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Chairman: Mrs. Mara RADIĆ (Yugoslavia).

AGENDA ITEM 49

World social situation: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/6703 and Corr.1, chap. VI, sect. III and chap. XI, sect. I; A/6826, E/4324 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.1495)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. ASTEN (Australia) emphasized the importance of the item under consideration and stated that economic development involved social adjustment; consequently, development planning which was realistic would always regard economic and social planning as a joint exercise.

2. The first requirement for successful planning was sound factual evidence; for that reason, his delegation was glad that the 1967 Report on the World Social Situation was now virtually complete, and it also welcomed the move to secure from five special rapporteurs' reports which would evaluate programmes and methods in the social fields of technical assistance.

3. Secondly, it was to the next United Nations Development decade that thoughts were now turning. What had been achieved in the 1960s might not be considered really satisfactory, but at the same time it was true to say that that period had been the decade of economic and social discovery, when the formula for development had been found. For that reason, he accepted with understanding the point made by the Director of the Social Development Division (A/C.3/L.1495) relative to the revision of the time schedule for the draft declaration on social development, which must be a blueprint for the successful development of properly integrated economic and social programmes.

4. The fact that urbanization was moving forward at twice the speed of general population increase in such developing areas as Latin America indicated that rural development programmes must be accorded high priority in the future. All were united in a common desire to promote economic and social progress, and to achieve success in the next decade it would be necessary to accept objective evaluation of the facts.

5. Mr. SANON (Upper Volta) said he was pleased to note that the report of the Secretary-General (A/6826) summarized the wishes and decisions expressed in General Assembly resolution 2215 (XXI) and Economic and Social Council resolution 1139 (XLI). The latter was one of the most important decisions taken by the United Nations, since it represented an agreement to set up within the Organization a body which would be the "social conscience" of the world. His delegation was glad that the Director of the Social Development Division had emphasized the importance of ever-closer co-operation by the specialized agencies among themselves and with the Economic and Social Council on all social questions. His delegation had had the opportunity to benefit from such co-operation at the eighteenth session of the Commission for Social Development, when the excellent report of the World Health Organization on questions relating to the extension of health services had been considered, but it would reiterate its desire that the general study of the imbalance between rural and urban areas in that respect should be carried out in such a manner that the rural masses could be given the urgent help which they often needed.

6. The importance of General Assembly resolution 2215 (XXI) lay in the fact that it affirmed the principle of the interdependence of the economic and social fields. Although the Economic and Social Council recognized that interdependence, its decision to consider economic questions at its summer session and social questions at its spring session made it difficult to pay due regard to it in practice. That problem was of concern to his delegation, especially as the forthcoming report of the International Labour Office would refer to questions of such importance to the developing countries as distribution of income, social aspects of industrialization, creation of job opportunities and training of cadres in countries undergoing rapid modernization—questions which it would be dangerous to ignore in preparing an integrated development policy. A similar difficulty existed in the General Assembly, where humanitarian and social questions were dealt with by the Third Committee and economic questions by the Second Committee. Referring to General Assembly resolution 2218 (XXI), he said that the second United Nations Development Decade would run the risk of failure of its scope was restricted to the economic field. His delegation hoped that the specialists to be designated by the Secretary-General under Economic and Social Council resolution 1261 (XLIII) would include experts in social questions. In addition, the Economic and Social Council should be assisted and guided by the Commission for Social Development in preparing for the second Development Decade.

7. As the end of the first United Nations Development Decade approached, all States were agreed on the need for close co-operation in social development. The report of the Secretary-General^{1/} submitted to the Commission for Social Development was commendably frank and objective in its treatment of the problems and obstacles impeding technical co-operation in the social field. There was no need to emphasize the vital importance of strict co-ordination of the various kinds of technical assistance, whether emanating from the United Nations, from the specialized agencies or from any other source. There, one came up against the constant problem of tied aid, but if man was really to be rescued from poverty and to have his dignity restored, the need for such co-ordination must be accepted, if only in order to avoid the duplications which represented a waste both for the donor and for the recipient of aid.

8. He was disturbed at the reduction in the resources allocated to social development, and would like more funds to be devoted to that purpose under the United Nations Development Programme, without prejudice to other UNDP activities. With regard to the revision of international co-operation activities, it would be desirable for the regional economic commissions to collaborate as closely as possible with the five special rapporteurs who were to be appointed, in order that the latter's recommendations to the Commission for Social Development might be beneficial. He fully supported the programmes approved by the Commission for Social Development at its eighteenth session, and he emphasized the importance of avoiding delays and failures in social projects.

9. The idea of a declaration on social development should not supersede, or restrict the scope of, the charter of development the preparation of which was envisaged in General Assembly resolution 2218 (XXI). The declaration would, in fact, be only a step towards the preparation of the charter.

