



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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OFFICIAL RECORDS

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President: Mr. ENGEN (Norway).

Present:

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

Observers from the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Colombia, Italy, Romania, Sweden, Venezuela.

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.

Message from Mr. Amjad Ali, former President of the Council

1. The PRESIDENT said that on the occasion of the Council's tenth anniversary he had received a message of goodwill from Mr. Amjad Ali, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of the Government of Pakistan, who had been President of the Council in 1952. On behalf of the Council, he had made a suitable reply.

AGENDA ITEM 15

Non-governmental organizations

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON APPLICATIONS FOR HEARINGS (E/2905)

2. Mr. EPINAT (France), Chairman of the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, submitted the Committee's report on applications for hearings (E/2905) and requested that paragraph (b) be

amended by the addition of "Item 4: Economic development of under-developed countries (15 minutes)" and "Item 5: Financing of economic development (10 minutes)", as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions had applied also for permission to make statements on those two items. He hoped the Council would approve the Committee's recommendations.

The report, as amended, was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 10

Programme of concerted practical action in the social field of the United Nations and the specialized agencies (E/2890) (continued)

3. Mr. OLIVIERI (Argentina) had given very close attention to the Secretary-General's report (E/2890), on which he congratulated both the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies concerned, namely the International Labour Office (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The report was a valuable one which would serve as a basis for the Council's decisions on item 10 of its agenda. The Council was indeed the ideal body for co-ordinating the activities of the various United Nations organs, and that had been the reason for its adoption of resolution 496 (XVI).

4. The most important points in that resolution were as follows: first, it recognized the interrelated character of economic and social factors and the benefits to social progress resulting from a balanced expansion of world economy; secondly, it stressed the need for close co-operation between governments and for the co-ordination of national and international programmes; thirdly, it laid down an order of priorities for projects in the social field; and finally, it recommended the use of certain clearly defined practical methods and techniques for assisting governments in carrying out the projects in question.

5. The interrelated character of economic and social factors was so obvious that he would not discuss it at length, but would merely refer members to paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's report. Economic progress was undoubtedly the foundation of social progress. Since the former was necessarily slow, it was essential that the United Nations should devote very particular attention to the economic development of the under-developed countries, and especially to the improvement of family living standards. Moreover, the Argentine delegation was of the opinion that the studies mentioned in paragraph 14 of the report might be of use in preparing

programmes based on available resources and giving adequate priority to the most urgent questions.

6. The second point he had mentioned raised an extremely important question, concerning which paragraph 11 of the report indicated one of the main problems to be solved namely, the inadequacy of information on social conditions in the economically under-developed countries. In that field, the efforts of the various countries must be supplemented, not replaced, by international co-operation, as was recognized by the Council in resolution 585 C (XX). For that reason it would be expedient to prepare a report on the world social situation, containing detailed information on the progress already made in the social field as well as on permanent requirements and special needs. The report should not be confined to the question of technical assistance, which was only one of the elements in concerted international action, albeit an important one.

7. In that connexion, he recalled the help received by Argentina from WHO, through the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau, during a recent poliomyelitis epidemic. The organizations dealing with technical assistance could help Argentina on similar lines to find solutions for housing problems due to movements of population.

8. As to the third and fourth main points in resolution 496 (XVI), the United Nations and specialized agencies had been obliged to change the order of priorities therein laid down on more than one occasion. The Argentine delegation was nevertheless pleased with the way in which the resolution had been implemented, and felt that marked progress had been made in the social field since its adoption.

9. Mr. BAKER (United States of America) said that it was fitting that the first substantive item to be considered should deal with practical action in the social field, for it was a subject that was concerned with people, in which planning was essential if progress were to be made in raising world levels of living.

10. The report of the Secretary-General was undertaken to provide a basis for evaluating the existing priority programmes. At the Council's twentieth session it had been made clear in resolution 585 H (XX) that what was required was not one more collection of reports from agencies, but rather an analysis by the Secretary-General of the emphasis given to each priority programme. Yet the report was divided into separate statements by agencies, and there was no summary under the individual priority programmes, so that the burden of rearranging the data for the purpose of planning was laid on governments. His delegation, however, welcomed the fact that account had been taken of the priority programmes outlined by the Council at its sixteenth session, and he would reaffirm his Government's strong support for intensified international efforts to strengthen social programmes for taking into account the social aspects of economic development.

