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Chairman: Mrs. Turkia OULD DADDAH
(Mauritania).

AGENDA ITEM 48

Draft Declaration on Social Progress and Development
(continued) (A/7235 and Add.1 and 2, A/7648, A/C.3/
L.1666)

PART II: OBJECTIVES

1. Mrs. NICOL (Sierra Leone) noted that the text of the draft Declaration prepared by the Commission for Social Development and submitted by the Economic and Social Council¹ was a perfectly adequate working document, but proposed the following changes in part II (see A/7648, annex II): in the introductory sentence, the word "social" after the word "main" should be deleted as redundant; in paragraph 1, the words "the raising of levels of nutrition" should be replaced by "the improvement of nutritional levels, particularly in developing countries"; paragraph 3 should be reworded to read:

"The achievement in all countries of the highest possible standards of health, the development and expansion of systems of preventive, curative and welfare medical services, and the provision of health protection and sanitation services for the entire population, if possible free of charge".

She also proposed that the order of paragraphs 2 and 3 should be reversed.

2. Mr. HJELDE (Norway) said, with regard to methods of work, that the Committee should consider part II of the draft Declaration paragraph by paragraph, and not as a whole, since that might lead to a reopening of the general debate on the item.

3. Mr. EVDOKKEEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed with the representative of France that the Committee had already spent too much time in discussing the subject and that the proceedings should therefore be

expedited. The best way of doing that would be to continue with the procedure that had been followed in considering part I, by studying each paragraph separately. He agreed with the representative of Norway on that point, since to discuss part II as a whole would cause confusion and might lead to a reopening of the general debate on the subject. Moreover, the Secretary-General had transmitted a copy of the draft Declaration to Governments for their comments, and none of the replies that had been received suggested a reformulation of the text.

4. Mr. PAOLINI (France) said he wished to make it clear that his intention, in proposing that part II should be discussed as a whole, had been in no way to encourage another general debate on the item but, rather, to indicate a suitable method for quickly completing the consideration of the draft Declaration. Moreover, the Committee's customary procedure, when working on such instruments, had always been to take as the starting point a preliminary text drafted by the appropriate functional bodies and, on that basis, to make the necessary modifications—sometimes very substantial ones—as was perfectly natural, since the membership of functional bodies was small and not as representative, geographically and politically, as that of the higher organs of the General Assembly.

5. The task confronting the Committee was difficult and complex, in that it involved the preparation of a document which must contain, along with essential legal elements, guidelines for social development. The complexity of the subject was apparent from the way in which social legislation had gradually taken shape as the result of successive demands and advances covering the most varied aspects of life.

6. The draft prepared by the Commission for Social Development gave a very full enumeration of all the facets of social progress that should be included in the Declaration. At the same time, it provided a tripartite structure which had its own merits. Although he had initially had some doubts about the inclusion of a part dealing exclusively with means and methods—a subject more appropriate to a convention than to a declaration—he appreciated that it would be very difficult to dispense with a reference of that kind, since social development depended, in the final analysis, on the means and methods used to attain it, so that it was quite as important to define them as to define the objectives.

7. It must be borne in mind, in enumerating the objectives, that the Committee had already formulated a number of principles and would later have to define the means and methods of achieving those objectives. The text of part II should therefore be brought into line stylistically with the statement of principles, and the same procedure

¹ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 5, annex I.

should again be followed; in that connexion, he recalled that some delegations, including his own, had proposed a grouping together of articles with a view to arriving at a clearer and more logical structure and avoiding unnecessary repetition. His delegation would be proposing, again with some other delegations, an amendment to part II as a whole relating not to the substance—since the text contained everything that was needed—but to the form and the presentation, in order to make them as coherent and concise as possible. That task would be simplified by the fact that a distinction could easily be established between two broad categories of objectives: some of an absolutely general nature consisting of the elimination of a number of obstacles to social development, and others that were of a specific nature, either because of the specific problems to which they pertained or because of the particular social category which they involved.

8. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy) supported the French delegation's suggestions, firstly, because she agreed with the reasons on which it based its position, and, secondly, because some of the objectives enumerated in part II of the draft Declaration were of a general and others of a specific nature but all of them pertained to the individual and not to the society as a whole, its structure or its functioning. It would therefore be appropriate to add, by way of introduction, a general text taking into account both categories of objectives. In addition, an introduction of that kind, which could be article 1, would establish a better balance between part I, relating to principles, and part II, which in its present form was perhaps too succinct. The introductory text might read as follows:

“Social progress and development depend on the organization and the functioning of society itself enabling all its members to fully develop physically, intellectually and professionally on the basis of equal opportunities for all without any discrimination and in a healthy human environment; to enjoy freedom of thought, expression and association; to democratically participate in civil and political life and in economic development.

