



## CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 3:	
World social situation ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	35
Organization of the Council's Work . . . . .	39

*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: Belgium, Brazil, Cuba, Indonesia, Israel.

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

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, World Health Organization.

## AGENDA ITEM 3

**World social situation (E/2569, E/2747 and Add.1 and 2, E/2758, E/CN.3/179—E/CN.5/299, E/CN.5/301/Rev.1—ST/SOA/21) (*continued*)**

1. Mr. Moustafa HASSAN (Egypt) said that the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) had been a factual report on the situation—particularly in the less developed areas—which had, however, given such a gloomy picture that it might well have been thought that social reform was impracticable. However, the *International Survey of Programmes of Social Development* (E/CN.5/301—ST/SOA/21), showed that reforms had been feasible. It had not been possible in the *Survey* to go into great detail and it dealt only with sample cases; but it was a commendable factual survey of the practical measures already taken. The picture that it gave was not a rosy one, but it did provide an incentive to further practical efforts to improve social conditions. The two reports, in fact, were complementary.

2. Despite the variety of social activities described, certain general principles emerged. First, in the present era a change in social conditions, especially in the under-

developed countries, was taking place with unprecedented speed and matching the social revolution by consent in the more advanced countries. The peoples were making intense efforts to attain social justice. The *Survey* had well stressed that Europe had required three centuries to evolve from medieval to modern social structure, whereas today many countries were achieving that progress in one generation, or even in a few years, in a peaceful and orderly manner. Secondly, the change in social structure—particularly in countries emerging from a colonial régime into national independence—was worthy of note. The act of attaining freedom from the domination of former oppressors had given a great impetus to social reform and had made people feel a responsibility for establishing social justice, since they realized that their new freedom could not be safeguarded unless they bore in mind the fact that freedom and social reform were intimately related. Thirdly, the document clearly showed that progress was no longer a matter of mere domestic concern. The International Labour Organisation and the League of Nations had exercised only supervisory activities and had been vested with very restricted responsibilities. The concept of international social responsibility, as formulated in Article 55 of the Charter, was a recent innovation, as were the practical activities, such as a comprehensive system of advisory social welfare services carried out by the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The Council had shown great wisdom, when establishing priorities, in laying stress on community development. Under that system, Governments and international organizations gave direct help to peoples who were helping themselves. There was a growing demand, both in the under-developed and in the more highly developed countries, for a combination of welfare and increased productivity. Egypt's experience in community development had been encouraging and had been commended by qualified observers as a programme suitable for imitation by other countries with a similar background. Egypt was training individuals in true democracy through co-operation freely accepted by both individuals and groups. The Government was co-operating in development and not frustrating it. It was providing the machinery for organic development, linking both economic and social progress. All Governments recognized that the establishment of more adequate social services depended on higher productivity—indeed, one would be impossible without the other. No Government could plan for the extension of social services unless it was sure of a stable economy achieved through growing productivity.

3. Nearly every chapter of the *Survey* cited Egypt as an example of rapid progress. Since 1952 a great step forward towards the achievement of social justice had been taken in Egypt by changing the former agrarian

structure, placing a ceiling on rent and guaranteeing a minimum wage for agricultural workers. Social justice and social stability had thereby been simultaneously achieved. Productivity had been increased by planned irrigation, increased agricultural production and the like. The agrarian reform was aiming not only at social justice, but also at increasing productivity, by speeding industrialization. The land reform had not been based on confiscation, but on the compulsory sale of land by the very rich to the very poor, with the Government acting as intermediary. The need to increase the area under cultivation had been fully realized, as Egypt was over-populated. In community development the rural social centres covered all phases of the farm worker's life.

4. The Council should study the world social situation side by side with the world economic situation. International help by the United Nations and the specialized agencies was needed to supplement national efforts.

5. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) said that serious problems affecting the lives of millions of human beings were summed up in the item on the world social situation. The *International Survey of Programmes of Social Development* proved that the Council was right in dealing with social problems separately, despite their inter-relationship with economic questions. The stated purpose of the *Survey* was to help Governments to become more familiar with the policies of other Governments and thus suggest ideas and methods that they might consider as applying to their own social problems. It was the more regrettable, therefore, that the *Survey* failed to mention the programmes for, and the results of, social development in the USSR, the People's Republic of China and the people's democracies. Hence, it presented a distorted view of the world's social problems and of the various ways of solving them.

6. The last decade had seen great changes in the life of the Czechoslovak people. The constant development of the national economy guaranteed stable and ever-improving conditions of social security and expanding State attention to the people's welfare. The fundamental rights of the population were embodied in the Constitution. Every Czechoslovak citizen had the right to work, to just remuneration, to rest and leisure, to social and health insurance and to education, as well as many other rights. Constantly increasing sums were appropriated for social and cultural services and facilities for the people.

