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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, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, United Arab Republic.

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

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

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Request by the USSR for the inclusion in the agenda of the thirty-sixth session of an additional item (E/3809)

1. Mr. ARKADIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had addressed a letter (E/3809) to the President requesting the inclusion in the agenda of the current session a new item entitled "Policy of genocide which is being pursued by the Government of the Republic of Iraq against the Kurdish people". In submitting its request, the USSR delegation had been guided by the provisions of Article 62 of the Charter, and of General Assembly resolution 96 (I) of 11 December 1946 on the crime of genocide. To its letter of request the

USSR delegation had attached a memorandum setting forth facts which confirmed that a policy of genocide was being pursued by the Iraqi Government against the Kurdish people. At the same time, the Soviet Government had addressed communications to the Governments of Iraq, Iran and Syria on the same question, giving the relevant facts of the case and proving that the matter had acquired serious international significance and should be drawn to the attention of United Nations organs.

2. In view of its international significance, the problem should be examined in the Economic and Social Council, for it was directly linked with the problems which came within the Council's competence, and with the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which the Council had prepared. Moreover, the Council already had a number of items relating to human rights on its agenda.

3. The Soviet Union had been compelled to urge that the item should be included in the Council's agenda because at that time brutal reprisals were being conducted by the Iraqi authorities against the Kurdish people, who comprised nearly a quarter of the population of Iraq. Large-scale military action was being taken against peaceful Kurdish towns and villages; troops supported by aircraft, tanks and artillery were gradually exterminating the civilian population, including children, women and old people; vast areas were being laid waste and large numbers of civilians were being driven from their homes.

4. Some might say that those data were available only to the Soviet Government, but that was not the case: the events had been publicized so widely that factual information could be obtained not only from official statements of the Soviet Government and from the Soviet press, but from such international newspapers as *Le Monde*, which bore out the Soviet statements in a leading article in its issue of 11 July, and the *New York Herald Tribune*, 10 July, which reported that three divisions, or 60 per cent of the Iraqi army, were conducting a merciless campaign against the Kurds, wiping Kurdish villages from the face of the earth with tanks, bulldozers and napalm bombs.

5. That was why the Soviet delegation had hastened to call the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the question, in order that the Council should use all its authority and influence to ensure that those merciless and brutal actions should be terminated forthwith. The Council was one of the main organs of the United Nations: it was responsible for the preparation of many highly important documents designed to secure human rights; it had been responsible for preparing the Conven-

tion on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; it had set up special functional commissions on various aspects of human rights; and it annually discussed the problems concerned at a high level, on the basis of documentation covering many of the countries of the world. Accordingly, the Council could not possibly ignore the facts to which its attention had been drawn by the Soviet delegation, which was convinced that the Council would include the item in its agenda, would examine it with all the attention it deserved and would take an equitable decision in the spirit of the draft resolution annexed to the Soviet memorandum. By adopting that draft resolution, the Council would undoubtedly serve the cause of peace, justice and humanity, which was the cause of the United Nations.

6. Mr. NEHRU (India) said he had listened to the statement of the Soviet Union representative with great attention and respect. He appreciated some of the arguments adduced and the legal and other points that had been raised. However, legality apart, there were other considerations which should be kept in view. India enjoyed friendly relations with the Government and people of Iraq. That friendship was not a recent one; it had its roots in the past and was valued accordingly. Naturally therefore, any conflict and any difficulties Iraq might be experiencing were a matter of concern to his country. It was undeniable that a conflict existed — a purely internal conflict — and because of the friendly relations between the two countries, India was concerned about it.

7. However, in dealing with such matters affecting a friendly country, there had to be some objective in view. The Indian objective was to help in promoting a peaceful atmosphere conducive to a peaceful settlement. The passing of resolutions condemning one side or the other would be of no help in creating such an atmosphere. It was India's desire and hope that the Government and people of Iraq would be able to overcome their difficulties. He was aware that they wished to avoid conflict, to solve their problems peacefully and to devote themselves to the great task of internal construction and development which was the principal task of all the Afro-Asian countries, including India.

8. Bearing those considerations in mind, he felt that a debate on the question should be avoided. Irrespective of legal and other considerations, and because of India's desire to help in promoting an atmosphere which would lead to reconciliation and peace rather than to bitterness and recrimination, his delegation was unable to support the Soviet proposal. He appealed to the Soviet delegation to reconsider its initiative. The objective should be the promotion of peace rather than the aggravation of difficulties.

9. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan) said that, as the Council was engaged in discussing a question of procedure, he did not propose to follow the example of the USSR representative and discuss the substance of the matter at that stage. Nor did he intend to discuss any of the fantastic accusations made by the Soviet Union. He would confine his comments to the procedural aspects of the matter and

hoped that the President, in his wisdom, would not permit any irrelevant matter to be introduced into the discussion.

