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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Eighth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 8 August 1957, at 2.45 p.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. VIXSEBOXSE	(Netherlands)
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. RYAN	Australia
	Mr. DURAISWAMY	Ceylon
	Mr. Y.W. LIU)	China
	Mr. YANG)	
	Mr. de CAMARET	France
	Mr. KESTLER	Guatemala
	Mr. JAIPAL	India
	Mr. PACHACHI)	Iraq
	Mr. KADRY)	
	Mr. IDENBURG	Netherlands
	Mr. THORP	New Zealand
	Mr. VELANDO	Peru
	Mr. GIDDEN	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. MORE	United States of America
	Mr. ALFONZO-RAVARD	Venezuela

Representatives of specialized agencies:

	Mr. METALL	International Labour Organisation
	Mr. ORR	Food and Agriculture Organization
	Mr. SALSAMENDI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
	Dr. COIGNEY)	World Health Organization
	Mrs. MEAGHER)	
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. COHEN	Under-Secretary for Trusteeship and Non-Self- Governing Territories
	Mr. BENSON	Secretary of the Committee

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES:

- (a) QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORTS ON SOCIAL CONDITIONS APPROVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (A/2908, part II)
- (b) INFORMATION ON SOCIAL CONDITIONS CONTAINED IN THE SUMMARIES PREPARED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/3602, 3603, 3606, 3607, 3608, 3609)

Mr. KADRY (Iraq) emphasized the importance to the Committee, in its evaluation of the efforts of the Administering Members to prepare the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories for self-government, of adequate information concerning the efforts of the peoples themselves to improve their living conditions. It should know, for example, the degree of cohesion they exhibited in promoting changes in the social structure, to what extent the changes introduced by the Administering Powers were for the better and to what extent they were adapted to the real social and cultural needs of the indigenous community.

Since an essential feature of any free, dynamic society was the full exercise of the people's ability to help themselves, the Administering Members should encourage them in greater measure to form voluntary associations, such as co-operatives, for their own benefit. They could stimulate the formation of such associations through legislation, for regulation by law had a decisive role in all fields of social development. However, legislation constituted only a partial remedy to social ills, especially if it was not properly or fully applied. Many Territories had labour codes, for example, and were parties to international labour conventions, but that was no guarantee that the actual living conditions of the people, as distinguished from their working conditions, were satisfactory. The Committee was concerned with proper housing and health conditions, the freedom of the indigenous inhabitants to form trade unions, the freedom of those trade unions to function and to bargain on a footing of equality with other labour associations, and their freedom from racial discrimination.

In conclusion, he expressed the hope that unlike the reports transmitted in the past two years, future reports of the Administering Members on social conditions in the Territories for which they were responsible would point to significant and beneficial changes, particularly in labour and employment, social security and welfare and the development of co-operative societies.

Mr. Y.W. LIU (China) strongly associated his delegation in the final remarks of the representative of Iraq. He considered that the fact that no significant changes had been reported in the major fields of social development indicated a dearth of information for the period under review, and expressed the hope that the Committee would have more information before it in connexion with its detailed discussion of social conditions at the 1958 session. China welcomed changes, particularly such as would improve the general conditions of life of the peoples of the Territories.

Although it was gratifying to find that some measure of social progress had been achieved in the Territories, mainly as a result of steadily increasing Government expenditure on public health and the expansion of community development projects and housing schemes, the Administering Powers should intensify and expand their efforts. China had been particularly concerned about the lack of information on the prevention of crime, especially in view of the very large number of convictions for various offences reported in certain Territories, as, for example, in Kenya.

In most of the Territories, development was impeded by poverty, ignorance, poor health, low vitality and low productivity. Those were complex problems, all of them economic and social in origin, to which the ultimate solution lay in education. However, they formed a vicious circle which could only be broken by an integrated, vigorous attack on all its component evils simultaneously. The Administering Members should launch such a co-ordinated attack without delay by every means available to them. Only thus could they hope to advance the paramount interests of the inhabitants, as prescribed by the Charter.

The growth of the community development movement, particularly in a number of United Kingdom Territories, was heartening. It was an excellent means of improving economic, social and cultural standards by stimulating the active participation of the members of the community. Moreover, community development figured prominently in the Committee's enumeration of the principal aims of social policy (A/2908, part II).

Mr. KESTLER (Guatemala) pointed out that the Committee encountered the same difficulty in evaluating progress in social development as it had found in attempting to assess educational advancement: owing to the nature of the information contained in the Secretariat summaries, it was unable to define clearly the policies of the Administering Members and to determine how far they met the need for the social integration of the Territories. Many aspects of social problems were closely related to economic, educational and political conditions, and isolated figures proved of relatively little value. For example, statistics on the incidence of crime were not very helpful because they indicated not the number and type of offences committed, but the number of court convictions. The figures relating to Papua classified offences according to the racial origin of the offenders whereas it would have been more valuable to know the types of offences committed and the social conditions in which they had been perpetrated. Crime was clearly one of the many serious consequences of low levels of living and there was an urgent need for precise information on the types of crimes and the measures taken to prevent them.

