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President: Sir Douglas COPLAND (Australia).

Present:

The representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Australia, China, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, India, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Observers from the following Member States: Cuba, Indonesia, Mexico.

Observers from the following non-member States: Bulgaria, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Spain.

The 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, International Telecommunication Union, World Meteorological Organization.

AGENDA ITEM 4

General review of the development and co-ordination of the economic, social and human rights programmes and activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies as a whole (E/2659 and Corr.1, E/2661 and Add.1, E/2662, E/2668 and Add.1, E/2676, E/2692, E/2717, E/2722, E/2724 and Add.1, E/2728 and Corr.1, E/2733, E/2735, E/2748, E/2749 and Add.1 and 2, E/2753 and Add.1 and 2, E/2769) (*continued*)

1. Mr. EPINAT (France) said that the Council was acquiring a heightened sense of responsibility as it became more clearly aware of the world economic situation; hence the French delegation, which at the eighteenth session had expressed the wish that the Secretary-General should submit annual surveys of the world economic and the world social situations, was particularly gratified that the Council should now be considering at one and the same time the development of the programmes and activities of the United Nations and the specialized

agencies as a whole, in the fields within the Council's purview, and the problem of co-ordinating those activities. He had read the Secretary-General's Statement (E/2769) on the subject with great interest, and wished to thank him for it, as well as for the valuable oral comments which he and the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs had made.

2. The French delegation associated itself with those others which had paid a tribute to the progress the United Nations had made towards concentration of effort; since the available resources were so small in relation to needs, rational use should be made of all the machinery available. His delegation, also, took the view that efforts should be concentrated on the under-developed countries, but without losing sight of the further development of the more advanced countries.

3. In the matter of guiding principles, the French delegation would also like to make plain its interest in any efforts that might be made to bring about the more effective co-ordination of United Nations activities with those of Governments. Perhaps the time had come to specify the data and indicate methods which would be of help to Governments in drawing up their plans and programmes of action in the social field, taking account of economic development factors. Similarly, it was desirable that the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the regional economic commissions should be able to communicate their plans and long-term programmes to each other in good time, so that each organization could submit the comments and suggestions essential to properly co-ordinated implementation. The examples given by the Secretary-General in his written statement brought out clearly the degree of efficiency that could be attained when co-ordination was kept constantly in mind from the outset of the work.

4. The French delegation thought that the experience already acquired by the various United Nations organs, and also the reorganization of the Secretariat, should make it easier to give effect to the few essential guiding principles, thus reflecting the Council's constant concern that the United Nations should carry out integrated economic and social programmes while continuing to render direct assistance to interested Governments.

5. With more particular reference to the Secretary-General's efforts to increase the efficiency of the Secretariat by reorganization—incidentally, a continuing process—the French delegation hoped that any such efforts would be supported by the Council's commissions, which, he thought, should be consulted before any decision was taken. He was thinking in particular of the re-organization carried out in the Department of Social Affairs, which had reduced the standing of the Population Division to that of a mere branch; yet obviously—as, indeed,

was shown in the Secretary-General's statement—population programmes would in the future demand closer and closer attention from the international institutions and from Governments. It might have been desirable, before taking so definite a decision, to ascertain the views of the Population Commission and the Social Commission.

6. To conclude the foregoing few remarks on guiding principles, the French delegation hoped that all international institutions dealing with economic and social questions would continue their work on the basis of the Council's directives concerning priorities, since it thought that time was an essential element of success and that, while the Council might well review some of its directives with the object of making them more elastic, it should not succumb to the temptation to change the established order of priorities too often. There, good judgment was essential, and the Council must make a close study of its activities as a whole before it could revise its order of priorities in the light of resources and needs. On that point the French delegation fully appreciated the proposal made during the discussion at the 879th meeting by the United Kingdom representative, and shared his view that it would be useful if the Council were from time to time to examine a report on a subject of its own choice, showing the work done and the results obtained through the co-ordinated action of the various organs concerned. As the example of population—taken by the representative of the United Kingdom—showed, the Council would thus have a clearer picture of those points on which the studies in the chosen field had been successful, and of any deficiencies or disparities. Such a procedure might be thought rather slow, but the time seemed to have come for more thorough action on certain subjects.

7. It was in the same spirit that the French delegation, noting the remarkable improvements made in the operation of the technical assistance programmes, had welcomed the suggestion that action by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC)—restored, with due regard to its resources, to its place as part of the technical assistance machinery—might prove most useful, especially in co-ordinating the Expanded Programme with similar activities under the regular budget. In the present machinery every part had free play and could make its contribution to the work of the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC), the international body responsible for direction and supervision.

8. That led him to the more general importance of intergovernmental supervision exercised in the interest of the organizations themselves. It would appear that international activities developed most successfully in those very fields in which, owing to their keen sense of responsibility, the members of the executive board exercised strict supervision. Good examples were the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

9. Commenting on the enormous task that faced the specialized agencies, he said he was confident that they could ensure at all levels the co-ordination essential to the efficiency of their operations. The same applied to the regional commissions, which would ensure profitable collaboration with the Secretariat and support technical assistance without taking a disproportionate

part in its activities. In conclusion, the French delegation considered that co-ordination should not be regarded as an end in itself, but as a means of obtaining, with modest resources, the best possible results in a varied sphere. It was therefore necessary to formulate simple directives, and the French delegation would endeavour to support the Council's efforts in that direction in the Co-ordination Committee.