10. The prior question to be decided, before discussing the possibility of revising the agenda, was whether the item proposed came within the Council's competence. His delegation had carefully scrutinized the submissions of the Soviet Union in document E/3809 and had listened attentively to the statement of its representative. It would be failing in its duty if it did not remind the Council that the serious accusations made by the Soviet Union were undoubtedly outside the Council's competence.

11. There was no case of genocide being committed in Iraq. When any group or small segment of a population deemed fit, at foreign instigation of one kind or another, to defy law and order, it was the sovereign right of the State concerned to take adequate measures for the preservation of law and order. Such security measures fell squarely within the sphere of domestic jurisdiction. He would refrain from citing examples in support of that point because the Soviet representative, he was sure, was well aware of those he had in mind. Suffice it to refer to Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter, which laid down that nothing contained in the Charter should authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

12. The Soviet representative had made several references to the Convention on Genocide, but, as all were aware, the Convention itself specified the action to be taken. Under article IX, disputes relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Convention should be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute. The most that the Soviet Union could claim was that a dispute existed; but even if, for the sake of argument, that were accepted, the remedy did not lie with the Council. The question therefore arose why the Soviet Union was not seeking the remedy specified by the Convention and why the Soviet representative had not even referred to the relevant article. The answer was simple. Throughout the whole process of drafting the Convention, the Soviet Union had opposed international jurisdiction as an infringement upon the sovereignty of the State. That being so, one might ask whether it was open to the Soviet representative to convert the Council into a court and require from it what amounted to a judgement on matters not within its competence.

13. The Council was not a judicial body competent to entertain accusations of the kind. It possessed neither the judicial nor other powers required to consider or even discuss such absurd charges. It had never been part of the Council's functions to investigate measures taken by Member States against rebel groups for the purpose of keeping law and order.

14. The USSR representative had adduced Article 62 of the Charter in support of the Soviet action. There was no question of the Council being given the right under Article 62 to entertain complaints of that kind and assume functions not delegated to it by the General Assembly. The drafters of the Charter had never intended that the Council should be given the right to judge the policies of Member States.

15. The request of the Soviet Union had no precedent in the history of the Council. His delegation hoped the Council would take firm and resolute action in the matter. The Council could not and should not take lightly the fantastic charges that had been made; but it should reject the Soviet request forthwith.

16. Mr. HAJEK (Czechoslovakia) said that the arguments brought forward by the Indian and Jordanian representatives had not convinced him of the soundness of their attitude on the question at issue. The facts quoted by the Soviet delegation — which were indeed reported daily in the world press — proved that the acts in question were of the kind referred to in article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Repression of the Crime of Genocide.

17. Referring to article IX of the Convention, the Jordanian representative had contested the Council's competence in the matter; but article VIII laid down that "Any contracting party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III." Moreover, Articles 55 and 60 in Chapter IX of the Charter were sufficient proof that the Soviet Union was perfectly right in bringing to the notice of the competent United Nations body — namely, the Council — a question which related in substance to acts of genocide, and in requesting the Council to take all appropriate steps to prevent such acts for the sake of the innumerable human lives that were at stake and in the interests of mankind as a whole. The Czechoslovak delegation accordingly supported the Soviet proposal so far as concerned both procedure and substance.

18. Mr. ARKADIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the representative of Jordan was obviously using procedural tactics in an attempt to circumvent action by the Council on a matter that was of the utmost gravity and urgency; possibly his main interest lay in procedural matters and he was not concerned about the probability that while he was talking hundreds of thousands of Kurds were falling victims to the Iraqi Government's bloodthirsty policy of genocide. The representative of Jordan had spoken of "fantastic accusations" by the Soviet Union. But even if it should be the case that the Soviet statements stood alone, they had been made with a full sense of responsibility; and the Council would not be entitled to pass over the matter in silence. The fact was, however, that the Soviet evidence was fully substantiated by the world press and by representatives of the Kurdish people. There could be no doubt as to the facts, and he therefore failed to understand the peculiar zeal with which the representative of Jordan was trying to stop the Council from taking action to protect the Kurdish people. If the idea was to demonstrate Arab solidarity, he would point out that there was a broader solidarity which took precedence over it, the solidarity of all the peoples of the world. It was the Jordanian delegation which should think again and desist from closing its eyes to the situation in Iraq.

19. The Indian representative's expression of sympathy for and understanding of the motives which had prompted the Soviet Union to raise the Kurdish question was not enough. Of all the members of the Council, the representative of India should be able to go beyond mere understanding, since, year after year in the General Assembly, the Government of India had been seeking redress for the acts of aggression and genocide committed against people of Indian descent by the Republic of South Africa. The Soviet Union had consistently given full support to those legitimate efforts to prevent the extermination of Indian people in South Africa, and he failed to understand why Soviet attempts to protect the Kurdish people in similar circumstances were not receiving full Indian backing. That was a failure in humanity and justice, and was tantamount to giving the Government of Iraq India's blessing in pursuing its path of crime.

