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President : Mr. A. PATIÑO (Colombia)

Present :

Representatives of the following States: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Senegal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yugoslavia.

Observers for the following Member States: Algeria, Greece, Ireland, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, United Arab Republic, Venezuela.

Observers for the following non-member States: Federal Republic of Germany, Holy See, Switzerland.

Representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization.

AGENDA ITEM 3

World social trends

(E/3769; E/CN.5/375 and Add.1 and 2; E/L.1010)

GENERAL DEBATE (*resumed from the 1282nd meeting*)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hajek (Czechoslovakia), Second Vice-President, took the chair.

1. Sir Samuel HOARE (United Kingdom) said that, apart from a few minor inaccuracies and the inadequacy of certain basic statistics, the *Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/375 and Add.1 and 2) was excellent. It showed clearly that balanced development was not easy and that many mistakes had been made. It would be shallow to attribute such mistakes simply to faulty planning. The overriding problem was lack of both national and international resources. As a result, countries had often to choose certain sectors for development at the expense of others, thus making it impossible to

maintain the necessary balance. Chapter I of the *Report* stressed the need for a better adaptation of educational systems to economic requirements. But there again, for financial reasons, countries had to choose between universal primary education and increased technical training. Many of them felt compelled to choose the first alternative. The *Report* in the penultimate paragraph of that chapter rightly stated that inadequacy of financial resources had been a principal obstacle to social advancement.

2. The *Report* also showed the close relationship between the various fields of social development. For example, it was desirable to combat the apathy to which the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs had referred at the 1282nd meeting, by means of community development, but it was difficult to bring about community development without some degree of land reform. It would be advisable therefore to tackle those problems jointly, although land reform required both capital expenditure and training, which again had financial implications.

3. Many of the difficulties of the developing countries lay in their basic social structures; for example, the absence of a middle class or, as mentioned in the chapters dealing with Latin America, the failure in some instances of the middle class to provide dynamic leadership. The planning of social development on a large scale was a new task for the developing countries and it required both training and experience. Nothing less than a major structural transformation of the developing societies was needed and that could hardly be achieved without setbacks.

4. There were some encouraging features brought out in the *Report*, particularly as regards health and education. But in some sectors, especially housing, little progress had been made, mainly through lack of finance. And the chapters dealing with population trends cast a menacing shadow over the rest of the *Report*. Much more thought, both at the national and international level, would have to be given to that subject.

5. Mr. PAVLIK (Czechoslovakia) said that from the social point of view, the period 1950 to 1960 had been marked by the rising hopes of mankind rather than by tangible results.

6. The social problems of the countries of North America and western Europe were due to considerable differences in living levels, the plight of many aged persons, unemployment, juvenile delinquency and the psychological

tension caused by urbanization and the fear of war. On the other hand, the socialist countries, although not free from problems, enjoyed social stability and an expansion of social services made possible by rapidly expanding production.

7. The *Report* presented a rather sombre picture, particularly as regards the developing countries. Despite a certain improvement in public health and education, no progress had been made in those countries in respect of personal income, consumption, employment, housing, food supplies and nutrition. The *Report* showed that it was precisely in the countries with the lowest national income that development was the slowest. It also confirmed that, as regards living levels, the gap between the advanced and the developing countries was widening.

8. The prerequisite for accelerated social development was an increase in national per caput income through intensified industrialization and agrarian reform. The *Report* seemed to minimize the role of industrialization and of general economic progress as conditions of social development; on the other hand, it overrated factors, such as population growth, which were not decisive. Social development was intimately linked to economic development, since the latter provided the resources for the former. The *Report* contained ideas on the planning of balanced economic and social development. In that connexion, the establishment of planning institutes to operate under the regional economic commissions should prove very fruitful. Czechoslovakia was prepared to make its experience with the integrated planning of economic and social development available to all interested countries.