10. One could not but agree with the Director of the Social Development Division that the social picture was dark; yet he was confident that the goals that had been set could be reached. He emphasized the ineffectuality of being satisfied with small advances and the need to ascertain the reasons for failures and to keep one's eyes fixed on the future.

11. Mrs. DIRZHINSKATTE-PILYUSHENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed regret that the report of the Secretary-General (A/6826) did not entirely reflect the substance of the question under consideration, since it did not give a complete picture of the problems in the social field or propose a satisfactory solution.

12. The Committee and the relevant organs of the United Nations would be able to go deeper into basic social problems if they had more complete documentation.

13. In her view, one of the most important functions of the United Nations in the social field was to evaluate the social activities of the Organization and to restructure the programmes of the relevant organs. In the absence of action programmes, drawn up by agreement

with the States Members of the United Nations, the work of those organs would be fruitless. A number of delegations, including her own, had repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the work performed did not meet the needs of Member States, especially the developing countries. General Assembly resolution 2035 (XX) and Economic and Social Council resolution 1139 (XLI) indicated the basic orientation for a revision of United Nations activities in the social field. The General Assembly had emphasized the importance of the interdependence of the economic and social factors of development, and of planning to raise national levels of living.

14. The World Land Reform Conference at Rome had been a valuable contribution to social development. The question of land continued to be one of the most difficult social and political problems in developing countries. The Conference had spoken in favour of giving the land to the man who tilled it and of liquidating the feudal system and large landholdings, had affirmed the principle that land reform took priority over what was called "community development", had stressed the role of peasant organizations in land reforms and had recommended that Governments should eliminate the obstacles to the establishment and functioning of such organizations. Her delegation regretted that the latest United Nations programme in the social field did not take sufficient account of the proposals and recommendations of the Conference.

15. Her delegation had warmly supported the preparation of the draft declaration on social development, which it believed could be extremely useful to States in formulating their national policies. She believed that the Commission for Social Development had placed proper emphasis on drawing up such a declaration, and she hoped that it would succeed in preparing a suitable document.

16. In the view of her delegation, the declaration should indicate the possibilities of social progress. It should facilitate the formulation of more just policies in the social field and the practical preparation of development plans in which due account was taken of the political, economic and social characteristics of States, with a view to social progress. Her delegation also believed that the declaration should promote peace, mutual understanding between peoples, and a strengthening of the independence, equal rights and sovereignty of States. It should also facilitate the complete elimination of racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism and of the exploitation of man by man; for there could be no social progress unless those evils were abolished.

17. The declaration should also facilitate the social changes which would make it possible to do away with inequalities in the economic, social and cultural spheres, and to guarantee such fundamental human rights as the right to work and to a just remuneration of work along with the final and complete elimination of unemployment, the right to participate in all decisions on economic and social problems in the administration of enterprises and in the economy in general, the right to free education at all levels, the right to free medical services and to social security covering sickness, old age, disability and so on. The declaration should also specify the methods by which social

^{1/} Document E/CN.5/412.

development could be achieved, taking into account, among them, the general scientific planning of social and economic development.

18. She suggested that all proposals and opinions on the subject put forward at the current session should be summarized by the Secretariat for transmittal to the Commission for Social Development.

19. Her delegation had thought that the decision to reassess the activities of the Commission for Social Development would result in a drastic restructuring of the entire United Nations programme in the social sphere, and it deplored the fact that that had not occurred.

20. Many of the United Nations bodies concerned with social development were concentrating on secondary problems, which were often neither timely nor important for Member States. After dislodging the colonial system, many developing countries were faced by the need for economic and social reforms, for increasing the level of employment, ending illiteracy, and raising cultural and public-health standards. In her view, the main task in which the United Nations should be engaged was the determination of what measures the developing countries had to take in order to achieve rapid progress and eliminate the vestiges of colonialism.

21. With reference to the social situation in the Soviet Union, she pointed out that her country had solved such vital questions as the guaranteed right to work, the complete elimination of unemployment, free education at all levels, old-age and disability pensions without exception, and all that had been accomplished in a half century of changes despite foreign intervention, civil war and the devastation of the Second World War. Technical progress had been accompanied by great advancement in the development of the individual, which was shown by the high level of education and culture. In the field of health, all institutions functioned at the expense of the State budget, and medical services were provided free of charge. Social security embraced a whole range of measures for the protection of the citizens' material well-being. The high level of social development was due to the economic changes that had taken place; for the first time in history all natural resources and the principal means of production had become the property of the people. The basic task in the construction of socialism had been industrialization, which constituted the necessary foundation for strengthening the country's economic independence. The success of the programme was due to the fact that it was guided at all times by the fundamental goals of socialism, which were the satisfaction of the social needs and the improvement of the well-being of the workers. Thus, the real income of industrialized workers had increased by 660 per cent since 1913 and that of farmers by 850 per cent, thanks to the planning of the economy, which had made possible the uninterrupted progress of the whole system without depressions and with full employment. Planning had also made it possible to determine the best relations between, and the most rational distribution of, the labour force and the country's material and financial resources. The system of planning was continuously being improved and the latest reforms were aimed at strengthening

economical procedures in administration, improving State planning and expanding the independence and initiative of enterprises. One of the main problems was the construction of housing to meet the needs of the population. The scale and speed of construction made the Soviet Union one of the world's leaders in that field: in the last ten years almost half the population had been given new or improved housing.