20. The Government of Iraq was undoubtedly well aware of the fact that the shameful acts it was committing were condemned by all the peoples of the world, including the peoples of the Soviet Union. The bloody repression of the Kurdish people could but weaken the status of Iraq in the world, as well as the status of Arab solidarity. The representative of Jordan should bear those considerations in mind and should ask himself whether he was in fact acting in the interests of the Arab world as a whole.

21. The arguments adduced from the Convention on Genocide were untenable. Article IX dealt with a technical matter: the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. The Soviet Union did not recognize the jurisdiction of the International Court, and its stand on that matter was already well known. What was of real importance was for the Council to bear in mind the provisions of article VIII, under which any party to the Convention had the right to apply to the competent organs of the United Nations. It was in exercise of that right and in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter that the Soviet Union was applying to the Council, as a main organ of the United Nations, to take appropriate action on the Kurdish question forthwith. The matter was one of extreme urgency, and the Council could not disclaim responsibility on purely procedural grounds; should it follow that course, it would be exposing itself to world opprobrium for failure to step in and put an end to the shameful acts of the Iraqi Government.

22. For its part, the Soviet Union would not be content to let a matter of such gravity lapse, but would, in the event of the Council's failing to act, bring it to the attention of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations. Indeed, steps in that direction had already been taken by the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic. Justice would triumph in the end; and world opinion in general, and as represented in the United Nations, would undoubtedly rise in support of the Kurdish people and condemn the Government of Iraq for the policy of genocide it was practising.

23. The Council was well aware of its competence to deal with the Kurdish question, as in the past it had dealt with many other cases involving human rights and the rights of peoples. If the Council was competent to draw up a

convention on genocide, there could be no question but that it had the authority to take action where a specific case had arisen.

24. Mr. WAKWAYA (Ethiopia) said that, when at the 1267th meeting the Soviet delegation had first raised the Kurdish question under agenda item 12, his delegation had on purely procedural grounds abstained from the vote then taken. Ethiopia attached great importance to prompt action on genocide whenever and wherever that crime against humanity raised its head; and also believed that the Council had a duty to take up such cases. It was regrettable that, despite continuing appeals, the Council had failed to take action year after year on the proven cases of genocide against the native population, as practised by Portugal in Angola and by the Republic of South Africa.

25. It was hard, however, to determine whether or not the events in Iraq constituted a case of genocide. The Council was not in possession of all the relevant facts on which to base a valid judgement. His delegation would therefore prefer that consideration of the Kurdish question be deferred until enough information was available. He accordingly supported the Jordanian view that at the moment the Council was not competent to take the matter up.

26. The question was so important that in the opinion of his delegation the Council should have an item relating to genocide on its agenda each year.

27. Mr. HAJEK (Czechoslovakia) noted that the Ethiopian representative approved the Council's dealing with questions of genocide when the population of Angola and the African population of South Africa were concerned; and the Czechoslovak delegation also approved of that. In those circumstances, however, it was difficult to see why the Council should not take up a case of genocide, the facts of which were reported daily by the great news agencies and by influential newspapers, not to mention the Kurdish population itself. A negative attitude by the Council in the case under consideration would amount to discrimination against the Kurdish people; and that would certainly not enhance the Council's prestige. The Council was fully competent to intervene, and it was in duty bound to do so in fulfilment of its mission as laid down by the United Nations Charter. He insisted that the Soviet proposal should be treated seriously and not rejected by what might be called a mechanical vote. The problem was one which could not be solved by a vote; it would be solved by history, and the Council was responsible to history and would be judged by the manner in which it had interpreted its responsibilities.

28. Mr. NEHRU (India), denying the charge of inconsistency levelled against India by the USSR representative, said that when a similar question had been raised in the General Assembly two years before in connexion with Tibet, the Indian delegation had taken exactly the same stand as it was taking then. For India, the supreme test in such cases was whether or not its action in the United Nations would be conducive to helping the

people concerned and assisting a friendly State in overcoming the difficulties it was facing.

29. With regard to Indians in South Africa, he would remind the Soviet representative that it was only after more than ten years of effort to solve the problem by peaceful means had failed that India had resorted to other methods.

30. Mr. ARKADIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he failed to understand the Indian representative's point; the Soviet Union was seeking none other than the use of peaceful means, through immediate action by the Council, to induce the Iraqi Government to put an end to its military operations against the Kurds. That indeed would be the most peaceful means of all to settle a situation of strife.