“Specific objectives of social progress and development vary from country to country according to their historical, cultural, political and economic patterns and situations. They also vary according to changing needs and should therefore be continuously adapted according to the results of a systematic study of needs. In establishing specific objectives, special importance should be given to those institutions and services which mostly affect social progress and development, and to those sectors of the population whose development mostly contributes to social progress and development.

“In particular, social progress and development should aim at the progressive attainment of the following specific objectives:”.

9. She would submit that introduction as a formal amendment only if it met with a favourable response on the part of members of the Committee. She would therefore welcome the comments of other delegations on it. On the question of form, she said that part I should be taken as a model and the word “article” should be added before each paragraph of part II.

10. The CHAIRMAN drew attention, in connexion with the comment made by the representative of Italy, to document A/7648, paragraph 6, which indicated that the Third Committee had decided at the twenty-third session to insert the word “article” before each paragraph of the operative part of the draft Declaration. That decision therefore applied to part II, relating to objectives.

11. Mr. ARCHER (United Kingdom) said that he agreed with the French and Italian delegations. Instead of regarding the text which the Committee had before it as a final one, it would be appropriate, at the present stage of the discussion, to consider the desirability of changing the structure and general presentation of the draft Declaration, as well as the formulation of the individual articles. The goal should be a clear, precise and easily understandable text. The Committee must bear in mind that the draft Declaration was intended for the “Little Guy”; it was his interests that must be regarded and his problems that had to be solved. The “Little Guy” would surely want to be consulted concerning his needs and aspirations, and the Declaration must therefore provide for some channel of communication, some way of establishing contact. The little man would also wish to be informed of the privileges and benefits to which he was entitled. In countries like the United Kingdom, which had elaborate social security systems, there were many cases of persons who did not avail themselves of the benefits to which they were entitled simply because they were not aware of them. In addition, if a social development policy was to be really effective, the Government must have the power to implement and enforce it, even when it met with opposition from individuals. But for that very reason, it was necessary to ensure that individual rights were considered in the event of conflict. For that purpose, it was necessary to establish appropriate supervisory machinery. The detailed nature of such machinery might have to be considered when part III of the draft Declaration was taken up. But its existence was a matter of principle. On that point, the seminar held at Warsaw in August 1967,² put forward some extremely interesting ideas.

12. He would in due course be submitting some amendments, in the hope that they might serve as a basis for discussion.

13. Mr. WALDRON-RAMSEY (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the text which the Committee had before it was clear and simple and he saw no need to alter its basic structure or to combine or regroup articles, as had been suggested by other delegations. He had no criticism of the terminology, which was simple and direct. On the contrary, he thought that the chief merit of the present wording lay in its very simplicity and conciseness. The Italian proposal would over-burden the text and for that reason he might have difficulty supporting it, but he would not be able to take a definite stand on it until he saw it in writing. Referring to the observations made by other representatives, he said that when a State had social welfare machinery which functioned satisfactorily and met the social needs of the individual, it was unnecessary to

² For the report of the seminar, see *Seminar on the realization of economic and social rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (document ST/TAO/HR/31).

establish special contacts with that individual in order to keep him informed of the benefits to which he was entitled. The question of the establishment of supervisory machinery depended in the last analysis on the philosophy of each State.

14. He expressed the view that the primary social objective should be the elimination of the major evils afflicting modern society, namely colonialism, racism, discrimination and neo-colonialism and said that he would be prepared to submit an amendment to that effect.

15. Mr. JHA (India) welcomed the idea put forward by France and observed that there seemed to be a consensus to the effect that in considering the draft Declaration the Committee should adopt the method suggested by the French delegation. Although he had no objections to that method, he thought that the method whereby each article was considered separately also had its merits, since it would give greater weight and substance to the draft Declaration. It should be noted that the latter would probably be the most important text dealt with by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session. He agreed with the United Kingdom representative that the draft Declaration was addressed above all to the man in the street, a concept which should include the whole of the developing world.

16. Mr. CEAUSU (Romania) said that he thought the first sentence of part II of the draft Declaration should be of a general nature and should define the main objective of social development. He therefore would like to propose, together with the delegation of Mongolia, the following text:

“Social development shall aim at the continuous raising of the material and spiritual level of living of all members of society, on the basis of an equitable distribution of the products and benefits of economic progress, thus gradually ensuring the best possible conditions for the complete affirmation and development of the human personality in harmony with the interests of the whole nation of which it forms part.

“To that end, social progress and development shall also aim at the progressive attainment of the following main goals:”.

