

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FOURTEENTH SESSION
Official Records

**SECOND COMMITTEE, 595th
MEETING**

Monday, 19 October 1959,
at 10.50 a.m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 31:</i>	
<i>Programmes of technical assistance (con- tinued):</i>	
<i>(a) Report of the Economic and Social Council;</i>	
<i>(b) United Nations assistance in public ad- ministration: report of the Secretary- General</i>	
<i>General discussion (continued)</i>	63

Chairman: Mr. Marcial TAMAYO (Bolivia).

AGENDA ITEM 31

Programmes of technical assistance (continued):

- (a) Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/4143, chap. III, sec. X-XII);
- (b) United Nations assistance in public administration: report of the Secretary-General (A/4212 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

1. Mr. ZENKER (Austria) said that his country had been happy once again to increase its pledge to the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, which was making a contribution to economic development and international understanding that could not be measured in dollars or numbers of experts and fellowships alone.
2. Commenting on the reports before the Committee, he said that the current preponderance of requests for experts over requests for fellowships was no doubt due to the fact that experts could be used to fill gaps immediately, and that in many cases national personnel lacked the training necessary to derive full profit from training facilities available abroad. Nevertheless countries should try to fill as many important posts as possible with their own nationals, and it was gratifying that the continuous decline in the number of fellowships had at last been halted. His delegation commended the efforts made by TAB and TAC to promote the training of national personnel and to develop national and regional training centres, and had been greatly impressed by the training facilities which India had provided for nationals of a large number of other Asian States.
3. He had been glad to note that in the near future a detailed report on regular programme activities during the current year and a preliminary analysis of programmes planned for 1960 would be submitted to TAC; and that it had been possible to keep administrative and operational services costs below the estimated amount and to use the savings for field projects.
4. His delegation had also noted with interest the new procedure for technical assistance on a payment

basis, which afforded further evidence of the value Governments attached to the assistance provided. His delegation endorsed the principle that recipient Governments should have the responsibility for establishing technical assistance priorities.

5. With regard to United Nations assistance in public administration, his delegation would support the recommendations in paragraph 20 of the Secretary-General's report (A/4212 and Corr.1). It was significant that, as in other fields of technical assistance, more requests had been received than could be satisfied.

6. He regretted that despite the withdrawal of an additional \$1.5 million from the Working Capital and Reserve Fund, financial resources were not sufficient to carry out the programme originally approved for 1959, and that the estimated contributions of \$33 million for 1960 would not be enough to finance the 1960 programme, although it had been planned at 5 per cent below the level of the 1959 programme. While the help given through the United Nations technical assistance programmes, by individual countries through bilateral or multilateral agreements, and by private organizations had increased considerably in the past ten years, no under-developed country had been able to raise its level of living sufficiently, and the gap between per caput incomes in developed and under-developed countries had widened. The need for assistance remained urgent and would become even more urgent, since population growth was faster in the under-developed areas than in industrialized countries.

7. He agreed with the United Kingdom representative that Governments should inform the "people at home" about technical assistance activities. In order to induce Parliaments to approve higher contributions for assistance programmes it was necessary to provide the public with a better knowledge of the economic problems of the under-developed areas and their effects on the world economy.

8. Mr. BANNIER (Netherlands) paid a tribute to the memory of the late General Marshall, the architect of the plan to which many countries in Europe were largely indebted for their rapid economic recovery after the Second World War.

9. Turning to the financial position of the Expanded Programme, he said that he had been disappointed to learn that in spite of the increase of \$3 million in contributions already pledged for 1960, it would not be possible to finance the 1960 programme at the same level as that approved for 1959. He hoped that it would be possible to halt the downward trend in the curve of the Programme's development and that Governments would respond to the Executive Chairman's appeal (592nd meeting) and consider the possibility of increasing their pledges in order to fill the existing gap.

10. His delegation looked forward with interest to the results of TAC's study of the possibility of lowering the level of the Working Capital and Reserve Fund. The existing statutory level of the Fund, \$12 million, had been indispensable when the Programme had still had to give evidence of continuity and stability. Now that the principal contributor's contribution was to a certain extent stabilized, and contributions by other countries were clearly tending to increase, the level of the Fund could well be reduced to \$10 million or even \$9 million.