31. He could not but challenge the premises of the Ethiopian representative, whose proposal for deferment was an astounding one, lacking in all logic. Surely the Ethiopian representative could not think that the Council should sit with hands folded until such time as evidence was forthcoming that the Iraqi Government had succeeded in its criminal object of exterminating the Kurdish people! That would be a shameful attitude, and he appealed to the Ethiopian representative to reconsider his position and take an energetic stand for immediate action.

32. A most odd feature of the discussion was that the main countries responsible for the maintenance of the peace of the world, the permanent members of the Security Council, had failed thus far to take any stand on the Soviet proposal. Their apparent decision that silence was the most appropriate course was indeed unwise and might be open to misconstruction. Every member of the Council, not only the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, ought to be interested in stopping the bloodshed in Iraq. He would therefore be glad to hear the views of the world leaders he had mentioned and of all other members of the Council on the matter.

33. Mr. WAKWAYA (Ethiopia) explained that his delegation fully supported the opinion of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia that genocide was a matter of concern to the Council. His point, however, was that the Council could take no such stand as that advocated in the Soviet draft resolution until the facts concerning the Kurdish question were fully established.

34. Mr. HAJEK (Czechoslovakia), replying to the Ethiopian representative, observed that what the Soviet delegation had requested was precisely that the question be placed on the Council's agenda so that it could be examined in the light of the facts available. It would be easy to prove that the acts in question involved crimes of genocide. After what the Ethiopian representative had said about the crime of genocide, it seemed somewhat illogical on his part to claim that the Council could not deal with such matters. He appealed to the Ethiopian representative to reconsider his position.

35. Mr. ARKADIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed with the Ethiopian representative's view that the Council was competent to discuss the subject of

genocide in connexion with the policy being practised by the Portuguese Government against the African inhabitants of its colonies and by the Government of South Africa against Africans and persons of Indian origin in its territory. However, the Ethiopian representative had criticized the Soviet draft resolution on the grounds that it contained an *a priori* condemnation of the Government of Iraq. If the Ethiopian representative wished to investigate conditions on the spot, he was at liberty to do so; the trouble was that he might be too late. He was surprised at that representative's negative approach to the question, and at his reluctance to be persuaded that genocide was in fact taking place in Iraq when that was asserted to be indeed the case by such reputable newspapers as *Le Monde* and the *New York Herald Tribune* as well as in statements by the Government of the USSR. Perhaps the Ethiopian representative would be able to support the operative paragraph of the Soviet draft resolution, even if he did not agree with the preamble; the USSR delegation's purpose would be served by the adoption of the operative paragraph alone.

36. Mr. DUCCI (Italy) said that his delegation had studied the Soviet memorandum carefully and that its attention had been particularly drawn to the passage which referred to the oppression of the Kurds under the Kasseem regime. Apparently, the Iraqi Government had been ill-treating the Kurdish people for a number of years, and yet the Soviet Government had not referred to its actions as genocide until quite recently. The Italian Government wondered whether the different political outlook of the present Iraqi Government had not had something to do with that change of attitude. The Soviet Union was now applying to different organs of the United Nations and making representations to various governments; the Mongolian People's Republic had asked that the question be placed on the agenda of the General Assembly, and the President of the Security Council had been warned of the threat to peace which those events might represent. He agreed with the Ethiopian representative that not enough information was available to decide on the spot whether a policy of genocide was indeed being pursued in Kurdistan. Furthermore, he did not think the Council was competent to deal with the matter; for he interpreted Article 62, paragraph 2, of the Charter to mean that the Council could make recommendations only on matters of principle, and not deal with individual cases. That view however, was without prejudice to what Italy's attitude would be on the substance of the question should it come before the General Assembly or any other competent organ.

37. Mr. ARKADIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), replying to the Italian representative, said that his delegation, unlike certain others, could not ignore the fate of the Kurds, who were threatened with extermination. As for the earlier military action against the Kurdish people to which the Italian representative had referred, it had been followed by a definite respite, but repression had recently been renewed on a much larger scale. It was perfectly clear to all that the Kurds were being threatened with genocide, and that was the basic fact with which the Council should be concerned. Some members, however,

were trying to evade responsibility by reducing the issue to a question of the Council's competence; their arguments were unconvincing, for the Charter itself explicitly stated that the Council should deal with such matters as they arose; that clear directive could not be nullified by the personal opinions expressed by various delegations. Moreover, his delegation did not by any means consider that the actions of the Economic and Social Council always conformed with the duties laid down for the Council in the Charter. Among many other examples, he could cite the recent case in which the Council had failed to confirm a resolution of ECA excluding Portugal and South Africa from membership of the Commission. The western Powers, which wielded undue influence in the Council, had once again on that occasion brought about a violation of the Charter, and they seemed about to do the same in the case of the policy of genocide being practised by the Iraqi Government against the Kurdish people. The representatives of those States should, however, bear in mind that their action would certainly not enhance their reputation in the eyes of world public opinion.