11. In his view, the time seemed ripe for seeking the advice of the Council's subsidiary bodies and of the specialized agencies with a view to stressing the most urgent problem in each field covered by the priority programmes. As an illustration he would quote the spe-

cific problem of malaria. In 1952, the *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN. 5/267/Rev.1), had shown that 300 million people suffered from malaria and that three million died of that disease each year. As a result of the operation of international control programmes, the magnitude of the problem had been reduced by one-third, which was a remarkable indication of the progress achieved. What had been done for some of those suffering from malaria should, however, be done for them all, for the effects of that disease impinged on every part of a nation's life and were largely responsible for grave social welfare problems and the low rate of economic development in the countries affected. In the world as a whole, malaria was an expensive item. For instance, 60 per cent of the goods imported into his country came from malarious areas and malaria control absorbed at least 5 per cent of the annual production budget of those countries. That hidden tax, projected on a world basis, became a cost of staggering proportions. The internationally approved decision to pass from control measures to the actual eradication of malaria undoubtedly represented a landmark in the history of man's attack on one of his oldest and most vicious enemies. On the basis of that recent experience with malaria, it would surely be desirable for the Council to consider on what problem major emphasis should be placed within each of the other fields covered by the priority programmes.

12. Turning to the five specific points raised in the report, although paragraph 4 stated that countries were not necessarily requesting the types of technical assistance outlined in the priority programmes, no information was given to show the extent to which the requests departed from the priority programmes. There was therefore no basis for deciding whether the programmes called for reassessment. Although there could obviously be no uniform method of implementing those programmes, generally speaking, the extent to which they fitted the needs of countries was an indication of their realism. A discussion of the subject based on the needs of the receiving countries and the experience of the organizations providing technical assistance would be of value in future planning, and he would hope that the representatives concerned would all make a contribution.

13. With regard to the question of community development, referred to in paragraph 6, his delegation agreed that the Secretary-General should include in his forthcoming report recommendations for long-range action. He assumed that the Secretariat would bear in mind the definition of community development approved by the Council at its twentieth session. His Government was a firm believer in community development as a process for raising the level of living, and it was particularly effective in developing and strengthening local and national organizations for the purpose of administering social programmes. In the United States, for example, the educational problems created by the rapidly increasing population were being actively tackled through the community development process. A committee had been set up by the President to make an over-all study of the nation's elementary and secondary school requirements. Some 4,000 local, regional and State conferences in 1955 involved the co-operation of more than half a

million citizens. With funds supplied by Congress to help defray the cost, each State and Territory had worked out its own programme, with the result that the study undertaken in 1955 was the most widespread and intensive that the American people had ever made of their schools. The first result was a marked increase in the number of people taking part in educational activities. Further, with wide public support, legislation had been enacted so that greater efforts and more money were being devoted to education than ever before. That was an outstanding example of the effectiveness of the community development process, for it was the need of the local communities that had determined the action undertaken.

14. Paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report referred to the need for studies of actual conditions in under-developed countries, and he would endorse the proposal that the problem of improving information should be taken into account in connexion with the examination of the next report on the world social situation. Since the setting up of the Council, a great deal of basic information on geographic, social, economic and demographic conditions had been collected. Much more factual knowledge, however, was required for the preparation of specific programmes for the promotion of human welfare.

15. Although his delegation had supported the Council's decision that special attention should be paid to urbanization in the second report on the world social situation (resolution 585 H (XX)), he felt serious doubts about the separate long-range programme of urbanization proposed in paragraph 13 of the report at present under review. What was needed was not a new programme, but rather consideration of the problems involved in urbanization in each of the fields covered by the existing priority programmes. Urbanization was a process involving a whole series of complex problems relating to social and economic development; it might even be styled a new way of life. The subject, in fact, included all the problems listed in the priority programmes recommended by the Council in resolution 496 (XVI). Long-range plans should be related to the existing priorities and programmes. There would be general agreement that urbanization could be undertaken most smoothly when all the social and economic programmes were combined into a single programme of practical action.

16. Finally, paragraph 14 referred to "methods of integrating economic and social projects into a coherent development plan and achieving thereby a proper balance and phasing of projects". Although agreement could not be reached on the percentage of public expenditure that should be devoted to particular programmes, nor on any single pattern of relationships between social and economic programmes, there was already considerable agreement on the elements which should go to make up a programme of social and economic development and it should be possible to develop a broad area of understanding in respect of some of the necessary interrelationships between industrialization on the one hand and improvements in social services on the other. In that way, it would be possible to analyse the different methods used and the problems encountered in integrating social and economic action in the various countries and his

delegation considered that the Secretary-General should be requested to undertake such a study, which might well be prepared for the twelfth session of the Social Commission.