11. Other significant features in the operations of the Programme during 1959 were, in his delegation's view, the provision of additional training facilities, changes in the country programming procedures and TAC's decision to revise the arrangements for the allocation of administrative and operational services costs. With regard to training, he believed that the participating organizations had complied with the recommendations in General Assembly resolution 1255 E (XIII), and that it was for the countries concerned to apply, within the country programming procedures, for adequate priority to be given to their requests. He had been glad to learn that applications for fellowships were more numerous than they had been in recent years.

12. The changes in the country programming procedure adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-eighth session (resolution 735 (XXVIII)) were entirely acceptable to his delegation, which would welcome the possibility of budgeting for even longer periods, if that were not excluded by the existing system of annual contributions and by the present financial situation. The introduction of two-year programming would undoubtedly provide greater flexibility. He would not discuss the problem of flexibility in general, except to say that TAC's decision to establish a 5 per cent planning reserve as soon as the financial situation permitted^{1/} would benefit both participating organizations and requesting countries, particularly those which had recently acquired their independence.

13. With regard to the allocation of administrative and operational services costs, he noted that it had repeatedly been stated in the Committee that the percentage of the available funds set aside for administration and for services rendered by participating organizations was too high and should be reduced. His delegation fully realized that some expenditure on administration and operational services was inevitable, but took the view that the costs in question, which now amounted to about \$4.5 million annually, should eventually be charged, wholly or in part, to the regular budgets of participating organizations. It was clear that the full transfer of the costs to the regular budgets of participating organizations could not be achieved immediately, since the organizations needed time to make the necessary adjustments. However, the costs could be absorbed progressively over a number of years. The interim solution proposed by the Economic and Social Council represented a limited but useful first step, and as soon as Council resolution 737 (XXVIII) was carried into effect, a sum of \$880,000 would be released for field activities under the Programme. His delegation welcomed the Council

decision, and hoped that further steps in the same direction would be taken in the coming years.

14. In general he believed that, notwithstanding financial set-backs and the gap between the demand and supply of technical assistance, the Programme had been effectively administered, and the Committee could best help TAB in performing a difficult task by not asking for new studies or new arrangements. The control of the Programme exercised by the Economic and Social Council and TAC also appeared to be wholly satisfactory, and he was somewhat surprised that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had suggested that the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the General Assembly (the Fifth Committee) should be associated with the legislative review of various administrative and budgetary aspects of the Expanded Programme (A/4172, para. 14). The suggestion would undoubtedly receive proper attention in the Fifth Committee, but he thought it appropriate to say that his delegation entertained some doubts regarding the Advisory Committee's suggestion, since, if adopted, it would weaken the supervisory position of TAC, which had demonstrated its ability to perform the tasks assigned to it under Economic and Social Council resolution 222 A (IX).

15. With reference to the statement by the Commissioner for Technical Assistance on regular programme activities (592nd meeting), he said that he agreed with the Commissioner that those activities provided greater flexibility, and he welcomed the Commissioner's announcement of his intention to introduce a new method and a new form of reporting. He was also gratified to learn that the Commissioner had given prompt attention to the recommendation made at the July 1959 meeting of European national committees on technical assistance for eliminating the time-lag between the nomination of experts under the various programmes and the approval of their appointments.

16. At previous sessions his delegation had doubted whether it would be possible to recruit international experts of sufficient standing for the programme for the provision of operational, executive and administrative personnel (OPEX). He was glad to learn from the Secretary-General's report (A/4212 and Corr.1 and Add.1) that the experience of the past year had proved those fears to be unfounded. His delegation had expressed the view at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly that in the first year much time would have to be spent in bringing the plan into operation, and the sum which could usefully be spent would be far less than the \$250,000 which the Secretary-General had requested for 1959. Those expectations had been confirmed by the statement in paragraph 23 of the report that the amount which would remain unspent during 1959 would be substantial. The Secretary-General should be commended for the skill with which he had solved various problems connected with the programme, and his delegation would support the Secretary-General's proposal that the amount to be appropriated in 1960 for the OPEX programme should be increased to \$300,000.