38. The PRESIDENT put to the vote the USSR proposal to include in the agenda of the current session an additional item entitled "Policy of genocide which is being pursued by the Government of the Republic of Iraq against the Kurdish people".

At the request of the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a vote was taken by roll call.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, whose name was drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Czechoslovakia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Colombia, El Salvador, France, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan.

Abstaining: Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, Senegal.

The USSR proposal was rejected by 13 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions.

39. Mr. DUPRAZ (France), speaking in explanation of his vote, said that, of the arguments advanced in the statements that had been made, his delegation considered that the most relevant ones were those which had dealt with the question from the point of view of the applicable rules and legal provisions, and hence from the point of view of the Council's competence.

40. His delegation, which had had those considerations in mind when it voted, was even of the opinion that no vote need have been taken, for the Council had never had anything to do with problems of that kind, any more than had the Commission on Human Rights, which drafted general principles, but which did not deal with particular cases.

41. Several speakers had pointed out that the matter had been brought before the United Nations political authorities. By voting as it did, his delegation had also wished

once more to emphasize its view that it was not one of the Council's duties to deal with matters of a political nature.

42. Mr. GUZINA (Yugoslavia) said his delegation could not but condemn the use of force by the Government of Iraq and the launching of military operations which had already resulted in loss of life among the Kurds, and led to further serious aggravation of a problem that had been attracting the attention of world public opinion for a number of years. Nevertheless, his delegation had abstained from voting on the USSR proposal because, firmly adhering to the policy of solving disputes by peaceful means, it believed that constructive and patient negotiations, based on respect for mutual interests, was the only correct method conducive to a satisfactory solution of the Kurdish question within the framework of the Iraqi State.

43. Mr. WAKWAYA (Ethiopia) said he had abstained from voting on the proposal because the question of the competence of the Economic and Social Council in the particular matter of the actions of the Iraqi Government had been raised. His delegation considered that the Council was competent to hold a discussion on the general problem of genocide, but could not agree that the specific question raised by the Soviet Union fell within its competence, since there was some uncertainty as to whether genocide was really being committed.

44. Mr. BINGHAM (United States of America) said that his delegation's vote against the USSR proposal had been based not on the merits of the case, but on the procedural issue only. He did not consider that the Economic and Social Council was the appropriate forum for the consideration of that question at that time.

45. Mr. UNWIN (United Kingdom) said his delegation had voted against the proposal because it was convinced that the question at issue was a political matter, which did not fall within the competence of the Council. Moreover, a request had already been made for the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the eighteenth session of the General Assembly. Finally, the Council's agenda was already overloaded, and it seemed unjustifiable to add to it an item relating to a situation which had not arisen suddenly or recently.

46. Mr. HAJEK (Czechoslovakia) said he had voted for the inclusion in the agenda of the item proposed by the Soviet delegation, first because he thought the Economic and Social Council was fully competent to deal with a question of genocide, particularly at a time when the General Assembly was not in session; secondly, because information had been made publicly available concerning acts which were unquestionably acts of genocide, and which it was urgent to stop; and lastly, because he had wished to draw attention to the desirability of the Council's acting in accordance with the mission laid down for it in the United Nations Charter.

47. Mr. NEHRU (INDIA), explaining his delegation's vote against the proposal, said that the three questions which had emerged from the debate were questions of

law, fact and the correct and constructive approach to an internal conflict within a sovereign Member State of the United Nations. So far as the last question was concerned, his delegation was sure that it would be inadvisable to start by condemning the State involved. The most constructive approach would be first to ascertain the facts, so as to help Iraq to solve its internal problem by peaceful means.

48. Mr. ARKADIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), explaining his vote, said that, at a time when the Iraqi Government was conducting cruel reprisals against the peaceful and defenceless Kurdish population by means of artillery, tanks and aerial bombardment, the Economic and Social Council, as the United Nations organ currently in session, could not stand silently by while the crime of genocide was being perpetrated against a whole people. The Council was fully competent to examine the problem; and besides, it was not a question of competence — the real trouble was the reluctance of a number of the Council's member States to put an end to the extermination of the Kurdish people. The Soviet Union's reaction to the events in Iraq had been to propose that the Council censure the crime being perpetrated by the Iraqi Government and stop military action against a civilian population; and yet the Council had allowed the artificial arguments of certain representatives to prevail, thus preventing discussion of the subject during the session. But the voice of justice could not be stifled, and other organs of the United Nations would not turn a blind eye to the extermination of the Kurdish people. The Government of the Mongolian People's Republic had already drawn the attention of the United Nations to the matter; and other governments would undoubtedly do likewise. The Soviet Government had also warned the United Nations of the danger that the policy of the Iraqi Government was creating in the area inhabited by the Kurds. In any case, the Council's refusal to include such an important item in its agenda would not redound to its credit.

