

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

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Chairman: Mr. Toru HAGIWARA (Japan).

AGENDA ITEM 29

- Programmes of technical assistance (continued):
- (a) Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3848, chap. III, part B, A/3909, part A);
- (c) Establishment of an international administrative service (A/C.2/200)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

1. Mr. CRNOBRNJA (Yugoslavia) noted with satisfaction that the technical assistance programmes were being increasingly integrated with national economic development plans. There had been a shift from studies to projects of a more operational nature, with primary emphasis on the training of national personnel. That trend should be strengthened and should be analysed in the evaluation of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance made each year by the recipient Governments, the Technical Assistance Board (TAB) and the resident representatives. In order to assist the recipient Governments in drawing up their future plans, TAB might sum up the experience gained in the training of national personnel and similar fields.

2. With reference to country programming—a procedure which had proved its worth in the last three years—he noted that, in giving effect to Economic and Social Council resolution 700 (XXVI), TAB would take into consideration the suggestions made at the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) during the twenty-sixth session of the Council, including the Yugoslav delegation's suggestion that all future supplementary provisions should respect the principle of country programming as much as possible. In that connexion, TAB should consider the possibility of abolishing "sub-totals", in other words, the practice of breaking up country target figures between the various participating organizations.

3. He welcomed the Council's decision setting a ceiling on the further rise of administrative costs. That, however, was only a temporary solution. The best and most lasting solution would be for the entire administrative costs of both the regular programmes and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance to be assumed by the regular budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

4. With regard to the financing of the Expanded Programme, he thought that the Committee should reaffirm the need for a gradual increase in resources, which was the only way of meeting the urgent needs of newly-independent countries without substantially curtailing existing programmes.

5. Mr. ANSELL (New Zealand) observed that the tenth anniversary of United Nations technical assistance activities was a suitable occasion for congratulation on the work accomplished. The participating countries had made an impressive effort both financially and by way of international co-operative endeavour.

6. The recent establishment of the Special Fund would considerably increase the over-all resources available to the United Nations to assist in the economic development of the under-developed countries. In that connexion, he noted with satisfaction the arrangements made, for example, in paragraphs 24 and 25 of General Assembly resolution 1240 B (XIII), to ensure effective co-operation between the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme.

7. TAB's report for 1957 (E/3080 and Add.1) indicated that an increasing number of recipient Governments were undertaking a systematic evaluation of the results of technical assistance projects in their countries. That trend was particularly encouraging, as was the apparent success of the country programming procedure, which helped to ensure that the available resources were used in the manner that most effectively met the needs of the receiving countries. In that connexion, he looked forward to the results of the study undertaken by TAB with a view to increasing the efficiency of the country programming procedure.

8. He recognized the numerous merits of the fellowship scheme, but questioned the suggestion in the 1957 TAB report that any decline in the number of fellowships below the 1957 levels would be a matter of concern. He felt that rigidity should be avoided and that it might be advantageous, in accordance with changing circumstances, to effect changes in emphasis as between the fellowship programme on the one hand, and training within the less developed countries on the other.

9. His delegation fully supported the objectives of the international administrative service. That project would be a complete one and, although there was a great demand for competent administrators, the integration of internationally recruited officials in national administrations would require considerable understanding and willingness to co-operate on the part of all concerned. Those were, however, the qualities on which the undisputed success of the technical assistance programmes of the United Nations and specialized agencies was based.

10. Mr. YRIART (Uruguay) paid a tribute to the technical assistance personnel and, in particular, to

the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of the Technical Assistance Administration (TAA) for the remarkable work they were doing. Technical assistance was not a new idea, but it was the Expanded Programme which had enabled international organizations to make that idea a reality in the most effective possible manner. In 1949, it might have seemed a revolutionary idea to proclaim the importance of the dissemination of knowledge and the duty of the developed countries to assist the less developed nations. That idea was, however, now universally accepted and, although most of the projects undertaken were financed on a voluntary basis, there was no doubt that technical assistance had become a permanent form of international co-operation.