10. Mr. Said HASAN (Pakistan) said that, since the Council would be taking decisions on item 4 before it considered the report of the Technical Assistance Committee, he might perhaps be permitted, as that committee's chairman, to anticipate part of the statement he would make when introducing its report, and inform the Council that, by and large, TAC considered the present arrangements for co-ordinating and administering the technical assistance programmes to be satisfactory.

11. In view of the fact that the work of the specialized agencies and other United Nations organs in that field was primarily carried on inside the individual countries receiving assistance, the real stage at which to prevent overlapping and duplication was that of country programming. His own country provided an example of effective co-ordination at that level.

12. In Pakistan, programme planning was dealt with by two committees, the Foreign Assistance Co-ordination Committee and the Screening Committee. The former consisted of representatives of all the countries and agencies which were granting assistance to Pakistan, including the resident technical assistance representative, representatives of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Colombo Plan and so on. At the Committee's quarterly meetings, officials of the Pakistan Government submitted a list of the country's economic and technical requirements, whereupon individual representatives informed them which items interested their particular agencies or countries. The Screening Committee fixed the fields in which training, fellowships and scholarships were required, in relation to the country's total requirements. Finally, a department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs placed the various fellows and scholars, in co-operation with agency representatives. Thus, in Pakistan, overlapping and duplication were virtually ruled out.

13. Some projects in Pakistan were contributed to by more than one country or agency, each dealing with a particular feature of the scheme. In East Pakistan, for example, there was a \$7 million multi-purpose project: it had been planned by the Food and Agriculture Organization. The United States had provided some of the resources through its Foreign Operations Administration and Colombo Plan countries had provided the rest, while certain specialized agencies had supplied technicians. Such a scheme would not be possible without the effective co-operation in the administration of technical assistance practised in his country.

14. Since the assistance provided by United Nations bodies was in general very small in relation to the total granted to a given country, co-ordination was required not only between the United Nations bodies themselves, but also between the various countries and the extra-United Nations organizations concerned. It was also a safeguard against the squandering of financial resources.

It should be possible, with a little planning and co-ordination, to concentrate the available resources on programmes in the most important fields of economic development. Opinions expressed in the course of the present discussion tended to confirm that the machinery of co-ordination had worked satisfactorily in the past.

15. Although decentralization was a healthy principle, it would be a mistake, in view of the great disparity in the development, resources and needs of the different regions, to transfer technical assistance functions to other agencies. Questions of economic development and technical assistance were of almost world-wide significance. To treat the various regions in isolation would therefore not be the most effective way of promoting the objectives and ideals of the United Nations. At present, technical assistance experts could be drawn from any part of the world, but if their selection was delegated to the regional commissions the choice might well be restricted in future. The problem concerned not the number of experts required, but their quality, and that could best be assured by working through United Nations Headquarters. The Pakistan delegation was convinced that the transfer of any part of technical assistance operations to the regional commissions would be a step backward.

16. In conclusion, he said that his delegation intended to introduce at a later stage a draft resolution covering all the various points entailed by the whole subject of co-ordination.

17. Mr. CHISTYAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had listened with interest to the Secretary-General's statement on the development and co-ordination of the programmes and activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the field of economic and social rights, and in that of human rights. The Secretary-General had appealed to the Council to draw conclusions for the guidance not only of the Secretariat and the Council's subsidiary organs, but also of all United Nations bodies.

18. His delegation considered that the co-ordination of the activities of the specialized agencies and the regional organizations was an important matter. The range of economic and social problems affecting the fate of mankind was exceptionally broad—so broad, indeed, that there was a danger of dissipating efforts and resources. There was therefore a need for co-ordinated action by all United Nations organs and all the specialized agencies in finding solutions to the main problems. Co-ordination played an important part in the development of international co-operation, the achievement of which was in fact its primary aim. Unfortunately, he was bound to note that efforts to broaden international co-operation and mutual understanding were not always discernible in the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Recent years had witnessed the refusal, in contravention of the Charter, of several organizations to co-operate with the people's democracies, a refusal which had harmed the cause of the United Nations. The Eighth General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which had met in Montevideo at the end of 1954, had, despite the Council's recommendation, refused to admit Romania and Bulgaria to membership,

deferring consideration of the matter until 1956. Yet the admission of those States to UNESCO, and a proper solution of the question of the representation of China, would make a significant contribution to the realization of UNESCO's aims. Again, no representatives of the Chinese People's Republic had been invited to attend the Asian regional conference of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), held last spring in New Delhi, although it was clear that the solution of Asian meteorological problems would be extremely difficult without that country's co-operation.