17. Mr. BERNARDO (Argentina) said that the Expanded Programme was the most important of the three United Nations technical assistance programmes. In its ten years' existence it had reached a high degree of technical perfection, due in no small

^{1/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-eighth Session, Annexes, agenda item 7, document E/3298, para. 64.

part to the competence and devotion of the Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board. The gravest problem confronting the Programme was the lack of resources, which threatened to paralyse it. In the previous year, despite the increased contributions of some countries, it had been necessary to reduce the scale of operations. It was clear that the industrially advanced countries had not been contributing in proportion to their economic power and potential. The less developed countries were hampered by financial and economic difficulties and could not readily increase their pledges. In any event they contributed large sums in local and other costs. But while urging the richer countries to make greater sacrifices, his delegation would press for a better use of the resources available. As a step to that end he would suggest the centralization of the offices in Member States of the United Nations, the Special Fund, the Expanded Programme and possibly even UNICEF and other international bodies. He realized that centralization would involve many difficulties and extensive consultation, and would therefore recommend that negotiations should be begun at once.

18. Some delegations had expressed concern at the uneven distribution of the resources as between the different types of assistance and had deplored the decline in the number of fellowships granted. His delegation, for its part, attached the greater importance to the provision of national and regional centres for the training of local experts, as had been recommended by the General Assembly in resolution 1255 E (XIII).

19. The geographical origin of the experts recruited had also been the subject of some criticism. In his delegation's view that was a problem for recipient Governments, which chose the experts, rather than for the Secretariat. It was hardly surprising that Governments were reluctant to employ experts who acted as spokesmen for ideological or material interests of the countries which sent them. His delegation believed that one of the significant changes in the Programme in recent years had in fact been the widening of the area from which experts were drawn. Experts were being supplied by the under-developed countries themselves and his own country, for instance, provided as many experts as it received.

20. His delegation approved the country programming procedure and hoped for a still closer co-operation with the regional economic commissions so that technical assistance plans might be better integrated with national and regional development schemes. The assistance provided by ECLA through its advisory groups in various countries was an example of fruitful co-operation of that kind. His delegation also supported the proposal for two-year planning but, for technical reasons, had some reservations about pledging contributions for more than one year.

21. With regard to the regular programme, his delegation was glad to hear of the proposals for simplifying and speeding up request procedures. It favoured the granting of technical assistance on a payment basis. It would have been glad of more information about the effects of the reorganization of the technical assistance services and their incorporation into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In particular, it would be interesting to know whether the merger reduced administrative costs. He feared that any gains might have been offset by the loss of con-

tact with the recipient countries themselves; he particularly regretted the closing down of the offices in Mexico and Santiago, Chile. In order to ensure that the real needs of recipient countries were taken fully into account, the country programming procedure might usefully be adopted in the regular programme. Recipient Governments should in any case be given full information on the kinds and extent of assistance available, before being asked to submit their requests.

22. With regard to the OPEX scheme, he felt that there was no doubt of the importance of assistance in public administration, although the emphasis placed on it had perhaps been exaggerated. Nevertheless Argentina had serious doubts about the value of the new scheme to provide operational, executive and administrative personnel to assist Governments at their request. His delegation had raised objections to the original proposal at the thirteenth session and regretted that its reservations and apprehensions had been fully justified. He found nothing whatever in the documents on the subject to warrant a continuation of the costly experiment, which was compromising the prestige and the future of the technical assistance programmes. Annex III of the Secretary-General's report indicated that the posts in question were in fact advisory rather than truly executive or directive, and it would seem that some Governments were using the new service as a means of obtaining more experts than they would normally have received under the ordinary programmes. Moreover, as Annex IV showed, most of the officials thus appointed were drawn from European countries, and the remaining one from the United States. He would like to know whether any had been drawn from the schools of public administration set up with the assistance of the United Nations at San Jose, Costa Rica, in Cairo and elsewhere. All in all, therefore, his delegation felt that as conceived and carried out the OPEX scheme served no useful purpose.

