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President: Mr. Hernán SANTA CRUZ (Chile).

Present: Representatives of the following countries:
 Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, France,
 India, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland,
 Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United
 Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United
 States of America, Uruguay.

Representatives of the following specialized
 agencies:
 International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture
 Organization of the United Nations, United Nations
 Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

**Economic development of under-developed countries
 (E/2003) (*continued*):**

(c) Land reform

1. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) said that, at the fifth session of the General Assembly, the Polish delegation had submitted a draft resolution on land reform which had been adopted almost as it stood (resolution 401 (V)). In introducing it, his country had desired to further the basic purposes of the United Nations; the Charter recognized that conditions of stability and well-being were necessary for peaceful and friendly relations between nations. To achieve such conditions it was essential to take up the problem of land reform, which was a matter of direct concern to the majority of the peoples of the world.
2. The resolution stated, *inter alia*, that agrarian conditions persisting in many under-developed countries and territories constituted a barrier to their economic development because such conditions were a major cause of low agricultural productivity and of low standards of living for the populations of those countries and territories. But the problem of land reform concerned not only the under-developed countries, but even so advanced an economy as that of the United States, where it was felt in its most acute form in the Black Belt of the South.
3. The problem of land reform was of universal importance for the progress of mankind, for, as Engels had written, the emancipation of humanity from the chains which its historic past had forged would be complete

only when the antithesis between town and country had been abolished. The major pre-requisite for achieving that aim was the elimination of out-moded social relations in agriculture. The problem of land reform had appeared for the first time in history during the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism. For the rising capitalist class, the acquisition of political power had been not an end in itself, but a means of accelerating the accumulation of capital. For that purpose it had been necessary not only to establish but also to consolidate the internal market, to promote the interchange of products between agriculture and industry, to create and augment the ranks of a class of property-less wage workers, and to make money, not land, the chief measure of political power. Such pre-requisites could not be achieved so long as the peasant was tied to the land and production was for subsistence rather than for the market. The feudal rights and privileges of the rising capitalist class had acted as barriers to trade; nor could the latter be removed before the power of the landed aristocracy was first broken or blunted by ending their monopoly of the land.

4. It was a fundamental characteristic of the bourgeois revolution that in no country where capitalism became the dominant economic system had the agrarian revolution been fully carried out. Two lines of development were possible—the nationalization of the land and its subsequent rental to direct producers, or the free transfer of the land into the hands of the peasantry. The latter had occurred only on a limited scale, the former either not at all; or, where partial nationalization had been adopted, it had hardly been effective, since the land had soon returned into the hands of the land-owners or the capitalist class. The incompleteness of the capitalist agrarian revolution was but one manifestation of the incompleteness of the democratic revolution as a whole. Thus in country after country the bourgeoisie, realizing that, if it wiped out every vestige of the landed aristocracy's power, it would have later to face the challenge of the growing working class, had preferred the path of compromise—in England, with the Crown and nobility, in Germany with the Junkers, in the United States, first with the "slavocracy", then with their direct descendants—the modern plantation owners. It was clear that such a development entailed a compromise on the land question,

whereby feudal and semi-feudal agrarian relations were eliminated and agriculture placed on a completely capitalist basis.

5. A few examples would suffice to demonstrate the truth of the thesis. In England, it was most dramatically shown in the history of the enclosure movement, which had dispossessed vast sections of the rural population, finally destroyed the independent peasant and placed most of the common lands in the hands of the nobility and the new capitalist squirearchy. Expropriation of the peasantry, begun in the fifteenth century, had become particularly rapid in the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. Between 1710 and 1760, 335,000 acres had been enclosed; between 1760 and 1843, 7 million acres. As late as 1908 it had been estimated that 710 men owned a quarter of all England, 70 men owned one-half of Scotland and 13,000 men two-thirds of the United Kingdom. Even as late as 1944, it had been estimated that 77 members of the British peerage owned 1.6 million acres of land. The class of non-productive land-owners created by the enclosure of the land and the expropriation of the peasantry still continued to exact tribute for land stolen more than a century ago.

6. In France, where before 1789 the bulk of the land had been held by the Crown, the nobility and the Church, the revolution had paid little heed to Gracchus Babeuf's cry, "Down with private ownership of the land; the land belongs to nobody." After the revolution, the confiscated property of the Church and the *émigrés* had fallen largely into the hands of the bourgeoisie. As to the nobility, Villèle's compensation law of 1825 had provided them upon their return with the means of acquiring new estates. By 1884, 2 per cent of the landed proprietors owned 36 per cent of the soil of France. Even to-day 114,000 big farms—viz. 3 per cent of the total—occupied almost 30 per cent of the cultivated land, while 73 per cent of all farms occupied only 22 per cent of the land. In 1946, as statistics proved, 1,200,000 peasants were agricultural labourers, 800,000 tenants and 200,000 share-croppers. In other words, one-half of the total were landless; the rest were small-holders.

7. The need for land reform had also never been fully realized during the American Revolution. Grant's slogan "Forty acres and a mule" remained a dream even now for many millions of tenants and share-croppers. The overthrow of the slave-owners had been a revolution; it had altered the economy of the nation, it had transferred the political power from one class to another, had shattered the feudalistic planter regime and had made industrial capitalism dominant. The triumphant capitalists, however, feared the full emancipation of their agricultural population, and in particular of the negroes. They did not want a large body of prosperous farmers and workers, but were quite content for planters, once they had been shorn of power, to retain control of the big estates. They wanted to keep the negroes, in particular, in a state of direct exploitation, short of actual slavery, for the profit of the northern industrialists, no less than for that of the southern planters.

8. The pattern for the plantation share-cropping system was formed as a result of the failure of American democracy to find a radical solution to the land question of the South at the time of reconstruction. A democratic solution would have meant confiscation and the breaking up of the big plantations, the distribution of the land among the ex-slaves and the landless whites. It would have broken the economic and political power of the plantation owner and opened the way towards a bright future for the farmer.

