionnaire sent to every recipient Government served by a Resident Representative. In addition, on the initiative of the ACC, the Board and the specialized agencies had undertaken a comprehensive review of the Programme and its possibilities entitled "The Forward Look" which was expected to prove most useful.

12. As Executive Chairman, he had been in a position to appreciate the extent and value of the Programme in various countries. The requests for studies recently made by Libya, the Gold Coast and the Sudan revealed to what extent the Administration could assist new and future Governments in assuming their responsibilities.

13. Moreover, he had been able to witness personally the excellent results achieved in such countries as Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Iran and in Singapore. In that connexion, it should be noted that the assistance of experts from all countries of the world, not only the more advanced countries, had contributed to the Programme's success. Those who had only recently begun to work with TAA had learned to appreciate the importance of the personal and human qualities they had to show in carrying out their duties.

14. In conclusion, he recalled that the effectiveness of all the experts' endeavours depended on the continuity of the Expanded Programme and he hoped that Governments would dispel the uncertainty which prevented TAB from planning long-term projects on a sufficiently sound basis.

15. The CHAIRMAN thanked the Executive Chairman of TAB for his statement. It showed the valuable contribution being made by the technical assistance to the economic development of the under-developed countries, and he congratulated TAB upon the remarkable success it had had.

16. Mr. FAHMY (Egypt) recalled that Egypt had presented its views on technical assistance to the Technical Assistance Committee (E/TAC/SR.85) at the twentieth session of the Economic and Social Council. However, he would draw the Committee's attention to a few important points.

17. In the first place, the Egyptian delegation considered the uncertainty regarding the amounts to be pledged to be a problem warranting serious attention and hoped that it would be solved in the near future in order to ensure the continuity and stability without which the Expanded Programme could not operate effectively.

18. Moreover, the Egyptian delegation was very much interested in the evaluation which TAC was to make of the effectiveness of the Expanded Programme. In order to make proper evaluation, TAC should take account of the views of all recipient countries.

19. With regard to the constitutional questions referred to in paragraph 246 of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2943), TAC had expressed the

view that there should be a closer relationship between the ACC and TAB, especially in order to ensure correlation between the Expanded Programme and comparable activities under the regular budgets of the participating organizations. That would in no way affect the existing relationship between TAC and TAB. The TAC would continue to be the only governmental body responsible for the supervision of the Expanded Programme.

20. He concluded by expressing his thanks to TAB and its Executive Chairman, and to TAA and its Director-General, for the excellent work they had done and were doing. He hoped that that co-operative endeavour would gain in strength; Egypt would do its utmost to promote its steady expansion.

21. Mr. CHA (China) pointed out that, in addition to the assistance provided under the regular programme and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, assistance was being rendered by the various specialized agencies and by Governments directly under bilateral and multilateral agreements.

22. In the technical assistance provided by the United Nations and the specialized agencies, co-ordination of activities should obviate duplication and waste of resources. While TAA, TAB and the specialized agencies had made excellent progress in that respect, there was still much to be done. The Economic and Social Council had expressed that view in resolution 584 (XX). As only three months had passed since the adoption of the resolution, it was difficult to discover whether there had been any improvement.

23. With regard to the relationship between United Nations technical assistance and assistance provided under bilateral or multilateral agreements, he noted with satisfaction that TAA and TAB were continuing to carry on the necessary liaison work, and he thought it would be enlightening for the Committee to hear from a competent person what progress had been made.

24. It was encouraging to see that all the countries participating in the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance had regularly increased their contributions in recent years, thus testifying to the value and effectiveness of the Programme. Bearing in mind the condition stipulated by the United States Government in announcing its contribution, the total should amount to \$31 million. If that target was reached, as was hoped, the question whether the Working Capital and Reserve Fund should be increased from \$12,000,000 to \$15,500,000 might arise. The Chinese delegation did not consider such an increase necessary inasmuch as TAB was no longer experiencing the same kind of financial stringency. At the beginning of 1956, the Fund would have reached the anticipated total of \$12 million and the financial stability of the Expanded Programme might then be an accomplished fact. For the time being, it was more urgent to make the best use of available financial resources, and it was gratifying to note that certain proposals on that subject would be submitted to TAC.

25. Since the inception of the Expanded Programme, the question of budgetary control of the financial resources had never been carefully considered. Without in any way implying that TAB or the participating agencies had not properly handled the funds they administered—which would not be true—he felt that, in principle, there should be legislative control over all

public funds, and TAC would be the proper legislative body to exercise that control. Moreover, there should be a well-established procedure for governing the spending and auditing of those funds. Budgetary control was all the more important because the Expanded Programme was growing so rapidly. For that reason he was gratified by Economic and Social Council resolution 584 (XX), which stated that TAC would consider the possibility of studying the establishment of more effective budgetary control during 1956.

26. With respect to constitutional and organizational questions, he recalled the fears expressed at the twentieth session of the Economic and Social Council concerning paragraphs 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the eighteenth report of the ACC (E/2728 and Corr.1) and the satisfaction which had greeted the statement by the Secretary-General's representative to TAC (E/TAC/SR.86) that no constitutional change had been contemplated and that there was no cause for fear that TAB would delay administration of the Expanded Programme. The Executive Chairman, who was appointed by the Secretary-General, had to report to him from time to time and to act in accordance with his instructions. On the other hand, TAC, with the concurrence of the Economic and Social Council, was the proper body to make recommendations on policy-making. Moreover, the consensus of opinion among

TAC members was that TAB, together with its Executive Chairman, was fully capable of administering the Expanded Programme. The Chinese delegation was convinced that it was unnecessary to alter the constitutional basis of the Expanded Programme.

27. So far as the recruitment of experts for the Expanded Programme was concerned, the Chinese delegation strongly recommended that TAA should request the Governments of the under-developed countries to study the possibility of supplying experts; experts from those countries were sometimes better able to understand the problems arising in other under-developed countries.

28. In conclusion, he pointed out that a number of participating countries were not Members of the United Nations and, therefore, had no opportunity to express their opinions on the Expanded Programme. Yet the Programme should have the enthusiastic support of all Governments, Member and non-member States alike. There were complaints on the subject every year at the Technical Assistance Conference. It was to be hoped that the General Assembly would ask the Economic and Social Council to take up the matter as soon as possible and that it would be settled at the current session.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.