9. The fair distribution of national income was essential for balanced economic and social development. The United Nations should give greater attention to that matter in the preparation of its reports on the world social situation and in specific studies of social development.

10. It was difficult to obscure the responsibility of colonialism for under-development by a reference to such facts as the disproportionate growth of population in the developing countries. It should be recognized that an improvement in the social situation in those countries depended on total decolonialization and on certain fundamental changes in their economic structure. The efforts of neo-colonialists who advocated the retention of defective economic structures in the developing countries even after their independence should be opposed.

11. The task to be accomplished was mainly one for the developing countries themselves, but the advanced countries had the moral duty to assist them. The experience of countries which had solved their main social problems in a relatively short time could be particularly useful to the developing countries. The United Nations was still paying too little attention to that aspect.

12. The social situation in the world and particularly in the developing countries could not be rapidly improved without general and complete disarmament. Czechoslovak experts had calculated that one-eighth of the annual

military expenditure of the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries over a period of ten years would be enough to pay for school buildings in Asia and Africa to accommodate 257 million pupils. His delegation welcomed the resolution 4 (XV) on the social consequences of disarmament adopted by the Social Commission (E/3769, para. 35) and hoped that the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the regional commissions and the specialized agencies, would submit to the Council specific proposals for the study of special aspects of the problem.

13. The development of international trade could also play an important role in social progress, particularly by guaranteeing work and wages to the large number of unemployed in the capitalist countries. It could also improve social conditions in the developing countries. By the export of industrial equipment to those countries, Czechoslovakia was helping to create new jobs and to train technical cadres. But markets for the resulting manufactures should also be provided. One of the functions of the Conference on Trade and Development would be to identify the long-term trends in international trade. Czechoslovakia was in a position to contribute to the objectives of the Conference because of the planned extension of its markets, which would absorb manufactured and semi-manufactured goods, as well as raw materials, from the developing countries.

14. The *Report* was useful in that it called upon Member States to give serious attention to the important problems it described, and his delegation approved of the suggestion made in the Social Commission that the *Report* should be the subject of a separate discussion in the General Assembly (*ibid.*, para. 15).

15. Fundamental rights and freedoms should be fully safeguarded, since only free men could carry out their creative plans. Consequently, every effort should be made to abolish all forms of discrimination, particularly that based on race or colour, and to oppose any attempt to revive fascism. The campaign of extermination waged by the Iraq Government against the Kurdish people was a recent example of the way in which rights and liberties could be trodden underfoot. It amounted to genocide and could also have serious economic repercussions for the people of Iraq. It was therefore regrettable that the Council had not seen fit to deal with the matter, although it fell within its competence.

16. Mr. DUCCI (Italy), welcoming the *Report*, considered the technique of dealing with economic and social problems together from both the sectoral and regional points of view to be excellent. While the world social situation could not be called satisfactory, the fear and discouragement voiced in the Council were not justified. Although the gulf between the levels of living of certain countries had widened, the means were greater and the will stronger to bridge the gulf. There was a growing understanding of the need for educating the masses, a more scientific approach to social problems, an effort to co-ordinate different national legislations, better regional planning, self-management programmes in community development — in short, a growing awareness of the human interrelationship.

17. Health and education were the fields to which most countries traditionally devoted most of their care and money and which had shown greater progress than such more recently recognized sectors as social security, social service and housing. Even so, the United Kingdom representative had expressed the view that progress in education had been more pronounced with respect to quantity than quality. That was a matter which only time and unremitting effort could remedy. With respect to health, better care had nearly doubled the span of human life in some areas in less than a century. In that connexion, his delegation had been particularly interested in the informative study of population growth in chapter I of the *Report* and wholeheartedly subscribed to the statement that no universal generalization could be laid down regarding the favourable or unfavourable effect of population growth upon economic growth.

18. Although balanced economic and social development had not yet been achieved, the interdependence of the two aspects was becoming more widely recognized. His delegation sincerely hoped that increasing attention would be given to the social aspects of economic development in all United Nations bodies.