9. The plantation system remained to-day a super-exploitation. It involved a combination of direct exploitation through production and outright robbery through credits, creating a state of perpetual indebtedness and dependence. According to the 1945 census, 40 per cent of the cotton acreage in the five cotton states east of the Mississippi, and 46 per cent of the tobacco acreage were farmed on the plantation system. A report of the Department of Agriculture on farmland ownership in the United States showed that more than half of the land was held by individuals owning more than 500 acres, while only 5 per cent held less than 70 acres.

10. The same report stated that the concentration of wealth was strongest in the South with 3 per cent of individuals owning 46 per cent of the land. An investigation in the Black Belt country had shown that in one region only, out of 2,000 farmers, thirty-six persons owned more than half of the arable land in the State of Alabama; 1,437 farms had an acreage of 2,843,000, while 121,182 farms, each with less than 50 acres covered a slightly bigger acreage, namely 2,952,000. Expressed in terms of percentage, tenancy had increased during the past 70 years.

11. Evidence had recently come to light of a further tendency towards concentration of wealth, accompanied by the deprivation of small farmers of land and the increase in poverty of the farm population. In 1947, 24.4 per cent of large farms covered 74.4 per cent of all arable land, 8 per cent of the largest farms covered 44 per cent of the arable areas, while 42 per cent of small farmers owned 13 per cent of the land and received 7.5 per cent of the agricultural income.

12. Finally, the incompleteness of the capitalist agrarian revolution was demonstrated in Italy, where one-half of the land was at present owned by landlords and large-scale capitalists, one-quarter by the Church and the State, leaving one-quarter only for the peasantry. Only 2 million out of the 8 million peasants worked on their own holdings, the other 6 millions being landless and poor peasants who were forced to toil on the properties of the big land-owners.

13. The data on land-ownership immediately revealed the acuteness of the agricultural problem in the economically backward countries. The problem remained untouched in Latin America, which for the last fifty years had been under the complete domination of the United States, shielding itself behind the Monroe Doctrine.

14. Reference had been made at the 533rd meeting by the United States representative to the successful land reform carried out in Paraguay. He (Mr. Katz-Suchy), on the contrary, would quote that country as an example

of a disastrous situation, since official statistics showed that 43 per cent of the total arable area consisted of estates of over 100,000 hectares; small-holders meanwhile, though accounting for 98.6 per cent of the total farming population, held only 7 per cent of the total quantity of land.

15. A report of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs on agricultural development in Venezuela revealed that, although there were large areas of land suitable for cultivation in the highland region, the prevailing form of land-ownership was largely instrumental in preventing their full and beneficial exploitation. It was estimated that 40% of the farmers in that region owned 2.6 per cent of the farm land, in other words, one-half per cent of the farmers owned 50 per cent of the farm land.

16. In Puerto Rico there were 55,200 peasant farms, but 42 per cent of the whole cultivated area belonged to big planters who, again, were connected with United States sugar trusts. In Ecuador, according to a book entitled "Indians in the High Andes", 115 haciendas were worth 500,000 sucres, or more than half the value of 79,000 farms. According to the same source, 3 per cent of the population owned 40 per cent of the land, while 90 per cent possessed no real estate whatsoever.

17. The situation in Hawaii was described in the following terms in the publication "Non-Self-Governing Territories":¹ "At the 1940 agricultural census there were 114 farms of 1,000 acres or more comprising 96 per cent of the agricultural land producing sugar cane, pineapple and livestock. The remaining 4 per cent of the land was divided into 4,881 farms producing mixed crops, meat, poultry and dairy products for local consumption." That document did not mention the well-known fact that the 114 plantations were controlled by five United States families who controlled practically the whole economy of Hawaii.

18. Reference must also be made to the large holdings of various United States companies in Latin American countries. As one instance, he would mention the United Fruit Company, which at the end of 1948 owned 558,965 acres of improved and cultivated land in Central America. In the Philippines, most of the wealth was controlled by approximately 1 per cent of the population. Ravenholt had pointed out in an article entitled "The Philippines: where did we fail?" in the periodical *Foreign Affairs* for April 1951 that: "In large areas the tenants who by law should be paying not more than 30 per cent of their crops as rent actually are delivering more than 70 per cent to the owners. . . . Many tenants are so deeply in debt that they have no hope of ever getting out from under this burden; they are in effect the property of the person whose land they work."

19. In colonies and dependent territories, the situation was much more acute. A few examples would suffice. In Southern Rhodesia, 1,500,000 Africans were herded together on 29 million acres of inferior land, while 100,000 whites occupied 50 million acres of tobacco and agricultural land. In Kenya, 2,000 white settlers held

40 per cent of the land, while 4 million Africans held the rest. In Tanganyika, with a native African population of 6 millions, the Europeans, who constituted two-thirds of one per cent of the inhabitants, held 30 per cent of the land under cultivation.

20. Those figures were eloquent of the rapacious exploitation of the peasant masses in the colonial and dependent countries and bore witness to the increasing hunger, to the shortness of the peasant's span of life, to illiteracy, to absence of political rights and to the denial of all human dignity.

21. In the case of Asia, it was clear that the growth of national liberation movements was not merely a struggle for freedom from foreign imperialist domination; at bottom it was a struggle for land and for the execution of agrarian reforms. In Indo-China, Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines, Burma and many other areas, the desire for the redistribution of land was the basic driving force of the struggle for freedom, a struggle directed against both the imperialist overlords and the native land-owners and big bourgeoisie, who mutually supported one another. The peasant masses everywhere were becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that, if anachronistic agrarian conditions still prevailed in the under-developed countries, that was due to the barriers which had been placed in the way of their removal by the combined forces of imperialist exploitation and native land-ownership. For the imperialist Powers, the under-developed countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa were merely hinterlands on which they could draw for raw materials and agricultural products and whose economies had to be kept permanently non-industrial. Thus, it was stated, in a report issued by the Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1945 and entitled "A Food Plan for India": "India is predominantly and may be expected always to remain predominantly an agricultural country."