17. Mr. BABAA (Libya) said that he would like to resubmit the three amendments to part II of the draft Declaration on Social Progress and Development which his delegation had proposed during the forty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Council. The first amendment related to paragraph 1 and would replace the words “Freedom from” by the words “Elimination of” and would delete all the words after the word “malnutrition”. The second amendment would consist of the insertion in paragraph 4, after the words “working hours”, of the phrase “a compulsory minimum wage high enough to ensure decent living conditions”. In accordance with the last amendment, the words “Assurance of” would be inserted before the word “respect” in paragraph 12.

18. Mr. SANON (Upper Volta) said that he thought the Committee's main goal should be to draft a clear text which could be read and understood by all and, in particular, by

those groups to which it was addressed, namely the populations of the developing countries. Accordingly, it was essential to avoid the proliferation of amendments and sub-amendments which would unduly complicate the Committee's task and give rise to duplication of effort and prolong the date. He therefore suggested that delegations which intended to submit amendments should consult with each other before doing so. Also, representatives should read the preamble and part I of the draft Declaration carefully before considering the part relating to objectives, for the text under consideration was an indivisible whole which could not be properly evaluated unless it was viewed as such. That over-all view would also make it possible to avoid needless repetition of the same idea in various parts of the draft.

19. The Committee's decision to insert the word “article” before each paragraph of the operative part of the draft Declaration applied not only to the part concerning principles but also to that concerning objectives, and the numbering of the articles should not be interrupted. Consequently, paragraph 1 of part II should be renumbered article 10 and that sequence should be continued throughout the text.

20. Mr. NENEMAN (Poland) introduced an amendment (A/C.3/1666) to part II of the draft Declaration (see A/7648, annex II) which would replace the wording of paragraph 1 by the following: “Elimination of hunger and malnutrition and the guarantee of the right to proper nutrition.”

21. With regard to the first part of the proposed amendment, he said that he thought the term “elimination of” was preferable to “freedom from” because its meaning was more precise and it was commonly used in United Nations documents. With regard to the second part, he felt that in a text such as the one under consideration, which was obviously being drafted with future generations in mind, it was entirely appropriate to include the concept of the right to proper nutrition, which should become one of the fundamental human rights. The exercise of that right did not depend exclusively on the degree of prosperity or economic development of a country but also on its social policy, and it should therefore be included among the social goals to the attainment of which mankind aspired.

22. He would be unable to support the Italian amendment, not only because he considered, as did the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, that it would overburden the text but also because it seemed to him that it was unduly conservative, for it appeared to relate to the past rather than the future.

23. Mr. MOUSSA (United Arab Republic) said that the parts of the draft Declaration relating to objectives and means and methods constituted the corner-stone of the text and warranted the most careful study. Naturally it was desirable that the wording of part II should be clear and concise, as was the wording of the preamble and that of part I, but part II should also include a detailed enumeration of the evils of society which would be easily understandable to the man in the street and would reaffirm in some way the ideas set forth in the earlier parts of the text. The most appropriate solution would be to divide part

II into four or five articles which would cover all areas of social progress.

24. He therefore suggested a new formulation which would begin by establishing, in the first two articles, that the achievement of the goals of social progress was essential if the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms were to have validity, and that social development entailed the steady improvement of the material and cultural level of the population. The following article would enumerate the basic goals of humanity in the social sphere, namely the elimination of the major social evils, and the last two would indicate the economic and cultural conditions which would have to be met if true social development and progress were to be achieved. He intended to submit that wording as a formal amendment after consulting other delegations.

25. Mr. LEMAITRE (Colombia) said that in view of its purposes and nature it was essential that a declaration such as that which the Committee had before it should be brief and simple, for it was addressed to the man in the street. The Committee should therefore seek a formulation in which all the important ideas could be concentrated in the smallest possible number of articles. For that same reason, he saw no practical need for the Italian amendment, which

would unduly expand part II of the text by adding a lengthy introduction.

26. It was likewise essential to avoid redundancy and the repetition of ideas, as in the case of paragraph 4, which referred to both promotion of employment and the elimination of unemployment. Also, for the sake of brevity it might be possible to combine some paragraphs, such as paragraphs 10 and 11, which dealt with related matters.

27. He agreed with the French representative that the text should follow a logical sequence and move from the general to the particular. Obviously some objectives of social development were more important than others, and the most important of all, which should be dealt with in the first paragraph, was the elimination of poverty through international co-operation. That was the fundamental goal of the poor and developing countries, which hoped that their efforts to achieve industrialization would be supported by generous and well-thought-out assistance from the developed nations. As long as the latter continued to take from the developing world in the form of interest on loans more than they made available to it, declarations such as the Committee had before it would be worthless.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.