19. Mr. P. BARTON (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions), speaking at the invitation of the President, welcomed the emphasis laid in the *Report* on social structure and not only on social welfare. There had been far too much stress on economic and capital investment while the social changes that must accompany them had been neglected. In many newly independent countries, for example, capital investment had tended to aggravate the economic problems inherited from the colonial era by financing industries that operated more or less outside society and did nothing to better their conditions.

20. Industrialization was not merely a matter of enormous urban agglomerations and large-scale industries; it was also necessary to develop smaller towns and further medium and small-scale industries which could establish the missing links between the traditional and the modern sectors of the economy. Comprehensive programmes must be adopted in such vital fields as vocational training, housing and wages. The role of the trade unions was not to mobilize the support of the workers for development programmes, or even to serve as a vehicle for their demands, but rather to provide them with a means of asserting their own status in society, particularly in the developing countries.

21. Finally, chapter VIII of the *Report* alluded to a country whose government had already been condemned by the ILO for not allowing its trade unions to be free. There were also certain discrepancies in the section dealing with wages, which the ILO had promised to clarify.

22. Mr. BOGLIETTI (World Federation of Trade Unions), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that the most striking social development of the past decade was the achievement of independence by a large

number of countries. The participation in social and political life of the millions of inhabitants of those countries was a further contribution to mankind's common struggle for social and economic progress and had already brought about changes in the international political scene. At the same time, ever-increasing numbers of workers had for the first time the opportunity of changing the economic and social structures of their countries. It was regrettable that those facts had not been given due prominence in the *Report*. An understanding of that trend would have prevented the authors of the *Report* from describing the lack of diversity in the agriculture of the developing countries as a "misfortune", when it was a consequence of colonialism and was being prolonged by those countries' continued dependence on monopolies.

23. A study of the world social situation brought home the generally recognized importance of planning in social development. The *Report* made particular reference to the planning of labour supply. But it was impossible to plan one sector of society — especially labour supply — while leaving intact the structure which dominated the entire social and economic life of a country and so long as investment policy remained in the hands of monopolies or of a feudal minority.

24. One of the objectives of the workers' efforts over the past few years was to win security of employment. In some socialist and semi-socialist countries, that had been done by a radical transformation of the system. The Ford Company's collective agreements in the United States, the benefits obtained by the Italian trade unions and other social gains, were all directed at protecting one of the fundamental human rights, the right to work, which was still merely theoretical for millions of workers. At the international level, the first step had been the adoption by the forty-seventh International Labour Conference of recommendation No. 119 concerning termination of employment at the initiative of the employer. That recommendation provided for priority of re-engagement, and laid down that the re-engaged worker should continue to enjoy all his previous rights and advantages. The World Federation, which had helped to secure the adoption of the recommendation, regarded it as an issue of major importance in an age in which the rapid development of science and technology led to unemployment which, in many capitalist countries, was superimposed on chronic structural under-employment. The consequences of that trend were especially dire for workers aged 40 to 45, unskilled workers and young people seeking their first job. An inquiry carried out by his organization in conjunction with UNESCO revealed the particular difficulties experienced by girls in finding employment consistent with their qualifications.

25. The *Report* also dealt with the relationship between social security and the social services. The idea of social services still seemed somewhat confused. The suggestion made by his organization at the thirty-fourth session of the Council had been adopted in part by the Social Commission and the matter was to be studied by a group of experts. The World Federation was therefore awaiting the outcome of the study in which it had proposed that

international trade union organizations should take part. It should be borne in mind that social security was a social right of all those who lived by their own work. His organization regarded it as its responsibility to uphold the interests of social workers, and particularly to prevent their becoming victims of conflicts of competence between one ministry and another.

26. Trade unionism was a growing force and had established its undeniable right to share in all activities aimed at promoting economic independence and economic and social development, the indispensable basis of any democratic society.

The meeting rose at 5.5 p.m.