22. Neither the new programmes, such as the Point Four Programme and the Colombo Plan, nor the substitution of indirect for direct rule by the imperialist Powers would effect the slightest change in that attitude towards colonial or dependent countries. Under those conditions, no real solution of the land problem in the under-developed countries was possible unless more resolute methods were adopted.

23. In marked contrast to the case of India was that of China, where the achievement of real and complete national independence, and the establishment of a real people's government had enabled the agrarian revolution to be carried through and the feudal system of land-ownership to be abolished. Land had already been redistributed in rural areas, with a population of more than 170 million, and the agrarian reform as a whole would be completed within less than three years. It was being carried out with the mass participation of the peasants themselves and was already transforming the Chinese peasant, the incarnation for centuries of misery, hunger and oppression, into a free man with a voice in determining his own future.

24. The example of China showed clearly that, in the case of colonial and dependent countries, the basic task was the establishment of fully independent sovereignties,

¹ See United Nations Publications, Sales No.: 1950.VI.B.1, Vol. II.

the granting of democratic rights to the mass of the people, the elimination of feudal and semi-feudal relations in agriculture, and the removal of all barriers to the development of domestic trade and industry. But, at the present time, the execution of such reforms did not require any new and grandiose development of capitalism in the under-developed countries. Already the workers and peasants in such countries were following the example of China and making it clear that they were determined to carry through the democratic revolution to the end and were equally resolved not to substitute for feudal forms of production and exploitation another obsolete system of production. Thus, as the lesson of China showed, hundreds of millions of people were already moving through transitional forms of social and economic organization towards the goal of socialism.

25. The replacement of the capitalist system by a socialist system was both inevitable and necessary because the former generated poverty out of abundance, led to wars and economic crises, and placed the chief means of production in the hands of the profit-seeking few. If the general social and cultural backwardness of rural life was to be overcome and the antithesis between town and country abolished, socialist forms of agrarian structure must be established. That was the path which the 800 million people who had escaped from the toils of capitalism had taken. That was the path chosen by the Soviet Union, with its achievements in the socialist collectivization of agriculture, as well as by his own country.

26. In pre-war Poland, more than half of the arable land had been owned by only one-half per cent of the population engaged in agriculture. No alleviation of the misery and poverty of the Polish peasant had been possible, but the free forces which had owned the bulk of the land had also been dominant in political life.

27. The importance of the problem of agricultural reform in Poland was revealed by the fact that one of the first actions of the new government was to carry out agrarian reform in the liberated territories. The decree of 6 September 1944 was promulgated at a time when a great part of the country was still under occupation and the distribution of land was carried out within the sound of guns. That decree had affected 3,934,444 hectares of land, of which 1,742,713 were woods, public roads and waterways. 2,191,731 hectares had been distributed in order that each farm unit might receive from 1.7 to 7 hectares. The complete liberation of Poland had made possible a full agricultural reform which had taken in an area of 15,114,222 hectares. Over 4,000,000 hectares of that land were public waterways, woods and roads; 2,000,000 hectares had been left as a reserve and for the purpose of public building and development, the rest being used to enlarge the farms of small-holders and give land to those who had none.

28. The establishment of a People's Democracy in Poland, of a workers' and peasants' government, had not only made possible the distribution of land among the poor peasants and agricultural proletariat, but had also enabled assistance to be given to peasants for the transfer from small individual farming to collective co-operative farming. Through the development of

the production of tractors, of agricultural machinery and fertilizers, of producers' and consumers' co-operatives, of co-operative stations for hiring machinery, of special forms of credit and taxation tariffs, of the Peasants' Mutual Aid Union, etc., a basis was being systematically laid for a mass voluntary organization of producers' co-operatives in the countryside, which was part of the long-term policy of the Polish Government.

29. In pursuing that policy, the Polish Government, like those of the other People's Democracies, had before it the example of the Soviet Union, where collectivization had not only put an end to all forms of exploitation in the countryside, but had vastly increased agricultural production, made possible the full utilization of agricultural resources, prevented the wasteful destruction of soil fertility, and put the Soviet Union in the front rank of modern agricultural States.

30. If he had so sharply outlined his Government's belief that it was only by immediately putting an end to the monopolization of the land by the big proprietors in the colonial and dependent countries that the latter could set out on the path of real economic development; that socialist land reform alone held out the prospect of a fundamental and permanent improvement in the lot of agricultural workers, and that it was only through such reform that agriculture, which had in the past lagged behind industry, could catch up with it, the emphatic expression of that conviction should not be interpreted as meaning—and some might thus interpret it—that the Polish draft resolution (E/L.247) had not been submitted in good faith. His delegation was the last to regard the United Nations as an instrument for promoting fundamental social change. Unlike the United States and other countries, it regarded it neither as an instrument for achieving socialism, nor as an instrument for perpetuating and extending the hold of capitalism. Unlike the United States and other delegations, his delegation saw the United Nations as an instrument for furthering the peaceful co-existence of the two different social systems, the capitalist and the socialist. Within that framework, it believed that it was possible and necessary to plan and promote certain programmes and activities which might to a great extent better the lot of the hungry and the down-trodden. It was in that belief that his delegation had submitted its draft resolution.