11. His delegation welcomed the many exchanges of experts and fellowship holders which would enable the peoples to know each other better and thus contribute to the establishment of a lasting peace. It also noted with satisfaction that, thanks to the experience gained, the number of projects which had no hope of success, because they were not suited to local conditions, was steadily decreasing. In that connexion, the critical evaluation of projects was valuable, provided the evaluation took into account not only their direct benefits but also the indirect benefits, which were not always immediately apparent.

12. In Uruguay, for example, a mission of experts of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Bank) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and subsequently other technicians, had studied the possibility of expanding agricultural production and stock-raising, as well as soil conservation, the maintenance of grazing land, the use of fertilizers, the control of cattle diseases, etc. Producers had gradually come to realize that they could increase their production further and reduce their costs. In consequence, the Government had been able to formulate a general plan for the development of agricultural production and stock-raising which would be carried out in the course of the next few years, possibly with the assistance of the Bank.

13. In general, he believed that an over-all evaluation should be undertaken of all the services rendered by technical assistance to the various countries and regions. The country programming procedure undoubtedly contributed to the success of projects, but it necessitated the setting up of co-ordination units and the presence of resident representatives. It was, therefore, encouraging that an increasing number of countries were setting up effective co-ordination services and that the number of resident representatives was also increasing. The resident representatives were particularly useful in helping countries without highly organized administrative services to carry out the various formalities required to obtain assistance.

14. His delegation did not consider that the administrative costs of the Expanded Programme should be charged to the regular budgets of the participating organizations, since the latter might be obliged in consequence to reduce their regular programmes, which were also very important.

15. Turning to the question of the future of technical assistance, he said that, while the progress made in the co-ordination of programmes and the elimination

of duplication was encouraging, consideration might be given to the possibility of making even better use of the funds allocated by Governments to technical assistance by establishing a single international plan which would ensure that countries did not disperse their efforts in numerous bilateral and multilateral programmes. It was perhaps too early to formulate such a plan, but the time had come to consider the possibility.

16. Mr. ANSARI (Pakistan) noted with satisfaction that the assistance provided under the Expanded Programme had continued to increase and to improve in quality, but regretted that cuts might have to be made in the programme for 1959, as contributions were likely to fall below the 1958 level. Despite its financial difficulties, his Government had taken into consideration the Council's recommendations in resolutions 658 B (XXIV) and 659 A and B (XXIV) and had raised its contribution from \$160,000 to \$170,000.

17. The nature and scope of the Expanded Programme would have to be reviewed in the light of the establishment of the Special Fund. His Government hoped that it would be possible to place greater emphasis on training facilities, demonstration centres and pilot projects. In that connexion, his Government regretted that it had been unable to obtain the services of the two lecturers it had requested for the Railway Operations and Signalling Training Centre at Lahore for whose operation it was now responsible. As the Centre offered training facilities to all the countries in the region, his Government considered the request justified and had urged TAC to define its policy in regard to the transfer of such regional projects to the host country. The question should also be considered by the Second Committee.

18. With regard to the relationship between the Expanded Programme and the Special Fund, he noted with satisfaction that the Executive Chairman of TAB would be a member of the Consultative Board of the Special Fund and that the Managing Director of the Fund would be able to participate in TAB and maintain a close relationship with the specialized agencies. TAB and the Fund would both gain from such co-operation and the Fund in particular would be able to make the fullest use of the resources of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, both at Headquarters and at the local level, and thus to take advantage of the services of the resident representatives. In many instances, the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme would be concerned with two aspects of a single development project, but their activities would have to be kept separate and the scope of the Expanded Programme would have to be fully maintained.

19. In conclusion, he paid a tribute to the technical assistance personnel of the United Nations and the specialized agencies who were helping the under-developed countries to help themselves.