Many of the other difficulties which beset the Non-Self-Governing Territories also had both social and economic aspects. The widespread incidence of tuberculosis in Malaya, Hong Kong and Papua, for example, was the result of the rapid growth of the population, the congestion of the cities, malnutrition and the lack of familiarity with elementary hygiene. Similarly, racial discrimination could not be combatted unless it was attacked from various angles: there was surely no point in fighting segregation in the schools if it was to continue in employment, hospitals, housing and in legislation. Guatemala would welcome more precise information on the measures taken by the Administering Members to combat racial discrimination within the scope of their general social policies. Of the problems relating specifically to the fields in which recent reports had noted no significant changes, there were many which remained unresolved owing to inadequate information.

On the other hand, considerable progress in social improvement had been made. The community development movement had been stressed, and rightly so, since only a comprehensive social policy which took full account of the economic, educational and political conditions in each Territory would effectively prepare the inhabitants for self-government. However, in many cases, partial measures had brought partial results, and the Administering Members should intensify and increase their efforts.

(Mr. Kestler, Guatemala)

While good progress in improvement had been recognized in some Territories, it was not commensurate with the urgency of the problem and the numbers of the population. Environmental disease and poverty had been decisive factors in the high death rates; they must gradually be eradicated in order to bring about the increase in productivity and the raising of living levels without which development was not feasible. It was equally important to improve the housing and living conditions of indigenous workers. While those problems could not be finally solved until the Territories were more developed economically, direct and determined action by the Administering Powers could have immediate beneficial effects on productivity. It was gratifying to find that steps were being taken to establish social security and welfare programmes, but in most cases there was insufficient information concerning the principles and conditions of those programmes. The efforts of some Administering Powers to eradicate racial discrimination were also laudable, but it was regrettable that in many Territories there was still a great disparity in working conditions between Europeans and indigenous workers.

His comments had not been made in a critical spirit, but in an attempt to make a constructive contribution to the Committee's work. Guatemala was confident that the Administering Members would exert every effort to correct social evils in the Territories, taking into account the paramountcy of the interests of the inhabitants.

FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE:

- (a) PROGRAMME OF SOCIAL STUDIES FOR 1958 (A/AC.35/L.252, A/AC.35/L.259)
- (b) DATE OF THE 1958 SESSION (A/AC.35/L.240)

Mr. JAIPAL (India) said that his delegation approved in general of the scope of the social studies planned for the 1958 session (A/AC.35/L.252), and accepted the three categories into which they had been divided. However, the emphasis appeared to be exclusively on urban family life and urban problems: the studies should also take account of rural family life and standards of living. Furthermore, the special study on social assistance measures should embrace rural and urban unemployment and measures at present being taken to combat it according to traditional or modern legislation. The special study on housing would be valuable, but it should cover rural housing problems as well as conditions in urban-industrial areas. Lastly, the Indian delegation considered /...

(Mr. Jaipal, India)

the growth of population in the dependent Territories to be a vital factor in social studies and hoped the Secretariat would deal with the subject fully.

He noted that the cost of the social studies planned for 1958 (A/AC.35/L.259) would come to \$11,900, an increase of \$6,250 over the provision in the budget. As he did not know how that cost was estimated he could not discuss it, but he would like to know on what basis the original budget figure of \$5,650 had been arrived at.

India was opposed to any narrowing of the scope of the social studies proposed. Economies were not to be effected at the expense of the Committee's work, and all the studies included in the 1958 programme were essential. The Indian delegation deplored the tendency of the budgetary bodies of the United Nations to treat the Committee as a Cinderella.

Mr. ALFONZO-RAVARD (Venezuela) also endorsed the programme of social studies for 1958 (A/AC.35/L.252). It would gain, however, from the addition of a chapter giving the general conclusions to be drawn from the consideration of the specific problems enumerated under category I. Since all social change affected the institutions of a particular society and the impact of new forms of living created the need for a readaptation of the social structure, a study should be made of the effects of such change. Accordingly, he proposed the addition of an item 8¹ to category I entitled: "Conclusions concerning the impact of social change on institutions and problems of social control and integration".

Mr. BENSON (Secretary of the Committee) said that he would have to make a tentative reply to some of the suggestions made by members of the Committee as they would require serious consideration if the Secretariat was to prepare not merely a document covering the points raised but a really valuable paper for discussion. He also wished to point out that in the course of the coming year the Secretariat and the specialized agencies would be considering points for inclusion in the long-term report which would be submitted to the General Assembly at its 1959 session. Some of the very broad aspects of policy could perhaps be given better treatment over that longer range of time than in a report on social conditions which would basically cover a three-year period.