AGENDA ITEM 2

World economic trends

- (a) Surveys of the world economic situation (E/3761 and Add.1-3, E/3774; E/CN.12/659 and Add.1, E/CN.12/679, E/CN.12/680; E/ECE 93)
- (b) Economic projections and development planning (E/3764)

GENERAL DEBATE

49. The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider item 2 of the agenda, and recalled its decision at the thirty-fifth session that any speaker who wished to cover item 3, relating to world social trends, in his statement on item 2 was free to do so.

50. Mr. de SEYNES, Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs,¹ recalled that when the Council had begun the examination of the world economic situation at its

¹ The complete text of Mr. de Seynes's statement was issued as document E/L.1005.

resumed thirty-fourth session, it had been told why some of the documents concerning the agenda item in question could not be submitted to it in time. Since then, the publication of some other documents which the Council was entitled to have at its disposal in considering agenda item 2 had also been held up; he regretted those gaps in the documentation.

51. The keynote of his remarks would be the concept of planning, which played an increasingly important part in policy, both national and international. There were few countries at that time which did not put forward, if not a plan, at least a series of objectives expressed quantitatively, dealing with various aspects of equilibrium and growth, to which governments endeavoured to relate their current decisions.

52. The 1962 performance was less remarkable for the rather favourable trend of indices than for certain miscalculations in economic policy. Increased production in private enterprise of industrial countries had been accompanied in the United States by the continuance of surplus capacity and substantial unemployment; in western Europe by an acceleration of increase in prices and costs. In the Soviet Union, the rate at which the national product increased was only slightly lower than that recorded in the previous year, but in other planned economy countries there had been a considerable slowing down in the growth rate, attributable mainly to climatic conditions which seriously affected agricultural output. In the developing countries, despite world conditions favourable to commodity exports, the rate of expansion had slowed down in general, to some extent, as in the planned economy countries, due to the harm done to crops by the bad weather, but at the same time to the burden of external deficits accumulated in earlier years and to the exhaustion of foreign exchange reserves — or short-term indebtedness. Even in the context of satisfactory changes in economic conditions, that underlying state of affairs would in future limit the governments' room for manoeuvre in pursuing a growth policy.

53. The current year gave promise of distinctly better results in a large part of the world. In the United States, expansion was displaying renewed vigour, easily outstripping the progress made during the last months of 1962 and the proposed tax reductions should give it further impetus. In the planned economy countries, the targets established for 1963 reflected the determination to speed up aggregate growth, which was expected to come mainly from increased agricultural production.

54. In the less developed countries, current crops gave promise of much more satisfactory yields, and the prevailing trend in industrial countries should ensure larger markets. Above all, the prices of primary commodities, which had barely fluctuated in 1962, had shown surprising firmness. For the first three months of this year, they had been on average 3 per cent higher than those for the corresponding period of the previous year, and according to the most recent reports, the trend was still upwards. That development was to be welcomed; if it were confirmed, the reversal of the depressive trend which had been affecting markets for some years past would change economic development prospects for the better. However,

there was nothing at that stage to warrant the conclusion that that was in fact a long-term movement rather than a temporary phenomenon.

55. In that generally encouraging picture, some shadows still remained to temper optimism. While the imbalances noted earlier in the international payments situation had not become worse, there had been no appreciable improvement. The gap between external payments and receipts in the United States had been hardly reduced at all in 1962 and sterling continued to be periodically under pressure. Important measures of co-operation had been worked out between the monetary authorities of the great Powers, under the auspices of the late Per Jacobsson, Director-General of IMF, in order to strengthen the existing defences against sudden large capital movements. Because of that increased collaboration and the greater confidence which had ensued the key currency countries were more inclined to abandon their former reserve and to pursue expansionist policies. Admittedly, though, that new attitude had not so far been put to the test of a real threat to the balance of payments.

56. It was apparently in the perspective of the imbalances which affected in a recurrent manner the international payments system that the concept of an incomes policy had emerged in the private-enterprise industrial countries. A long period of stable prices in the United States, contrasting with growing costs in Europe, had given promise of further progress in United States exports, while western Europe was seriously concerned about its competitive position on world markets. The dilemma the industrial economies were faced with owing to those discrepancies in price movements was the more serious in that resort to certain solutions was currently generally ruled out. Restrictions on imports were contrary to the restored disciplines of international trade, and currency devaluation was usually — especially in the case of the key currencies — regarded as a last resort. Moreover, the conventional measures used to contain or reduce domestic demand and activity conflicted with the basic objectives of full employment and expansion. To ensure that changes in costs and prices did not markedly differ from the trends in competing countries, and somehow to reconcile external balance, price stability and full employment requirements, governments were led to adopt a policy aimed at controlling income formation and distribution, and at doing so within the framework of institutional arrangements that were very largely based on collective bargaining on wages.