7. There was no unemployment in Czechoslovakia and levels of employment and wages showed a constant upward trend. The principle of equal pay for equal work was practised in every field. Social insurance was provided for by law and administered by the trade unions. Health insurance guaranteed working people, pensioners and their families the right to free medical and dental treatment and free treatment in hospitals, sanatoria and spas. The total expenditure on health services was thirty-seven times as great as before the war. Under the five-year plan the network of health facilities had considerably expanded, and a number of new hospitals and other institutions would be built in the next few years. Health centres and mother and child welfare centres had been established in every region and district,

and sick bays had been organized in the factories. Particular attention was paid to the education and training of medical and health personnel. There were nearly twice as many doctors as before the war and there had been an even greater increase in the number of such auxiliary personnel as nurses, midwives and laboratory assistants. The State also spent large sums on medical and prophylactic scientific research, particular attention being given to hygiene and the prevention of epidemics. The improved living conditions were reflected in the general health of the population and in the decline in infant mortality—now only thirty-seven per thousand—and adult mortality. Expectation of life had increased by twelve years as compared with the pre-war period.

8. Particular care was given to mothers and children. Every mother was entitled to eighteen weeks' maternity leave, and the State gave layette and maternity grants and a regular monthly allowance for every child, together with considerable tax reductions. Expectant mothers received specialist care, and two-thirds of all child-births took place in maternity hospitals. There were numerous crèches and kindergartens for children of pre-school age.

9. Other aspects of the State's social welfare programme included generous old-age and disability pensions, vocational training for, and the rehabilitation of, partly disabled persons, the blind, invalids and others, special long-term loans for newly married couples, low-cost meals in factory canteens, free recreation, and annual reductions in the price of consumer goods.

10. Unprecedented cultural progress had also been achieved thanks to the Government's attention to education and the constant improvement of the people's cultural standards. All citizens had access to education, without distinction as to social origin. In the last ten years the number of schools, universities and colleges had considerably expanded, with an accompanying increase in the number of students. Thousands of workers were studying at evening schools and through correspondence courses. In all key branches of industry there were special vocational training schools where young workers who had left school could complete their professional training. State expenditure on education was eight times as high as before the war.

11. The same successes were being achieved in the other people's democracies, a fact inadequately reflected in the *Survey*. He hoped that the results achieved in those countries would be taken into consideration by the Secretariat in the preparation of future studies and surveys.

12. His delegation considered the Social Commission's work extremely useful, and it had therefore taken an active and constructive part in the discussions at the tenth session, and had voted in favour of the majority of the draft resolutions now submitted to the Council for approval in the Commission's report (E/2758). It would therefore vote for the draft resolutions in the Council. Its position on the resolution concerning the international definition and measurement of standards and levels of living had been stated in the Social Commission. The problem was complex and neither the Committee of Experts nor the Statistical Commission had succeeded in reaching a uniform solution. The

experts' report was very valuable, but the methods it proposed for the measurement of standards and levels of living were not always correct. It failed, for instance, to give sufficient emphasis to the fact that in examining levels of living one of the principal criteria must be the social structure of the population, together with the distribution of social income, conditions of land tenure and similar factors. It also under-estimated the significance of employment or unemployment as an indicator of standards of social security and levels of living. In the case of health services, the real indicator was not the number of doctors or hospitals, but whether medical assistance and facilities were really available to the broad masses of the population. There could be no doubt that the provision of free health services and social security facilities contributed significantly to the raising of standards of living. The whole question of the international definition and measurement of standards and levels of living required further detailed study. The Council would be acting prematurely if it were to adopt the recommendations of the Committee of Experts, which, though valuable and useful in many respects, were frequently incomplete.

13. Economic development and generous State assistance were essential if the level of living and the unsatisfactory social and cultural conditions in many countries, in particular the less developed countries, were to be improved. An impediment to economic development, and therefore also to the improvement of living conditions, was the militarization of the economy, which led to enormous sums, being spent on armaments production, with resulting reductions in budgetary expenditure on vitally essential social development programmes. Without the peaceful development of the national economy and the direct support and constant attention of the Government, partial programmes of social development could lead only to partial improvement; they could never result in a permanent solution of all a country's social issues. His delegation therefore welcomed the USSR representative's suggestion at the 869th meeting that the Council should adopt a resolution laying down the main tasks and problems connected with further social development in the world.

14. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) said that the study of the world social situation was one of the most complex questions entrusted to the Council under the provisions of the Charter. It was only quite recently that Governments had taken an interest in social questions. Although such questions had begun to be investigated and studied in university circles in the nineteenth century, it had been necessary to await the work of the League of Nations to witness the development of the universal concept of social life and of the subjection of the State to the rule of law. The first concrete results had been obtained through the work of the International Labour Organisation, which had made an important contribution to the development of labour and social legislation in all countries. But it was above all upon the United Nations that the work of promoting social development measures on a world-wide scale had devolved. In connexion with this activity the Council had requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the specialized agencies and the appropriate non-governmental organizations, to

prepare a supplementary report on measures taken to improve social conditions throughout the world. That was the origin of the *Survey*, a voluminous document, now before the Council. The *Survey* gave a satisfactory general summary of the programmes and achievements of many Governments. It touched on the fields of health, nutrition, housing, community development, aid to consumers, education in all its forms, labour legislation, social security, social rehabilitation, rural life, research and surveys on social programmes and financing.

15. Much progress had been made in the world now that Governments were increasingly concerned to develop aid to consumers and to generalize education, which was no longer the privilege of an élite governing class. Attention should also be drawn to the efforts made to promote social security, which had been superimposed on the idea of charity, without, however, eliminating the work of the voluntary agencies. Excellent results had been obtained by all the Governments which had concerned themselves with social rehabilitation. Finally, the efforts made to give rural populations a sense of community life were worthy of note; those efforts promised much, since they were calculated to prevent depopulation of the countryside and under-developed regions and to provide an indirect solution of the serious problem of migrations.

16. It was regrettable that so full a document as the Secretariat's *Survey* should deal only with programmes and measures for material improvement and leave aside the question of human rights, religious values and the artistic side of human activities. There were certainly many difficulties in the field of human rights, but it would be well for the United Nations to attack the problem courageously.

17. The Secretariat had been mistaken in failing to study measures for the promotion of human rights the extension of which was of interest to all peoples in the world. Perhaps its aim had been to avoid exposing the document to attacks by certain Governments which might have felt they were alluded to because they had in fact interfered with human rights in their own territories. But a study of such questions could harm no one, and it was the duty of the United Nations to carry it out, even though in doing so it ran the risk of offending certain interests.

18. The documentation submitted by the Secretariat was of great value, and many Governments could study it with profit. The Government of Ecuador, in particular, would certainly derive extremely valuable information from it.

19. It was stated in the introduction to the *Survey* that forty-five countries, including Ecuador, gave an important place in their constitutions to the duties of the State in respect of the social welfare of the individual. The Constitution of Ecuador, for instance, defined the duties of the State to the worker, the family, the child and the Indian. The last-named enjoyed many rights that had been denied him until only a few years ago: these concerned minimum wages, the working week, paid holidays, the right to strike, trade union rights, collective bargaining, profit-sharing, allowances, protection against accidents, apprenticeship, social insurance and rural housing for workers.

20. He congratulated the Secretary-General on his brilliant description of developments in social legislation and of the transition from the individualist concept to that of social responsibility. Day by day the State was assuming new responsibilities in the social and economic fields. Hence, the *Survey* stressed the need for co-ordination measures and for the creation of organs responsible for making preliminary studies to that end. In that connexion, he recalled that a speaker at the recent Conference of Caracas had suggested that Governments should make their plans to take advantage of the experience of the international organizations.

21. The Secretary-General had rightly referred in the *Survey* to "human capital" as an essential factor in development. The Secretariat was fully justified in emphasizing the part played in improved productivity by increased knowledge and technical skill acquired through education. The individual lacked the necessary equipment to defend himself against his environment and required the co-operation of his fellows to develop his intelligence and to take advantage of the benefits of science and technique. In other words, man must be helped by man to fulfil his social mission.

22. Describing his country's achievements in the social field, he stressed the importance attached to public health, the training of health staff, and the steps taken to regulate the practice of the profession of pharmacy. Energetic campaigns had been organized to control epidemics and contagious diseases. Yellow fever had been conquered; yaws, malaria and certain other diseases were also disappearing. As a result, not only had the health of the population improved, but labour productivity also had increased.

23. The Government of Ecuador had likewise endeavoured to carry out programmes designed to improve the nutritional standards of the masses. It had sought to improve housing conditions, hoping thereby to solve a problem which was common to all States in Latin America. There was no doubt that the creation of an international credit institution for housing would solve the problem of financing building in all countries; but, in the absence of such an institution, Ecuador was financing its housing programme out of its internal resources and achieving excellent results in solving a housing shortage which recent catastrophes of Nature had further aggravated. The methods used to re-build towns which had been entirely destroyed might serve as an example to other countries, and the Secretary-General had made a point of mentioning them in his *Survey*.

24. He was happy to note the progress achieved in the social field under United Nations auspices, and would end by quoting a recent remark by the Director-General of the International Labour Office to the effect that it was becoming more and more apparent that the real task of the United Nations and the specialized agencies lay in creating a more humane world in which man would be the centre of the universe.