19. The Secretary-General, in his written Statement (E/2769), alluded to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as a body working within the framework of the United Nations. And the Soviet Union delegation had noted with surprise that at the present session GATT was listed among the specialized agencies represented at that session. As the Australian representative had pointed out at the 872nd meeting, GATT was not and could not, from its very nature, be a United Nations agency. It should also be pointed out that the eighteenth report of ACC mentioned certain agreements for co-operation concluded between a number of specialized agencies and the Council of Europe. He was not well acquainted with the work of that Council, and had no proof of its ability to contribute to the development of international co-operation.

20. The Secretary-General, in his already-mentioned Statement referred to recent efforts to find more practical channels for the United Nations programmes in the fields of economic and social affairs, human rights, freedom of information and the rights of women. The Soviet Union delegation agreed that those efforts were necessary; for the Council rarely paid much attention to the implementation of its decisions and recommendations. As everyone knew, the Commission on Human Rights had for the last seven years been drafting two important international covenants on human rights. That work could certainly have been speeded up.

21. The question of freedom of information had been on the Council's agenda year in, year out. Documentation running into thousands of pages had been prepared on the subject. But many of the documents had been unnecessary, and had indeed distracted the Council's attention from the real substance of the problem. At the nineteenth session, for instance, the Council had received some ten reports on various aspects of the subject, but the outcome had simply been the adoption of several decisions (resolution 574 A, B, C, D (XIX)) which had not really come to grips with the basic problems in that field.

22. He could agree with the Secretary-General's favourable appraisal of the efforts made to improve United Nations activities in the field of women's rights, which were still unsatisfactory in many countries. The Commission on the Status of Women had undoubtedly done much valuable work in making recommendations for improving the position of women everywhere, but there were still shortcomings in its work which could profitably be remedied.

23. Referring to the work of the regional commissions, he recalled that the United Kingdom representative, at the 879th meeting, had supported the establishment

of closer working relations between those commissions in order to enable them to play a more important part in technical assistance matters. The Soviet Union delegation supported that suggestion, and believed that the regional commissions could and should act as centres in the way Lord Selkirk had described in respect of the problems entrusted to them by their terms of reference.

24. Turning to the activities of the various specialized agencies, he noted the satisfactory work done by the Universal Postal Union in studying various technical matters connected with international postal services in order to help its member States to improve their working methods. The World Meteorological Organization too had done useful work in the application of meteorology in aviation, maritime navigation, agriculture and so on and had extended its contacts with other international organizations. The World Health Organization, by developing exchanges of medical information and convening expert committees on various problems, had made a significant contribution to the solution of various public health problems.

25. Other specialized agencies, however, could do more to promote better international co-operation. He could not but draw attention to the fact that within the International Labour Organisation certain groups were trying to obstruct business-like co-operation between countries with different social and economic systems. That agency's First European Regional Conference, held from 24 January to 5 February 1955, had nevertheless demonstrated that, given goodwill, it was possible to reach agreed decisions.

26. The further development of international co-operation and the extension of exchanges of scientific and technical information among the countries of all regions would undoubtedly promote the economic development of all countries and an improvement in the well-being of the peoples. Any review of the efforts being made to improve the co-ordination of activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies would be incomplete without some mention of the problem of simplifying the structure of international organizations. He endorsed the Secretary-General's belief that in the process of developing and co-ordinating the work of such organizations care should be taken not only to avoid increased complexity, but also to devise simpler and more economical procedures that would enable more rational use to be made of available resources. It could not, for instance, be considered normal that the administrative and overhead expenses of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance should absorb on an average 20.7 per cent of total expenditure on that programme.

27. It would also be well to consider the structure of the functional commissions and other organs of the Council with a view to simplifying it. Certain steps in that direction had been taken at the eighteenth session, when it had been decided to abolish the Fiscal Commission and the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling (resolution 557 (XVIII)). But more could be done. Due attention, for instance, should be paid to the remarks of the United States representative about the excessive number of meetings of organs of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The Soviet Union delegation believed that they could be reduced not only in number, but also in duration, without detriment to the work of the organizations concerned. The same considerations applied, as the United States representative had also observed, to the amount of documentation provided, much of which was unnecessary.

28. The United Nations and the specialized agencies were faced with important problems, the solution of which required purposeful action and concentration on the more important of them. Those problems included all-round economic co-operation between States, the raising of standards of living, and the promotion of the economic development of under-developed countries. The successful solution of those problems called for increased and more effective and precise co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The Soviet Union delegation deemed it essential that the work of the United Nations should evolve in a more practical direction. Finally, it considered it necessary to recommend the Secretary-General to continue his efforts for a simplification of the structure of United Nations institutions working in the economic and social fields and for a more economic utilization of resources.

29. Mr. PINK (United Kingdom) wished to clear up a slight misunderstanding. The Soviet Union representative had said that the United Kingdom delegation considered that the regional commissions should be given a larger part to play in technical assistance programmes. He (Mr. Pink) quoted Lord Selkirk's actual words at the 879th meeting, to the effect that his Government would wish to look very closely at the suggestion that the regional commissions should play a greater role in the field of technical assistance. The correct interpretation of that statement was that the United Kingdom delegation had strong doubts about the advisability of any such suggestion, not that it supported it.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.