31. The recommendations made therein were based on the data, findings and conclusions of the report entitled "Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development" (E/2003). That report made it clear that the defects in the agrarian structure of the under-developed countries constituted a serious obstacle to their economic development. It was most clearly apparent that concentration of most of the land in the hands of the few left the vast majority of the agricultural population either landless or with so small a portion of the land at their disposal that they remained hopelessly poverty-stricken and burdened by debt. It was also apparent from the report that there were several key problems, such as the handing over of the land to be worked either individually or collectively to those who tilled the soil, its re-distribution being accompanied by measures which would enable the tillers to work it for

their own real betterment and which would help ensure that it was not soon returned to the former or to new landlords. Furthermore, the report also made clear that such a land reform would prove ineffective unless it were part and parcel of a concerted effort to achieve the independent and genuine industrialization of the countries concerned.

32. All the defects of agrarian structure enumerated in the report—the uneconomic size of farms, maldistribution of land-ownership and landlessness, lack of credit facilities for small farmers, indebtedness, plantation economies, taxation policies which imposed unbearable burdens on the peasantry—all grew out of the feudal and semi-feudal agrarian conditions which prevailed in vast areas of the world and which were buttressed by the dead weight of colonialism. Those conclusions were clearly evident in the report, despite many of its weaknesses—particularly the tendency to lay too much emphasis on the advantages of individual as opposed to collective forms of land-ownership and operation, and unrealistic appraisal of so-called land reform measures in, for example, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

33. Dealing with the question of settlement of title, the report itself indicated that in many cases in the under-developed countries it was only a subterfuge for the alienation of land from the agrarian poor.

34. Further, with reference to credit facilities, the report pointed to the unsuitability of existing credit agencies and showed that the banking system in most of those countries was adjusted to the credit needs of agricultural production only in so far as that production was organized in large estates or plantations, the supply of cheap credit in most cases serving only to reinforce the position of the landlords. The report also noted that the effect of the change from tenancy to ownership depended on the terms on which the ownership of the holding was acquired. If compensation was required and was put at too high a figure, the net effect was that the landlord continued to receive the same high rent in a different form.

35. Another warning was contained in the statements made on Africa in which it was pointed out that the change of the communal forms of tenure by the introduction of share-cropping resulted in transforming an increasing number of Africans from subsistence farmers to agricultural workers, a development associated with the alienation of land through the system of concessions, large areas being turned over to private foreign capitalists.

36. Another point of interest was that an increase of credit did not indicate a high level of investment by the poor peasantry, but resulted from the need to borrow in order to finance consumption; it thus led to an increase of indebtedness.

37. The Polish draft resolution (E/L.247) recommended not only the introduction of appropriate land reforms, but also appropriate action on the part of the governments concerned. The main point of the draft resolution was the recommendation that appropriate land reforms should be carried out which would be of direct benefit to landless peasants, small-holders and medium farmers. The other recommendations were intended to strengthen that action, to stabilize it and to prevent any reversal of

it. Consequently, it was recommended that the governments concerned should give financial aid to small and medium peasants through cheap agricultural credit facilities. In order to raise productivity and output, the draft resolution recommended the granting of comprehensive technical assistance through the distribution of implements, seed, fertilizers and insecticides, and through the establishment of factories and workshops for the manufacture, maintenance, repair and servicing of agricultural machinery and spare parts.

38. It recommended also that the grave injustice done to the indigenous communities in the colonies should be remedied. It demanded legal measures to protect the holdings of farmers and prevent the forming of large estates through purchase of land by the wealthy, a process which would nullify the results of agrarian reform. It provided for financial measures such as sound taxation policies, abolition of debt, and the promotion of rural credit co-operatives. It also provided for the promotion of rural co-operatives in the field of production, marketing and distribution, such a development marking a more advanced stage of agricultural structure. Recommendations of that kind would, if applied, abolish the anachronistic agrarian conditions which obtained in the under-developed areas and colonies, would put agriculture on a sound basis in those areas, and would help industrial development. Simultaneously, industrialization would lead to higher agricultural output, provide an outlet for spare labour and allow for the application of new methods and for the mechanization of agriculture.

39. Turning to the United States draft resolution (E/L.246/Rev.1), he wished to state at the outset that the sudden interest shown by the United States in land reform must be judged in the light of the developments in those territories which were under the direct or indirect control of the United States. The reason why the United States suddenly wished to play the role of champion of land reform *vis-à-vis* the under-developed and colonial peoples was obvious enough. As the Secretary of State, Mr. Acheson, had himself often noted, the peoples of the colonial, semi-colonial and dependent territories throughout the world were on the move, and the tide of national progress and agrarian revolution was sweeping forward irresistibly. Since not all the dollars and guns of the United States could stem that tide, it was essential to devise new tactics and strategies to enable the United States successfully to play the role of King Canute and hold in check a movement which threatened more and more to sweep aside all outworn social forms. Those motives clearly showed through the flimsy veil of the United States representative's demagogical utterances about land reform. The representative of that country, speaking at the 533rd meeting, had made it clear that the aim of his Government's propaganda was to persuade the people of the under-developed countries and colonies to refrain from following the leaders who urged them towards national liberation and to avoid spilling over into sporadic violence.

40. It was pertinent to remind members of the Council that the attempt to describe United States policy in Japan as a genuine land reform had begun as long ago as the fifth session of the General Assembly, when the

Secretary of State had taken pains to pay special tribute to the so-called land reform which had been carried out in Japan. But an analysis of the situation would show that the action taken on the problem of agriculture in Japan formed part of the general policy of the United States to prevent the outbreak of a genuine national movement which would oppose both the United States occupation and the maintenance of the old ruling clique and the old order. While rejecting a proposal submitted by the Soviet Union to confiscate the land and either divide it among landless peasants or use it to strengthen small farms, the United States had applied a policy which, while eliminating the influence of the Samurai, would maintain the power of the government and of monopoly capital over the farmer.

41. Despite the land reform, the statistical table of the *Monthly Circular* No. 1 for 1951 of the Mitsubeshi economic research institute showed that nearly 40 per cent of the farmers did not completely own their land, while 40 per cent possessed less than 0.5 cho (1 cho equalling 2.45 hectares).

