



CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda items 30 and 12:</i>	
<i>Economic development of under-developed countries (continued):</i>	
(a) Report by the Secretary-General on measures taken by the Governments of Member States to further the economic development of under-developed countries in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1316 (XIII);	
(b) Progress in the field of financing the economic development of under-developed countries	
Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters II, III, IV and V) (continued)	
General discussion (continued)	175

Chairman: Mr. Marcial TAMAYO (Bolivia).

AGENDA ITEMS 30 AND 12

Economic development of under-developed countries (continued):

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Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters II, III, IV, and V) (continued)

(A/4143, A/4211, A/4220 and Corr. 1 and Add. 1 and 2)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

1. Mr. THEARD (Haiti) said that he had wondered for some time whether he should present a message of hope or of apocalypse to the Committee. Should he elaborate on the inspiring and optimistic views expressed by some representatives, or add to the somewhat discouraging picture drawn by others? Should he make a dramatic presentation of facts and figures or analyse technological progress and predict an ideal world of the future? Alternatively he could have surveyed the facts objectively, leaving it to others to draw conclusions. If he had taken one or other of those courses, he would, however, have felt that he was not being honest to himself, to the four million Haitians he represented, or to the 2,000 million men and women who lived in under-developed countries. Having shown the world the road to political independence, Haiti was under a duty to indicate the path to economic independence.
2. After completing a social revolution in the highest sense of the term—a revolution of slaves against their

masters, his country, which had been built on the ruins of the colony of Santo Domingo, had assisted in the liberation of Latin America. Its history was that of Alexandre Pétion who, in return for the assistance given to Simon Bolivar, had asked for the liberation of all the slaves and all the other Haitians who had upheld the equality of the races of mankind, a principle which was recognized today in the structure of the United Nations. Haiti had established freedom of worship in its first constitution and had welcomed without distinction all those who had been driven from their countries. However, it was also the only American State which had been refused participation in the Congress of Panama in 1826. The road to economic freedom was often more difficult than the road to political liberation: despite the good intentions of statesmen representing the richest countries, despite 150 years of daily effort, Haiti, which had been the richest French colony and had supplied metropolitan France with nearly half its income, had grown steadily poorer. A victim of what was today called the cold war, with all the necessary but unproductive expenditures that entailed, it had had to face discrimination, obstacles to its trade and even outright blackmail at the international level.

3. Haiti had seen countries which had been welcomed into the family of nations advance rapidly both economically and socially, open their doors to immigration and share their soil and sub-soil with all the peoples of the world save the Haitians. Investors had skirted its coasts and had invested their capital in virgin lands. Haiti had seen countries attempt to destroy one another only to become friends again.

4. In the meantime its population had risen from 500,000 to nearly 4 million, its forest reserves had disappeared, soil erosion had begun, harvests had dwindled, and even the rainfall had changed as the mountains had been denuded. For lack of fertilizers and adequate farming implements, the soil was impoverished. It might well be asked whether there was not a club of developed countries to which only an elect minority might belong. It was difficult otherwise to explain the fact that a country at the crossroads between two of the world's most highly developed continents, where the annual per caput income was \$1,000 and \$2,000 respectively, had an annual per caput income of only sixty dollars. Political instability had been put forward as the explanation, but the fact was that political instability was the product of economic instability. No one had endeavoured to explain why Haitian labour, which had formerly been sought after and which asked only to be employed, had suddenly been deemed inefficient and excluded from productive activities and progress.

5. The Indian representative had drawn a dazzling picture of the world of the future made possible by the advances of technology. The question was whether the under-developed countries would benefit from those advances. Forecasts of the future could only

be based on observation of the present. The under-developed countries had only hoes and matchets; they lacked tractors, means of transport and sufficient supplies of drinking water. Still less did they have atomic reactors or electronic brains. Many of the problems considered by the United Nations, such as nuclear energy, outer space and the rights of the child, were of no practical interest to countries which had not been touched by progress. History taught that civilizations had disappeared; the present showed that such tragic events had perhaps been caused not by natural disasters but by the selfishness of men. The only difference was that today the under-developed countries were determined to live and could make their voices heard in the United Nations.

6. Those countries represented a power, that of the producers of raw materials and the consumers of

industrial products, and they had numbers on their side. They knew that their interests were interdependent and that their future depended on themselves. But they also knew that the economic future of the whole world depended on them because they were the indispensable market. They should agree among themselves to establish markets for their products, so that they would no longer suffer from exclusion as Haiti had for so long a time. By co-operating closely, exchanging the knowledge gained from experience, displaying mutual understanding and agreeing to reciprocal concessions, they would be able to develop their economies and eliminate the fear and despair that today haunted their peoples.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.