/...

(Mr. Benson, Secretary of the Committee)

Referring to the remarks of certain members on social conditions, he said that it was true that the summaries submitted to the Committee at the present session dealt largely with statistical changes during the period under review. That was partly due to the nature of the information transmitted to the Secretary-General and partly to the instructions given to the Secretary-General in General Assembly resolution 218 (III).

He felt that the suggestions by the representatives of India and Guatemala regarding social conditions should be taken very fully into account in connexion with the studies to be prepared by the Secretariat for the Committee's next session.

The Venezuelan representative's proposal was very interesting, and many of the suggestions made by members would be carefully reflected in the long-term report to be submitted in 1959. If the Secretariat could produce a report of a tentative nature in 1958 on broad social aspects based on the proposals made by the Venezuelan representative it would do so, but the matter would need very careful consideration and framing in the light of the information submitted by Administering Members.

The list in document A/AC.35/L.252 was intended to be a list of themes to be discussed in the papers submitted to the Committee. A number of the subjects listed would also be covered by papers or studies prepared by the specialized agencies. Although the Secretariat had discussed that programme with the agencies the latter would wish for time to consider the precise nature and scope of their contributions. The Secretariat accordingly hoped that, as in the past, the Committee would, in indicating its wishes, leave a wide measure of discretion to the specialized agencies and the Secretariat with regard to the preparation of the desired studies.

As the list in document A/AC.35/L.252 was merely a list of themes, the Secretariat would, as it had done in 1955 in the case of education and social questions, submit to the Committee at its next session one general paper which would attempt to trace the main lines of social-policy evolution in the light of the information transmitted by the Administering Members and of the special reports on social conditions produced two years previously and in 1952.

(Mr. Benson, Secretary of the
Committee)

Referring to the Indian representative's statement, he pointed out that in the preliminary paper on economic studies submitted to the Committee's seventh session, the Secretariat had outlined the general theme regarding social studies for the Committee's consideration, and had pointed out that the change in the urban family was perhaps the most striking change of all in the evolving society of many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In working out the studies for the Committee's consideration at its present session, the Secretariat had felt that if useful papers were to be produced by it and the specialized agencies for consideration by the Committee in 1958 the emphasis on urban change would have to be very considerably reduced in the light of the general character of many of the social problems which arose.

The suggestions made by members would be used to modify the themes before the Committee, but there must be a certain limitation on studies which could be produced by the Secretariat and considered usefully by the Committee and which might possibly be better treated in the long-term report.

Referring to the financial implications of the printing of the special study on social conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.35/L.259), he pointed out that the Secretary-General had had to prepare his budget estimates very early in the year, at which time it had been estimated that the cost of printing the required study would amount to \$5,650. In the light of the discussions which had taken place early in the Committee's present session it had become obvious that that was an under-estimate and that the amount should have been \$11,900 - an increase of \$6,250. After consultation with the budget authorities, the Division felt that in accordance with article XIII of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations it should bring the matter to the notice of the Committee.

He pointed out that the cost of printing information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories had amounted in 1957 to \$23,495 and to \$19,840 in 1956. The estimated sum of \$11,900 for 1958 was therefore a reduction on previous years.

In making his final examination of the budget estimates the Secretary-General would have to decide whether the question of the extra cost of \$6,250 for printing the special study on social conditions should be submitted to the Fifth Committee.

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Mr. YANG (China), supported the proposal made by the United States representative at an earlier meeting that the Committee should hold its next session in spring 1958.

He noted from the annex to document A/AC.35/L.252 that the social studies to be prepared for the Committee's 1958 session were divided into three groups. He had no comments to offer on the second and third groups concerning public health and mass communications. The topics listed under these two groups seemed agreeable to him. But he wished to make a few observations on the first group dealing with family studies.

He felt that since the family was the basic unit of society, it was imperative that, when the Committee proposed to study social conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories, special attention should be given to the pattern of family life and the problems arising from the impact of modern civilization on that pattern.

He had carefully studied all the topics listed under the seven sections of the first group and his impression was that they dealt more with the problems of urbanization and its effect on urban family patterns than with the general traditional pattern of family life to be found in the vast rural area and the necessary measures to be taken to bring about desired changes and adjustments least painful, but most beneficial, to the dependent peoples.

He believed that the contemplated family studies, as they now stood, tended to be narrow in scope and the approach necessary was a negative one. Therefore, he wished to support the suggestion that the studies should be expanded to include a comprehensive study of the general family pattern in rural areas. It would be a serious omission indeed if the Committee was to consider section 1.D. of the first group without at the same time studying the consequences, avoidable or unavoidable, of the impact of modern civilization on the general traditional family pattern in Non-Self-Governing Territories. He accordingly suggested that such a study, if time permitted, should be prepared for the Committee's consideration at its ninth session.