22. A half century before, her country had decided to end its economic backwardness and to dedicate itself to the improvement of society. The October Revolution had been the beginning of a period of transition from capitalism to socialism not only in her country but also throughout the world, and the road it had pointed out had been followed by a number of countries. The old colonial world had been replaced by more than seventy independent States, which were trying to initiate the process of economic and social development, and one of the main tasks of the United Nations bodies concerned was to help them to solve their problems. She believed that the new trends in social development should be reflected in the activities of those bodies, which could and should deal with living conditions and how to improve them, by going more deeply into such matters as equitable distribution of the national income, utilization of domestic resources, functions of the government sector, elimination of illiteracy and unemployment, and free education and health services.

23. In her opinion the United Nations should study and draw conclusions of general significance from the development experience of industrialized countries, especially those which had solved social problems.

24. Mr. TSAO (China), after noting that, with its new mandate and its enlarged membership, the Commission for Social Development was making a meaningful contribution, said his delegation endorsed the statements of the Argentine and Philippine representatives that the draft declaration on social development should emphasize the dignity and worth of the human person. It had often been said that economic and social development should go hand in hand, but the fact should not be overlooked that the ultimate goal of economic development was still the well-being of the individual person. The Chinese delegation hoped that the Working Party which was to meet early in 1968 to examine the draft declaration, would bear that point in mind.

25. Another important subject discussed by the Commission for Social Development had been the greater use of the United Nations Development Programme for social development. His delegation shared the view of the Commission, but it wished to point out that assistance from UNDP was based upon requests from Governments and it was therefore essential that they should ascertain their needs and determine their priorities before seeking international assistance. That applied not only to UNDP projects but also to the assistance programmes of other United Nations bodies, such as UNICEF, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the specialized agencies.

26. As to the forthcoming Conference of Ministers responsible for Social Welfare, the Chinese delegation felt that it should not limit itself to exchanging

information and experience but should also deal with the problems encountered in social development and the best ways of utilizing international resources to that end; furthermore, its findings should serve as guidelines for national development and for United Nations work programmes.

27. With reference to the work programmes of the Commission for Social Development and the corresponding Division of the Secretariat, he said that a balance should be maintained between the formulation of policy and the implementation of programmes, and efforts should be aimed at direct assistance to the developing countries. In conclusion, he suggested that future reports on the world social situation should include conclusions and recommendations, particularly on what Governments could do to achieve the goals of social progress and on the possible ways in which the United Nations family could best assist in that process.

28. Mr. KADIJK (Belgium) said that his delegation attributed great importance to the item under discussion and the social aspect of development in general; he therefore deeply regretted that its discussion had not started earlier and that only four meetings were being devoted to it. In his view, if the Committee was to hold a fruitful discussion, it should have before it at each session a less ambitious report than that which was submitted every three years, drawn up along the lines of the annual reports of the European Economic Community on social development, which presented a summary of actual achievements in the social field without any interpretation or evaluation. While his delegation did not intend to make a formal proposal to that effect, it would like to hear the views of the other delegations and of the Secretariat on the

possibility of studying the world social situation more systematically.

29. With regard to the draft declaration on social development, his delegation believed that what was needed was not a series of grandiloquent sentences, but a document which could be applied by practically all Member States and which would provide guidance on varied aspects of development. For that reason, he endorsed the suggestion of the Italian representative that after being considered by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council the draft declaration should be submitted to Member States for their study and observations so as to facilitate its final consideration in the General Assembly.

30. Mrs. CABRERA (Mexico) felt that the decision to evaluate development programmes in five successive stages was a real achievement, for the world's development problems could not and should not be studied in isolation. She also felt that one of the basic problems was improvement in rural areas so as to stem the exodus from the countryside to the cities. Although the Committee did not have much time, she believed that four meetings were enough to discuss the item. In conclusion, she suggested as an acceptable draft resolution one which would recall General Assembly resolutions 1916 (XVIII) and 2035 (XX), endorse the main objectives and principles of the Commission for Social Development, and decide to give the item more deliberate consideration at the twenty-third session by devoting more meetings to it than at the present session.

The meeting rose at 5.5 p.m.