23. If the recommendations in Economic and Social Council resolution 739 (XXVIII) were incorporated in a draft resolution, his delegation would be unable to support it.

24. Mrs. LINDSTROM (Sweden) observed that in the ten-year history of the Expanded Programme, industrialization had made great strides in many countries previously dependent on agriculture and handicrafts. The process of industrialization itself, however, had given rise to new social problems, and to overcome those problems and thus increase productivity it would be necessary to improve the social conditions of the workers, for instance in matters of housing and diet. She therefore whole-heartedly endorsed Economic and Social Council resolution 731 J (XXVIII), drawing attention to the social aspects of economic development and the need for social experts in the planning and implementation of economic development projects. Even using the broadest definition, only 17 to 20 per cent of the experts engaged under the regular programme and the Expanded Programme could be regarded as social experts.

25. Requests for social experts were increasing, and there was evidence of a desire to engage such experts for longer periods. The Secretary-General had, however, been unable to meet many of those requests. That was perhaps due in part to an over-narrow definition of the sphere proper to technical assistance and to an over-rigid distinction between

the economic and the social. There were vast border areas such as those of labour protection, manpower health problems, the rehabilitation of handicapped workers and population problems which were both economic and social in nature. Her delegation was particularly interested in the last of those problems. As the report of the Population Commission^{2/} had shown, the world's population would rise from the present figure of about 2,800 million to between 4,900 and 6,900 million in the year 2000. The growth of population was an economic problem—indeed the essential economic problem. For the majority of States, in which the birth rate was higher than the increase in productivity, responsible family planning was literally a question of life and death. Yet remarkably little attention had been devoted to that matter. Of the total number of experts at present employed under the Expanded Programme, only 1 per cent had any connexion at all with the population problem and most of those were engaged in statistical work and not in counselling families about the proper methods to be used in order to keep the number of children within such a limit that the children were welcome and could grow up healthy and satisfied. Birth control was no less important than malaria control, yet there were 126 experts helping in the fight against malaria and none helping to keep the world's population down to a level corresponding to the increase in industrial and agricultural output.

26. Birth control had long been regarded as a moral and not a technical issue, but the recent report of the World Council of Churches had said that there was no moral difference between the various methods of birth control provided that they were employed in a spirit of Christian responsibility. She was sure that the leading religions of Asia also recognized the need for sound family planning, and that the United Nations in general and the Expanded Programme in particular need no longer regard the matter as a controversial subject, but could and ought to increase the number of experts giving practical advice and assistance in the organization of birth control clinics in the countries where the need for them was greatest.

27. Technical assistance was the best instrument in the hands of the United Nations for reducing economic gaps between countries and bringing peace to the world. She would therefore urge a broadening of the concept of technical assistance to cover the social fields, including those previously regarded as taboo. The economic and the social were indivisible and should receive equal attention.

28. Mr. VIVIAN (Canada) said that the diversity of the means adopted to fulfil the goal of international co-operation laid down in the Charter had made it all the more necessary for the United Nations, as a focal point of those efforts, to develop the techniques of co-ordination so that the limited resources available were used in the most effective way. Such co-ordination, not only between the agencies and organs of the United Nations, but also and primarily within the countries themselves, was essential to success. Canada also considered that, although there was an important place for bilateral arrangements, co-ordination of the efforts of donor countries was best achieved by multilateral action.

29. His delegation had been encouraged at the significant increase in the contributions recently pledged to the Expanded Programme. At the same time, it regretted that some delegations had made their pledges in such a way that their contributions would be difficult to utilize fully because of the conditions attached. That did not apply to countries which were themselves receiving assistance; however, it was unfortunate that other countries which expressed a devotion to the cause of multilateral aid through the United Nations continued to encumber their pledges in such a way as to transform it, in effect, into a disguised form of bilateral assistance.