57. The application of an incomes policy had almost nowhere passed beyond an embryonic stage. The main task consisted in calculating an over-all rate of increase in wages and salaries consistent with the increase of productivity. That amounted to defining a general objective rather than giving practical directives for the implementation of a policy. For there could be no question of applying such a simple and uniform rule to all sectors of the economy. That would merely result in maldistribution of labour. In fact, if a ceiling were to be maintained for the over-all rate of increase, then quite obviously the increase in some sectors must remain appreciably lower than the increase of productivity.

58. The whole difficulty lay in handling those discrepancies, for a rational policy conflicted with certain ideas of fair distribution, with the traditional nature of certain differential rates, or again with the current deep-rooted desire to anticipate a rise in the cost of living. But an incomes policy would still be more or less academic unless it tackled the problems of relative increases as well as that of the overall increase, and unless it managed to establish certain relevant criteria. It was also doubtful, considering its title and its ostensible objectives, whether it could for very long be restricted to the sphere of wages. It should rather be thought that social forces would surely lead to its extension so as to cover the distribution of the total product of growth, even before the new techniques and methods of dealing with the wages problem had really been worked out. At all events, in coming years the framing of an incomes policy was likely to be one of the major concerns of planners in private enterprise economies, and the need to resort to such a policy would involve the introduction of a minimum of short-term planning in countries where that did not yet exist.

59. Innovations were also taking place in the planned economy countries, where a reform movement, which began in the 1950's, appeared to have been speeded up considerably of late. The governments concerned had officially recognized that the maintenance of the previous high growth required certain adaptations in methods and institutions. Thus planning appeared not as a series of immutable precepts, but as a body of guiding principles which must be constantly renewed as the context in which it had been originally conceived gave way to very different circumstances.

60. At the outset, the primary aim had been to maximize certain production targets of a top priority nature, without paying too much attention to the possible impact of such action on other sectors. Even the over-fulfilment of targets had been encouraged. For the implementation of a policy of that kind, the economy possessed considerable reserves of natural resources — and particularly manpower — which were easy enough to obtain and mobilize. At that time, however, the problems were different. Available reserves were no longer on the same scale as before, the relationships between sectors and industries had become infinitely complex, and the attention paid to the consumer's wishes introduced new elements of uncertainty. The desire to ensure the optimum utilization of resources replaced or tempered the desire to raise production in certain sectors to the highest possible level. Lastly, that "optimalist" desire was reflected, within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, in the search for a certain degree of regional integration, which made it possible to benefit from the advantages of specialization and large-scale production.

61. Important discussions appeared to be in progress on the methods by which the transformations recognized as desirable could be carried out. There was agreement almost everywhere that the plan should make greater allowance for the initiative and problems of the heads of enterprises, make greater provision for the system of incentives, and in general, for some decentralization of decisions. Need-

less to say, however, the necessity of reconciling a greater measure of autonomy for enterprises with the implementation of central plans raised extremely difficult problems. It was inevitable that the solutions proposed should differ, considerably in some cases, from country to country, and that changes in methods should be accompanied by some hesitation.

62. In the developing countries, the number of plans promulgated, or at least drawn up, had increased rapidly. By and large, the plans covered 21 countries in Latin America, 20 in Asia and the Middle East and 10 in Africa, where others were being actively prepared. It seemed that that short experiment had already yielded some lessons. Efforts had been concentrated mainly on medium-term plans — usually covering four or five years, but sometimes also three years when steps had to be taken to remedy an excessive imbalance. The task of sub-dividing those plans into annual programmes, which would enable a link to be established between the distant target and current decisions, was sometimes neglected. The targets were ambitious, fully compatible with the aspirations of the Development Decade, but, in general, over-optimistic as regards foreign exchange resources, a mistake which those of the underdeveloped countries that had already acquired some experience of planning had learnt to correct. Although the realization of the targets fixed was not the supreme test of the plan's value, an unduly large and persistent discrepancy between the targets and the results could not fail to have unfortunate effects.

63. Lastly, the political measures which would make it possible to approach the targets were slow to emerge. Marginal rates of domestic savings of 20 to 40 per cent, implicit in many plans, must necessarily be based on a considerable increase in public savings, and at the same time called for tax reform and strict control over current government expenditure. Perhaps it was not surprising that, at the outset, more attention had been paid to problems of formulation than to problems of the implementation of the plans. Yet the latter were by far the most difficult and it must be recognized that, with a few exceptions, most of the under-developed countries which had embarked upon development planning had not yet clearly demonstrated its efficacy.