His delegation also attached great importance to community development and wondered whether it would be possible for the Secretariat to prepare a paper on that subject.

Mr. BENSON (Secretary of the Committee) said that the suggestions made by the representative of China would require careful consideration. The study under section 1 - family change in urban-industrial areas - was certainly limited. It had been the Secretariat's intention to limit the study on the urban-industrial situation largely because, important though it was, it affected a minority of people, and the Secretariat had been doubtful whether it could place a wide enough study before the Committee. However, it would attempt to do so if the Committee so wished.

With regard to community development, he would consult the Bureau of Social Affairs which was making a long-term study of that subject, and would endeavour to place before the Committee studies made by the Bureau for the Social Commission, adding any useful information in the possession of the Division on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that it should be left to the discretion of the Secretariat to prepare studies for the Committee's ninth session on the basis of the outline given in document A/AC.35/L.252 and the various suggestions made by members.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN referred to the proposal made by the United States representative at an earlier meeting and supported by the representative of China, and suggested that the Committee should hold its next session in the spring of 1958, at a date convenient to the United States delegation.

It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SUMMARIES AND ANALYSES ADDITIONAL TO THOSE TREATED UNDER PREVIOUS ITEMS (A/3602, 3603, 3506, 3607, 3608, 3609, 3619; A/AC.35/L.253, A/AC.35/L.258)

Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that since it was suggested in the final note to document A/3619 that final judgment on the merits of the new system of reproducing summaries of information should be left to the General Assembly, he would confine himself to some general observations with particular reference to the sample fascicles reproduced.

(Mr. Pachachi, Iraq)

The Secretariat was to be congratulated on the production of the new type of summaries in fascicle form, which might well lead to a wider distribution of information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as they would no doubt appeal to students in the Territories whose main interest lay in the affairs of their own region. The only reservation to be made was that in the present form the summaries appeared unduly brief. In the text on Aden, for example, information covering a territory with 750,000 inhabitants had been compressed into fifteen pages. Since the transmission of information concerning the dependent territories was a Charter obligation, it was of prime importance to ensure that the basic facts on each Territory were adequately summarized.

The question of timing also called for serious consideration, as under the new system the publication of information on a whole group of Territories might be delayed if information on a single Territory was not received in time. Nor could that deficiency be rectified by the introduction of addenda, since the main advantage of the innovation, namely its convenience and neatness, would then be lost.

A strong appeal should accordingly be made to the Administering Members to ensure that their information was transmitted as far as possible within the time-limits laid down. Incidentally, since from the dates given in Part V of document A/AC.35/L.253 there appeared to be some diversity in the time-limits for the transmission of information, the Rapporteur might refer to the matter in his report.

Furthermore, since the Committee had the right to have at its disposal the most recent information available, provision should also be made under the new system for the issue of mimeographed summaries if time did not permit the preparation of the fascicles for the Committee's meeting.

A regrettable disadvantage of the new method was the fact that the summaries would no longer be considered as United Nations publications. Since, under the Charter, information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be available to all concerned and should be generally known to be available, even if the summaries were not treated as sales publications, they should still be considered publications for purposes of publicity.

(Mr. Pachachi, Iraq)

Those considerations would be borne in mind by the delegation of Iraq whenever the question came up for discussion in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. However, if a rapid and comprehensive treatment of summaries could be ensured under the new system, and if adequate publicity were provided for, his delegation might be prepared to accept that system as a regular practice in so far as it concerned summaries of a supplementary character.

His final conclusion remained that the obligation to transmit information was of essential importance and that failure to comply with it could in no circumstances be excused. Similarly, when information was transmitted in fulfilment of that obligation, it was for the Secretary-General to ensure that all necessary steps were taken to use that information and to make it available to all concerned in the form of adequate and suitably publicized publications.

Mr. JAIPAL (India) pointed out that information concerning the Belgian Congo for the year 1955, which had been due on 30 June 1956, had still not been received by the Secretary-General. That situation clearly had to be brought to the General Assembly's notice by the Committee in its report and in doing so, attention should be drawn to the correspondence published in document A/AC.35/L.258. He would not suggest any further action until it was certain that the Belgian Government had decided to cease the transmission of information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter.

As the representative of Iraq had emphasized, the obligation to transmit information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories stemmed directly from the Charter, and not from a resolution or decision of the General Assembly. Furthermore, there were two parties to that obligation: the Secretary-General as head of one of the principal organs of the United Nations, and the administering Power. If the latter failed, it was the duty of the former to bring the matter to the attention of the General Assembly. And as the relationship between the General Assembly and the Secretary-General was determined by certain resolutions, the latter had a responsibility of his own which was quite distinct from the responsibility of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.