25. Mr. PEREZ-PEREZ (Venezuela) said that the world social situation and the world economic situation were closely interrelated and must be studied together

in order to achieve the well-being of peoples. Material progress alone was not sufficient for the attainment of true well-being. Intellectual and moral qualities must be fostered at the same time as higher living standards were promoted. That was the only way to free peoples from fear and to induce them to think constructively, rather than destructively. The *International Survey of Programmes of Social Development* was an extremely valuable document. It showed that countries in the course of development had to follow in the footsteps of the more highly developed countries, but that in order to do so, they needed the help of the latter.

26. The *Survey* had rightly stressed the unprecedented situation in which some countries in the course of development had decided to carry out their economic and social development much as the more advanced countries had done in the nineteenth century. There was, however, a basic difference: the more advanced countries had developed by stages, whereas the newer countries had forged ahead by leaps and bounds. The development of the individual meant that he increased his demands; but these had previously been made only by the wealthy, whereas now the whole community demanded higher social standards, better health and more leisure for all. The modern State could not provide such standards unless it tried to satisfy the people's needs. It had been well said that men would be more eager to defend property when they possessed it than when they merely desired it. Sustained will was required to put those principles into effect, and that will must be shared by those who governed and those who were governed alike. It was well known that Venezuela was passing through a period of fiscal prosperity, but her people knew that economic wealth was valueless unless it was converted into social wealth, and her Government was striving to spread the wealth for the well-being of the individual.

27. The *Survey* noted that the problem of underdeveloped countries was often that of setting standards and objectives which were too high to achieve with available resources. Venezuela did not lack resources, but needed even greater resources if its economy were to remain stable. The *Survey* stated that there were two general ways in which levels of living might be raised: either by the re-distribution of existing wealth and income or by increased production and the creation of new wealth and income. Venezuela had adopted the second method. The Venezuelan State gave the workers an assurance that their level of living would be continuously raised by means of profit-sharing, a guaranteed wage, paid holidays and the like. That was no longer regarded as charity, but as standard practice. Venezuelan social doctrine was based on the rational transformation of material circumstances and had created a political philosophy sustaining the dignity of the individual, thus creating a vigorous nation. Simultaneously with the expansion of roads, railways, industries, electrification and irrigation, Venezuela was raising the standards of food, education and health. It had one of the most advanced social legislations in the world and a well-developed social security system. For more than ten years, undertakings had been compelled to distribute at least 10 per cent of their profits among their employees. Large-scale housing projects for workers were being

undertaken, and thousands already owned their own homes.

28. The *Survey* noted the great expansion of social programmes in countries at various stages of development. Certainly most Governments and peoples were trying to make a better world, but that could be done only by genuine international co-operation. General well-being was the basis of international peace, whereas hunger and misery were disruptive forces. His delegation would speak in more detail on the subject in committee.

29. Mr. de SEYNES (Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs) expressed his great satisfaction at the Council's reception of the documents submitted to it by the Secretariat, and in particular of the *International Survey of Programmes of Social Development*. He also thanked the specialized agencies which had contributed so actively and effectively to the preparation of those documents.

30. Various delegations had made criticisms and pointed out omissions in the documents before the Council, and he thanked them for doing so. He must, however, categorically refute certain allegations concerning the Secretariat's intentions and motives. It had had no deliberate bias and had guarded against approaching problems in a systematically one-sided manner. It had merely sought to present a study and an analysis of the social programmes and different techniques by which the various Governments achieved their aims; it had not wished to give an analysis by countries or a study of comparative social legislation. The Secretariat's chief aim had been to enable interested Governments to choose the techniques best suited to their individual circumstances. If certain achievements found no place in the *Survey*, it must be remembered that, as the United King-

dom representative had rightly pointed out, the examples it contained were given only by way of illustration. It would certainly have been desirable in the choice of illustrations to present a sufficiently well balanced picture for all parts of the world to be equally represented. The Secretariat had not been able to do so, owing to material difficulties connected with lack of data and shortage of staff. He assured the Council that in preparing future reports the Secretariat would endeavour to take account of the criticisms made during the session. In that connexion he appealed for the collaboration of Governments, explaining that the Secretariat's task would be greatly facilitated if they supplied descriptions of the methods or techniques used in carrying out social programmes rather than statistics or extracts from legislative texts. The balance of the picture drawn by the Secretariat would be greatly improved thereby.

#### Organization of the Council's Work (E/L.666)

31. Mr. ROWE (Australia) proposed that the Social Committee should consider the world social situation (item 3 of the agenda) first, rather than the report of the Commission on Human Rights (item 8) which was given priority in document E/L.666. A number of delegations, including his own, were not prepared to consider item 8 immediately.

32. Miss HEATH (United States of America) supported the Australian proposal.

33. The PRESIDENT said that, if there was no objection, the Australian representative's suggestion would be adopted.

*It was so agreed.*

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.