64. Economic plans tended also to play a part in the development of international action, in connexion with financial assistance. That trend was gratifying, and was perhaps illustrated most strikingly in Latin America, within the framework of the Alliance for Progress. By placing development projects in a framework which brought out the part they played in the growth process or in the achievement of equilibrium, the existence of a plan made the role and importance of specific projects and programmes more easily understood. At the same time, the discipline involved in carrying out the plan provided certain guarantees that assistance would be used effectively. Private capital could also play its part, through the noticeable desire for rational expansion. In that way, external financing could be negotiated between contributing and recipient governments in a more objective manner and on a more rational basis, thus reducing the arbitrary element and the danger of politicization which might otherwise appear.

65. That explained the interest in the gradual establishment of an interdependent relationship between assistance policy and trade policy, so that they might be to some extent complementary. The international effort envisaged simultaneously in both its aspects, that of assistance and that of trade, should come to deserve the definition so frequently given for the French plan, namely, an instrument to reduce uncertainties.

66. While some might wince at the word "planning" used with reference to the world economy, it must at least be noted how insistently the word "organization" was resorted to when international trade was discussed, especially when the discussion centred on commodity problems. The measures evolved since the war for bringing about some order in commodity markets, after great efforts requiring considerable patience and technical skill, had produced useful, but limited results. Existing agreements covered only a very small proportion of world trade in primary commodities, and not even half a dozen such agreements had been concluded. Consequently, there were strong reasons why the ideas being mooted in favour of more comprehensive and vigorous action with a view to an organization of markets should be studied. It was to be hoped that those ideas, expressed in terms which were still very general, would shortly take the form of specific proposals, whose technical and economic aspects might be examined very closely.

67. The idea of a world plan for market organization came to broaden a concept developed within EEC, in connexion with agricultural products from the temperate zone. It was suggested that the industrial countries, which were often themselves producers of such commodities, should purchase theirs at prices set somewhere in the neighbourhood of their own production costs, namely, at prices which, generally speaking, would be considerably higher than the world price. One essential feature of the system was the idea of a central machinery for the distribution of surpluses for the benefit of the underdeveloped countries suffering from food shortages. It had not so far been clearly indicated how comparable measures would apply to commodities which the industrial countries did not themselves produce, and for which no yardstick of domestic prices was therefore available, or which, by their nature, would not be suitable for use as surpluses through assistance programmes.

68. But the logic of the system would require that the proposed formulas should distinguish themselves from commodity agreements in their current form in that they ensured to producers a return not only more stable, but higher than that resulting from the application of world prices — using the term, of course, with all the reservations imposed by that often rather nebulous notion.

69. An element of assistance would, in fact, creep into commodity exchanges. Aid provided in that way would depart from the principles so far applied; it would in a sense be automatic, and thereby distinguish itself from the major programmes currently in operation, linked as they were to the submission of specific projects whose implementation concretely reflected a certain absorptive

capacity. So far the latter method had appeared to offer the best chances of more constructive aid based on more rational criteria. There was nothing to suggest, however, that that would always be so, nothing to prevent the study of other solutions and it should be remembered that for some time the organization had had before it proposals for compensatory financing, some of which precisely included an element of assistance.

70. Moreover, the liberalization measures as proposed in the framework of the GATT programme of action, for instance, came quite naturally within the framework of an organization policy in the sense that they proposed the elimination of certain anomalies. The maintenance of tariff, or other, barriers artificially restricting the consumption of tropical products was surely far less compatible with the idea of organization than their reasonably staged abolition.

71. Hence, the opposing views which had crystallized at the GATT Ministerial Meeting and had persisted throughout the session of the preparatory committee of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development did not represent a conflict of principles, and nothing would be more regrettable than to allow a doctrinal dispute to develop on that subject. The problem was a concrete one. It lay, as everybody knew, in the Contract of Association concluded between EEC and eighteen African countries. It was possible to hold different opinions about that contract, but it was not possible to ignore its existence, its *modus operandi* and the reasons underlying it when proposals capable of universal application were at stake.

72. One must hope that the fact that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was drawing nearer would induce the governments concerned to prepare and publish a time-table, thus opening the door for early liberalization measures without that having any delaying effects on the study, and perhaps even — in certain sectors — the putting into practice of a policy of market organization.

73. An attempt should be made forthwith to explore every possible method, including gradually rising import quotas such as those provided for in the GATT Long-term Arrangement regarding International Trade in Cotton Textiles, whose method was satisfactory, though the effect had been so disappointing; preferences accorded by developed countries without reciprocal advantages; preferential zones set up with the help of a relaxation of the GATT regulations for the exchange between the less developed countries themselves of certain products, the list of which could be gradually enlarged; and lastly, the method which firms in the industrial countries could follow by decentralizing, in the direction of the less developed countries, the manufacture of some components of their end products. For the examination of those various possibilities, the United Nations should use all the means of study, of discussion and of negotiation which were at its disposal with all the insistence it had demonstrated on other occasions.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.