42. He must reiterate that his statement on that vital problem, as indeed on all others, was not intended as an attempt to impose the social structure of Poland on other countries. Unlike the United States, his delegation was not fighting for a position which would facilitate such a manoeuvre. It approached the problem with a full appreciation of its gravity and in perfect awareness of the fact that the Council, being composed of representatives of countries with various economic and social structures, must seek compromise solutions. But it was necessary to define the problem in its essentials; to analyse it completely and honestly; to draw conclusions fearlessly, bearing in mind the fact that proposals on land reform must play a role in helping to improve the lot of the vast masses of agrarian workers. That approach would also enable all delegations realistically and correctly to assess the Secretariat's report (E/2003). In the last analysis, it was the good faith of governments in whose countries or dependencies anachronistic agrarian conditions existed which would be tested by the sort of recommendations that were drawn up and the extent to which those recommendations were carried out.

43. Support for the Polish draft resolution would depend on the extent to which delegations abandoned their adherence to the present foreign policy of the United States, one of the main features of which was the attempt forcibly to suppress the national liberation movement in Asia and elsewhere. If the struggle for national liberation was in essence a struggle for freedom to carry through basic land reforms, it followed that those who were themselves trying to suppress such struggles were seeking to maintain and extend obsolete agrarian conditions and the mass starvation and oppression which inevitably accompanied them. Those who continued to flout the principle of the self-determination of peoples and prevented the improvement of the well-being of more than half mankind, would be not only spurning the principles of the Charter, but also increasing international tensions and jeopardizing the peace of the world.

44. Mr. ORTÍZ MENA (Mexico) said that his delegation had studied with great interest the report by the

Secretary-General (E/2003) on defects in agrarian structure as obstacles to economic development. Those defects tended, more especially in the under-developed countries, to maintain a low living standard among the agricultural population. His delegation had taken particular note of the chapter describing the land reforms effected in Mexico and the benefits ensuing therefrom for the nation as a whole as well as for the agricultural population.

45. The report, however, was linked to one aspect of the problem, as was also General Assembly resolution 401 (V) recommending that the Secretary-General submit such a report. But, for a clear understanding of the problem in all its aspects, each of the factors of production must be examined and their joint effect evaluated.

46. In the study on Mexico in the Secretary-General's report, land reform was depicted only in its first stage—namely, that of the re-distribution of the land. Its complementary aspect, which formed the second phase, on which the Mexican Government was at present actively engaged, had for the most part been neglected. Re-distribution of land could not by itself completely solve food problems or effect an improvement in the standard of living of the agricultural population unless cognate problems were also studied with a view to their solution. Thus, a study of improved agricultural methods, of irrigation and of new techniques was essential to all endeavours to bring about full agricultural development, which in turn would exercise considerable influence on economic development.

47. He recalled the various stages of the re-distribution of land in Mexico and observed that one-half of the total arable land usually held in *latifundia*, had ceased to be private property, and had been allotted in the form of small holdings together with communal pasture land. But, in spite of such progress, the problems facing Mexican agriculture were not yet solved. The problem of irrigation was and always had been of extreme importance and it was of interest to note that, out of the total area irrigated in Mexico, 37 per cent was irrigated by works four centuries old and 63 per cent by works constructed in the last twenty-five years, the period when the policy of constructing irrigation works had been inaugurated by the Mexican Government after the revolution. Approximately one-fifth of the total area of land under cultivation each year was irrigated by such works, and their importance was the more striking that irrigated land constituted more than one-quarter of the area under crops.

48. Such irrigation projects, of which the two largest at present under way would benefit a population of one million, also helped in the sanitation of the districts concerned, and by regulating the water supply and generating electric power, contributed to economic development and to the improvement in the living standard of the inhabitants. Moreover, the irrigation works were of an extremely high technical standard and had, at the various stages of construction, contributed towards the training of Mexican engineers.

49. Satisfactory agricultural development meant not only utilizing land and water to the fullest possible

extent, but also the application of new techniques. He gave examples of the progress achieved by his country in the last decades by granting credits for agriculture.

50. The working of the soil had, generally speaking, been defective, from the point of view of its conservation and the maintenance of its fertility. But, within the last two decades, effective progress had been made in combating drought, reducing irrational afforestation, and introducing rotation of crops and greater use of fertilizers. The Mexican Government had devoted much attention to the production of fertilizers, and only three months ago a large modern factory for producing fertilizers had begun working. The cost of financing the factory had been borne by national funds, supplemented by funds from the Import-Export Bank. Estimates, based on the amount of land under cultivation in 1949, had been drawn up to show the increase in *per capita* production due to the full utilization of nationally produced fertilizers. The output of maize, for instance, would increase from 117 to 198 kilogrammes, of wheat from 20 to 47 kilogrammes, of peas from 9 to 25 kilogrammes and of rice from 8 to 14 kilogrammes.

51. During the last quarter-of-a-century, the use of agricultural machinery and equipment had greatly improved Mexican agriculture, although obsolete equipment was often still in use. For example, the number of tractors in Mexico had increased sevenfold during the last ten years and the use of modern ploughs was gradually increasing, as the number of factories producing such machinery clearly showed. Furthermore, the utilization of all types of modern machinery, such as reaping machines and threshing machines, had increased very considerably. Great progress had also been made in the use of genetics and anti-pest measures.

52. In 1942, the Mexican Government had taken steps to improve maize crops and in 1947 had set up a national maize commission which had taken large-scale measures to increase the production of maize, through intensive experimentation and development services.

53. Agricultural credit was mainly official, although private enterprise had begun to show greater interest in agricultural holdings. Efforts had been made to see to it that such credits should be available at reasonable rates and subject to terms ensuring their amortization.