20. Mr. PSCOLKA (Czechoslovakia) said that the Expanded Programme should help to remove the existing disparity between the economic levels of the under-developed and the industrialized countries by enabling the former to profit from the experience of the latter. It was noteworthy that 25 per cent of the 2,513 experts who had carried out technical assistance missions in 1957 had been themselves citizens of under-developed countries. Thus, the question was not

so much one of granting or receiving assistance, as of pooling the technical resources of the different countries in a broad programme of international co-operation. It could only be regretted, therefore, that the Expanded Programme was not genuinely universal in character and that some countries, such as the German Democratic Republic, were denied the right to participate, as the result of an inexplicable decision which introduced into the field of technical assistance a political element that ought to be excluded.

21. With regard to the activities of the Expanded Programme in 1957, his delegation regretted that the volume of equipment and supplies and the number of fellowships and seminars had decreased. It was essential to speed up the training of specialists from the under-developed countries by such measures as the provision of facilities for short, intensive training in industrial undertakings in the more advanced countries. On the other hand, it was most satisfactory to learn from the TAB report that a large number of fellows had been able to take over the work of foreign experts on returning home.

22. His delegation had been disagreeably surprised to find that the administrators of the Programme had not made full use of the Czechoslovak experts who had been offered to them. Countries receiving bilateral assistance from Czechoslovakia had always been satisfied with their services. He hoped that TAB and TAC would remedy that situation.

23. He would comment later on the question of establishing an international administrative service, but he wished to stress that, although a good administration would benefit the under-developed countries, their most pressing need at present was assistance in the development of their industry and the exploitation of their natural resources. Part of the resources of the Special Fund, which should be regarded as the nucleus of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED), must, therefore, be devoted to the capital development of the under-developed countries, and a larger proportion of the Expanded Programme's funds must be used on the production sectors of the recipient countries' economies.

24. Czechoslovakia, which had extensive experience in the field of technical and economic assistance and which had, for example, organized seminars on forestry and fisheries in 1957 and 1958, was ready to take part in the activities of the Special Fund, to provide equipment, to undertake surveys and research projects, to place its experts at the disposal of the under-developed countries, and to receive their fellows.

25. His delegation was naturally anxious that the International Atomic Energy Agency should participate in the Expanded Programme, provided it offered recipient countries a type of assistance which would truly help them to develop their economies.

26. He was glad that the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA had been able to visit Czechoslovakia during the summer. Contacts of that kind between the technical assistance staff and the administrators in the different countries must surely encourage international co-operation.

27. Mr. JANTUAH (Ghana) stated that his country was receiving more technical assistance at present than it had received before becoming independent. In 1957, more than twenty international officials and experts had worked in Ghana on projects relating to public health, housing and agriculture. As its development programme increased in scope, his country would make further calls on United Nations technical assistance.

28. His country had every reason to be satisfied with the close collaboration between the local office of TAB set up in Accra in December 1957 and the national economic planning and co-ordination body. It hoped to be able in the future to collaborate as fruitfully with the Economic Commission for Africa and the regional offices of the various specialized agencies. In that connexion, he wished to thank the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs and the members of the Economic and Social Council for the efforts they had made to help set up the Economic Commission for Africa, and he paid tribute to Mr. Mekki Abbas, Executive Secretary of the Commission.

29. He welcomed the establishment of the Special Fund and agreed with the Netherlands representative that a very clear dividing line must be drawn between the activities of the Fund and those of the Expanded Programme. Otherwise, a confused situation might arise and Governments might in good faith make similar requests to both institutions.

30. The proposed collaboration between the Managing Director of the Special Fund and the resident representatives of TAB could be most fruitful. It was to be hoped that the regional offices of the specialized agencies and the Economic Commission for Africa would be able to make a greater number of studies and surveys of a practical nature, so as to provide a solid basis for the activities of the Special Fund.

31. His delegation wished to pay tribute to the men and women of good-will throughout the world who devoted themselves to the work of technical assistance, and, in particular, to Mr. Wilfred Benson, the resident representative of TAB, and to the experts who worked with him in carrying out projects in Ghana. All nations, whatever their political régime and social system, could collaborate effectively to fight diseases, poverty and hunger. That was surely the best way of maintaining peace and creating prosperity.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.