30. His delegation was pleased to note that several significant steps had been taken during the year to improve co-ordination between the various organs of the United Nations and to simplify administration. Among those steps were the merger of the Technical Assistance Administration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the compromise interim solution adopted by the Economic and Social Council regarding the allocation of administrative costs between the Expanded Programme and the specialized agencies (resolution 737 (XXVIII)). His delegation supported that solution because it successfully reconciled two opposing viewpoints, but did not view it as a step towards the assumption of administrative costs by the agencies, which would entail certain disadvantages. If costs were scrutinized in one place, it would be easier to keep them down, whereas if they were considered separately by the agencies, it would be more difficult to keep the overall picture in view and increases in administrative costs would become more likely.

31. His delegation also supported the experiment of two-year programming, in view of the advantages it offered, although it would seem difficult to obtain the necessary assurance by Governments that similar financial support would be forthcoming for two years in succession. TAB could of course work on the basis of estimates, but it was essential that those estimates be conservative so that disappointment and the disruption of programmes already under way did not take place.

32. His delegation was happy to see that the experience gained in United Nations technical assistance was being used constantly to modify procedures in order to achieve administrative efficiency and sound co-ordination.

33. Canada had taken an active part in the scholarship and fellowship programmes of technical assistance and considered that they were of great value in furthering international understanding. Facilities had been provided in Canada for nearly 500 scholars and fellows, and in 1959 alone a total of 160 Canadian experts were serving abroad under the technical assistance programmes.

34. Reaffirming his delegation's support of OPEX, he expressed the hope that the Assembly would approve the Economic and Social Council's recommendation that it be continued (resolution 739 (XXVIII)), and that the Secretary-General would be given the adequate scope to carry out the experiment which had been called for in that recommendation.

35. In conclusion, he congratulated the Executive Chairman of TAB and his staff on their work over the past decade and expressed his delegation's support of

^{2/} *Ibid.*, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 3.

the soundly-conceived goals the Commissioner for Technical Assistance had set for himself and his service.

36. Mr. CARDENAS (Ecuador) said that his country had benefited greatly from United Nations technical assistance, in such fields as agricultural development, resource surveys, administration, and financial policy. He drew special attention to the training of national experts and officials which had made it possible to derive maximum benefit from the other forms of technical assistance. Criticisms could, of course, be made of some aspects of the programme, but the inadequacies and errors of planning had been minor, while the successes achieved fully justified the continued existence and expansion of the Programme. Indeed, it was gratifying to note that the constantly rising level of technical capacity in the recipient countries made necessary in its turn more rigorous standards for the selection of United Nations experts.

37. His delegation welcomed the adoption on an experimental basis of the two-year country programming system, although it was aware of the difficulty caused by the fact that most countries could not pledge contributions for more than a year in advance. In any case, however, the experiment would be useful in determining the best method to adopt in the future.

38. His delegation would suggest that the recruiting problems which were one of the difficulties of short-term programming might in large part be solved by the adoption of a policy of increased recruitment from the under-developed countries themselves. The experts involved would be employed on a temporary basis and given leaves of absence from their national

services. Such a policy would improve still further the quality of the experts employed and eliminate the difficulty caused by the fact that experts did not wish to leave their countries of origin because to do so meant abandoning their professional careers.

39. His delegation had been concerned to learn of the forthcoming further reduction in the number of fellowships granted under technical assistance because it believed that the training of future leaders within the less developed countries was one of the most important, as it had been one of the most successful, aspects of international co-operation. In its view, the time had come to consider increasing the resources available for such fellowships by the creation of national fellowship funds established with the contributions of national and international agencies. Such action would make possible a significant improvement of co-ordination and planning in that important field.

40. That same belief in the value of training nationals of the less developed countries themselves led his delegation to doubt the value of the OPEX scheme. It hoped, however, that the results of the programme would serve to dispel its doubts.

41. Ecuador was satisfied with and grateful for the technical assistance it had received, and was making efforts of its own to complement it. Those efforts, while decreasing the total demand for assistance, made necessary a constant increase in the quality of the assistance received, which was in itself a mark of the progress being made.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.