54. The progress of Mexican agriculture had thus been based on a combination of factors. Figures for the increase in productivity clearly showed the extent and character of its development. For example, to take only six of the most important crops, agricultural production had increased during the last two decades in the following proportions: cotton fourfold, sugar-cane three- or fourfold, rice threefold, beans two and a-half times, and maize twofold, while the wheat crop had increased by two-fifths. Moreover, the study of the increase in *per capita* consumption of agricultural products recorded a rise of 28 per cent within the last ten years. Those increases in production had been accomplished by a relatively smaller agricultural population. Whereas the total proportion of the population engaged in agriculture had diminished from 70 per cent in 1930 to 60 per cent in 1950, the average productivity had increased over the

past twenty years by approximately 20 per cent. Such figures showed that a considerable section of the population had transferred from agriculture to secondary and tertiary activities. In that way, the real national income had been increased and the economic structure of the country had undergone a change reflecting the relative importance of industry. The figures showed that the living standard of the population had risen considerably over the past few years. In fact, the real national income had increased by 75 per cent during the last decade. The testimony of those data strengthened the confidence felt by the Mexican people in the economic policy followed by the governments in power since the revolution.

55. The foregoing comments pointed to the need for including in a study such as that submitted by the Secretary-General some indication of the way in which agriculture had developed in countries which had carried out reforms not only through re-distribution of land, but also through the modernization of agriculture.

56. His delegation would communicate directly to the Secretariat a few modifications which it wished to make on points of detail in the report (E/2003) and reserved the right to comment later on the two draft resolutions.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Fischer, representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions, took a seat at the Council table.

57. Mr. FISCHER (World Federation of Trade Unions) said that the points he would put before the Council were drawn from the discussions of the conference held by the International Union of Agricultural and Forestry Workers' Trade Unions at Mexico City last May. Those discussions had shown that in many countries the system of large properties meant the practice of one-crop farming, agricultural production being insufficient to satisfy the needs of the people, and involving poverty and exploitation for the rural masses.

58. His organization considered that the observations in the Secretary-General's report were often correct. Paragraph 235 might, in particular, be cited. It showed that, in the under-developed countries, industrial development promoted by foreign capital investment did not necessarily help to increase agricultural production, or benefit the agricultural population as a whole. Paragraph 241, which noted that the agrarian structure of many countries impeded their economic development, also deserved special mention.

59. But the report suffered from certain omissions. In the first place, it did not lay sufficient stress on the inequitable distribution of land or on the appalling conditions from which agricultural workers suffered; nor did it bring out the fact that agrarian economy in the under-developed countries was still deteriorating.

60. The importance of the problem was shown by the fact that, according to paragraph 2 of the report, over 1,000 million people in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America depended for their existence on agriculture. An overwhelming majority lived in terrible poverty because of the cruel exploitation to which they were subjected. Thus, in Latin America, the big land-owners represented 2 per cent of the agricultural population, medium farmers

10 per cent and agricultural workers, share-croppers and small owners 88 per cent.

61. In the under-developed countries, a large proportion of the cultivable land lay fallow. According to the *Economic Survey of Latin America, 1950* (E/CN.12/217/Add.11), in Venezuela, for example, only 4 per cent of the potential agricultural area had been under cultivation in 1939; the petroleum boom had brought about the veritable stagnation of agriculture.

62. He quoted a number of documents to show that the cornering of land by big land-owners or foreign companies in the Philippines, Chile and Colombia had resulted in a reduction of the areas under cultivation.

63. In Equatorial Africa, the French Government had dispossessed nearly 25 million Africans of their right of ownership to the lands of their ancestors. That was due to the increased exploitation of African wealth by the metropolitan country, and the consequent use of the African population as a cheap form of labour. The Secretary-General's report laid stress in paragraph 83 on the alienation of land in French Equatorial Africa. It might also be noted that, according to the report submitted in 1950 by Mr. Antonini to the Assembly of the French Union, out of an area of 470 million hectares in French West Africa only 28,000 hectares had been registered in the name of 1,724 African owners. The Africans, therefore, were vigorously demanding that State property as well as lands which had been taken from them should return to territorial and indigenous community ownership and be managed by the communities as they saw fit. Similar conditions prevailed in Morocco and the Belgian Congo.

64. Thus, in the under-developed countries, the big landed proprietors and foreign companies continued to dispossess the small and medium farmers. The result, as Mr. Radhakamal Mukherjee had stated in his book, "Land Policy and Agriculture", was that a considerable landless population lowered the cost of labour and retarded the introduction of improved methods of agriculture; unemployment in the villages lowered industrial wages and postponed the execution of building, education and other social improvement schemes.

65. As was stated on page 25 of the International Labour Organisation's report entitled *Agricultural Wages and Incomes of Primary Producers*, landless labourers in Thailand were on the increase. In Brazil, according to José de Castro's book "The Geography of Hunger", 72.2 per cent of agricultural workers were obliged to cultivate the land of others.

66. Such a system caused poverty and the exploitation of the agricultural wage-earner, made it impossible to build up a real home market or promote industrial development. The large foreign companies imposed the single-crop system on the under-developed countries at the expense of a balanced economy and drew enormous profits from national resources which were not reinvested in the country. The *per capita* cultivated area was so small as to make an economic return from agriculture impossible. The President of the Republic of Chile, for example, had been obliged to admit, in his message of 25 July 1947, that shortage of land was the main cause of the poverty of the Indians in his country.

67. Moreover, the big land-owners had nothing to gain from improving their land, and the joint ECLA/FAO Working Party's report on agricultural requisites in Latin America recognized that, in that region, little progress in irrigation had been made in the past hundred years. The small farmers and agricultural workers were shockingly exploited, and the fact that their purchasing power was almost non-existent made any expansion of national industries impossible.

68. The small farmers had to pay exorbitant dues and rents to the large landowners. In many countries, farmers and share-croppers could be evicted without warning. Poverty drove them to fall so heavily into debt that they were unable to repay the loans and became the veritable slaves of the large land-owners, as was shown in Ravenholt's article entitled: "The Philippines: where did we fail?" and published in *Foreign Affairs* for April 1951. The same conditions obtained in Malaya and Latin America. Agricultural credit was generally provided by private individuals at very high rates of interest, a fact which, according to the *Economic Survey of Latin America, 1950* (E/CN.12/217/Add.8), prevented capital accumulation.

69. In Latin America, certain compulsory services (*pongueaje, colonato, huasicamia*), survivals of the feudal system, were tantamount to a veritable thralldom and the purchasing power of the semi-serfs subjected to them was almost nil. The share-cropping system obliged the peasant to yield part of his crops to the land-owner in exchange for the use of the plot of land he leased. Generally, the share-cropper, as a result of debt, was in as wretched a position as the semi-serf.

70. The peon of Latin America was far from enjoying the same rights as an ordinary agricultural worker. The systems of peonage prevailing in the various countries of Latin America bound the agricultural worker and even his descendants to the land. Mr. Rafael Reyeros, in his book on peonage in Bolivia published in 1949, had observed that servitude persisted, unrestricted by any legislation, and that a large part of the population performed unremunerated menial and servile work.

71. In Chile, Bolivia and the Union of South Africa, agricultural workers did not enjoy the trade union rights granted to industrial wage-earners. Wages were much lower than the very low industrial wages. According to the Bell Mission's report, the average agricultural wage in the Philippines in 1941 had been 45 per cent of the wage of an industrial labourer. A similar state of affairs had been found by the International Labour Organisation in Ceylon, Malaya, Puerto Rico, India and Thailand. In Latin American countries, agricultural wages were also quite inadequate. It was not, therefore, surprising that, in those circumstances, agricultural workers suffered from hunger; that was one of the fundamental reasons for the low productivity of agricultural labour. As a result, agriculture represented a very small proportion of the national income, as was shown in tables 5 and 7 of the Secretary-General's report on volume and distribution of national income in under-developed countries (E/2041). That situation was the result of the inhuman exploitation of the labouring masses by the land-owners and foreign companies.

72. One of the main reasons for destitution in agriculture, and its backwardness, was the use made of under-developed countries by foreign monopolies, which monopolies dispossessed the small indigenous land-owners and reduced the area under essential food crops.

73. He quoted from several documents emanating from United Nations organs and showing that foreign companies practised a single-crop system of agriculture in Cuba, Peru, Puerto Rico and Brazil, to the detriment of the large majority of the people, who suffered from chronic under-nourishment.

74. In Ceylon and Malaya, large tea and rubber plantations were held by the British, who drew enormous profits from them, while only a very small proportion of the tillable area was devoted to the cultivation of foodstuffs, particularly rice, so that Malaya was obliged to import large quantities of agricultural products.

75. In Honduras, Costa Rica and the Philippines, foreign companies took enormous profits out of the country, thus draining the national economies. Those companies had no regard for the development of the under-developed countries, and were merely concerned with export possibilities.

76. In brief, the consequences of large-scale foreign land holding were: destitution and exploitation of the local labouring masses, single-crop agriculture with vast areas allowed to lie fallow, unilateral development of the national economies in favour of a few export commodities, famine, and the checking of all material and political progress for the people. The dangers and the drawbacks of single-crop agriculture had been clearly brought out in the report by the Secretary-General on fluctuations in the prices of primary commodities (E/2047). It could therefore be said that the analysis of the section on plantations in the report (E/2003) on land reform was inaccurate, because it sought to play down the undeniable disadvantages of the plantation system and the single-crop agriculture to which it gave rise.

77. In those circumstances, land reform should be one of the foundations of a programme for economic development. It should be carried out side by side with an industrialization programme and backed by a series of practical measures such as the provision of agricultural credit and of tools and agricultural machinery for peasants.

78. To find the resources required for such a programme, it would be sufficient to introduce an improved fiscal system, to check speculative investment in agriculture, to return to those entitled to it the national wealth exploited by foreign companies at the people's expense and to reduce expenditure on armaments. The Bell Mission's report showed that, in the Philippines, only 0.25 per cent of the 1951 budget was allocated to agriculture, while 20 per cent was allocated to military and police expenditure. According to the section on real and money wages contained in the part of the *Economic Survey for Latin America, 1950* (E/CN.12/217/Add.3) dealing with Chile, real wages in that country had declined between 1945 and 1949, whereas profits had increased. Consequently, there were wide opportunities for action by governments which really wanted to get to the roots of the evil.

79. The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was glad to note that many under-developed countries were carrying out land reforms. It must be pointed out, however, that in Latin America only Mexico had actually carried through a reform of that kind. Although, in less than twenty-five years, that reform had made it possible to raise agricultural production to the same level as mining production, it had not been sufficiently thorough, and 30 per cent of the agricultural population still consisted of landless peasants. Investments in agriculture were made with a view to the production of export commodities (E/CN.12/217/Add.8, second section of second part), and agricultural wages were still very low.

80. According to Mr. George McCune, author of "Korea Today", land reform projects had failed completely in South Korea, whereas in North Korea 50 per cent of the cultivated land had been distributed among 725,000 families by 1946 and land reform had been extremely popular.

81. The information about Japan contained in the report on land reform was also over-optimistic. In his recent book, "The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase", Mr. Robert A. Fearey, a State Department official, showed that the problem of rural depopulation had not been solved, that the agricultural credit system had not been improved and that the big feudal land-owners were still a power and were ready to sabotage reform.

82. Furthermore, the above-mentioned report made no reference to the measures adopted in the Viet Minh Republic, where the uncultivated land of the French colonists had been distributed to the peasants.

83. In China, land reform had been carried out on a grandiose scale, 250 million peasants having benefited therefrom by May 1951; it had aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the rural masses. In 1950, the harvest as a whole had been 20 per cent and the cotton crop 58 per cent higher than in 1941. Trade and distribution had been improved and co-operatives, with a membership to date of 30 millions, had been established. Owing to their increased purchasing power, peasants were buying large quantities of farm implements and of manufactured goods. Those facts had been admitted by an American writer, Mr. F. W. Riggs, in a study entitled "Wards of the UN: Trust and Dependent Areas", published in the *Foreign Policy Reports* for 1 June 1951.

84. It was therefore clear that land reform, when carried out in conjunction with the development of industry and in the interest of the workers, was an important factor in the economic development of the under-developed countries.

85. In conclusion, he warmly supported the proposals contained in the Polish draft resolution (E/L.247), which were based on the resolution adopted by the Conference of the International Union of Farm and Forestry Workers' Trade Unions, held at Mexico City in May 1951. Such measures should enable man to derive from the land, which today was a source of poverty and servitude, some of the satisfactions he was entitled to expect from it.

Mr. Fischer withdrew.

86. Mr. REISMAN (Canada) said that his delegation had always considered the subject of land reform as one of the most important items that the Council would consider at its present session. Appropriate measures of land reform were essential not only for carrying out a well-balanced and effective development programme, but also to the maintenance of economic, political and social stability in both the national and the international spheres. It was therefore desirable that the Council should continue to devote particular attention to that problem.

87. Throughout the Council's discussions on economic development, his delegation had continually stressed the agricultural side, which could make a valuable contribution towards raising standards of living and constitute the framework for more ambitious programmes. His delegation believed that in many countries the agricultural development necessary for ensuring full economic development could not be effected on a satisfactory scale unless land reforms were carried out in the near future.

88. The resolution on methods of financing economic development (E/2107) recently adopted by the Council proposed measures to increase the flow of capital. Such measures could not, however, be effectively implemented unless the fundamental development of agriculture and land reform were recognized as pre-requisite conditions. For instance, a home market which would absorb internal production could not be created unless the agricultural population had sufficient means to enable it to buy the goods available. Moreover, shortages of foodstuffs placed a great strain on the balance-of-payments situation, since they had to be compensated for by imports which would not otherwise have been necessary. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development had stated repeatedly that it could grant loans only in cases where they could be adequately absorbed and repayment ensured. Improved productivity and increased efficiency in the working of the soil would place many countries in a more favourable position to employ such capital, which, he was sure, would be forthcoming in those circumstances.

89. Canada had considerable experience of the problem of establishing a satisfactory agrarian structure. It was indeed in a favourable position in that its territories were vast and its population relatively small. Moreover, inhibitory social structures did not exist, although originally part of its land had been distributed under feudal arrangements. At an early stage in the development of Canada, however, land had been allocated under government supervision to individual families in sufficiently large holdings to allow for reasonable standards of living once the land had been cleared and developed. That had not been easy. Most of the credit for progress in the Canadian agrarian economy must go to the people who pioneered the land and wrested it from wilderness, often under the toughest conditions of climate and other adversities of nature. In course of time, the seigneurial system of land distribution and operation had been entirely abolished, so that to-day the Canadian agrarian structure was essentially one of family-owned farms. Great progress had also been made in Canada by way

of voluntary co-operation between farmers through co-operatives for processing and marketing farm produce.

90. In addition to the question of land-ownership, the report of the Secretary-General and the various draft resolutions referred to the need for granting appropriate credit and other facilities, particularly to small farmers. On the basis of experience gained during the great depression, when prices had fallen to a low level and farmers had found themselves heavily in debt, the Federal Government and the provincial governments of Canada undertook bold measures to help the agricultural population by easing the burden of indebtedness and by providing adequate credit facilities at reasonable rates of interest for farm improvement and the purchase of modern agricultural equipment. In addition, the Federal Government had undertaken agricultural research, set up experimental stations and taken other measures to assist farmers in adopting new methods and techniques. Consequently, Canada possessed one of the most highly developed agricultural systems in the world, and the standard of living of its farm population was second to none. It was clear that identical measures would not be appropriate for all countries. He had, however, wished to draw attention to the need for government action in the sphere of agriculture even in a land as bountiful as Canada. It was important to realize that a prosperous agricultural population was an essential factor in development.

91. His delegation had carefully studied the Secretary-General's report and commended it wholeheartedly. It supported to a considerable extent the conclusions reached therein. He believed, however, that a fundamental weakness of the report lay in the fact that its recommendations were based on a global survey of widely different regions and problems rather than on specific detailed analyses of concrete situations facing individual countries. In those circumstances, it was difficult for the report not to be superficial in some degree. The recommendations were nevertheless highly appropriate as a framework for action within which the countries concerned could select those measures which directly met their particular needs. His delegation considered that more effective progress would be made if a separate study were devoted to each country, concentrating on the specific conditions and requirements of that country. At the same time, he recognized that it would not be appropriate for the Council to undertake such action, which might be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of countries. For that reason, the main responsibility would necessarily fall on the individual nations themselves. The United Nations and the specialized agencies, and particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), had a most important part to play in that matter by way of technical assistance; and the progress achieved hitherto, notably by FAO, was a promising beginning.

92. Referring to the United States draft resolution (E/L.246/Rev.1), he thought its proposals sound, although it tended to consider the problem on unduly broad lines, as indeed did the report itself. It did not lay sufficient emphasis on the direct relationship between economic

development and land reform, and his delegation had consequently circulated an amendment (E/L.250) proposing the insertion of such a reference. He felt that the United States draft resolution thus amended should prove acceptable to the Council.

93. With regard to the Indian delegation's amend-

ments (E/L.249) to the United States draft resolution, he said that his delegation would study them carefully and would make any comment it deemed necessary at a later stage.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

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