17. His delegation would be glad to co-operate in the framing of a suitable draft resolution to that end. The reports of social progress made by the United Nations and the specialized agencies (E/2890, Annexes I to V) were encouraging, and it was clear that effective planning was being undertaken to solve the problems of the future. The Council should so direct its labours that its progress in ten years' time would surpass the brightest hopes that it had entertained in 1956.

18. Mr. HOARE (United Kingdom) said that resolution 496 (XVI) set out, *inter alia*, a list of categories of social work that it would be advisable not to describe as priorities, for they did not provide for any order of implementation nor did they purport to be a comprehensive group of projects for the betterment of the human lot. They were, in fact, no more than the main heads, or most important types, of activity in the social field. Paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report, which amounted to a factual interim report, contained an accurate and commendably modest statement that none of those heads or activities had been neglected. That indeed is what one would have expected.

19. Turning to the specific proposals made by the Secretary-General, he pointed out, with regard to the third sentence in paragraph 6, that community development could not be carried on at all at the international level. It was a means by which coherent units for social work could be organized inside a given country and was essentially a local and national process. At the international level, there could be only assistance for the promotion and encouragement of national and local community development projects. Community development had very considerable potentialities for economic and social progress in under-developed countries and as he had indicated at the twentieth session (866th meeting), his delegation would favour any effort to improve international assistance in that field, and particularly to concert and co-ordinate the activities of the different agencies. It was not altogether clear to him, however, why that should necessitate a long-range programme. The list of activities in the Annexes, though interesting in itself, did not suggest any basis for such a programme. That was perhaps natural, for it was a field in which experience was being gained, mainly by trial and error, and he would instance the discovery that the establishment of demonstration centres was by no means the best method for achieving the desired results. It was right that there should be a review at that stage of the whole field with a view to considering means of greater concentration of effort and if possible of giving greater direction to that effort, and he had no quarrel with the praiseworthy intention to provide that. He would, however, be chary of using, in that context, such phrases as "on a long-range basis", which was found in the last sentence of paragraph 6. It might well be found that a short-range basis—e.g., for two or three years—might be more appropriate.

20. Paragraph 8 referred to the training of social welfare administrators, a question that was also referred to in paragraph 40 of Annex V. Experience certainly suggested that the approach advocated therein was wise. He hoped that one result might be the increased use, especially in countries where new services had to be built from the ground up, of untrained social workers, or those who could be trained on the job; such persons could make a valuable contribution, especially during the early stages of the creation of such services.

21. He agreed with the recommendation in paragraph 11 with regard to the difficulties of providing adequate information, the lack of which constituted a serious and constant handicap. In that respect, his delegation would endorse the comments, in particular, of the Netherlands (927th meeting) and Argentine representatives as to the undesirability of international investigation on a large scale, and the responsibility in that field of national authorities. He understood, however, there was no question of embarking on any ambitious programme and he would support the proposal that the Council should approve further consideration of what was an important problem.

22. The question of urbanization, referred to in paragraph 13, had already been the subject of comment by the United States representative. The problem was one of real importance and would doubtless be discussed in detail in the Social Committee. Reference in the last sentence in the paragraph to "the formulation of a long-range concerted programme" called for the same criticism that he had made of that phrase under paragraph 6.

23. The point dealt with in paragraph 14 raised serious difficulties, for the question of achieving a proper balance in an undeveloped country between expenditure on social welfare and on economic projects was one of considerable complexity. At the 927th meeting, the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs had raised the very objections that he (Mr. Hoare) would have made, only to continue, however, by saying that such criticisms could be stigmatized as unduly negative. He would not wish to take a merely negative approach, and he would not go so far as to suggest that it was never possible usefully to compare the experience of different countries. He would simply say that there were limits to the usefulness of such comparisons, and that in that particular matter the limit seemed to him to be in sight. Indeed, the *International Survey of Programmes on Social Development* (E/C.N.5/301), quoted in the paragraph, struck a note of decided scepticism. Moreover, he had understood Mr. de Seynes to suggest that certain of the studies proposed would have budgetary implications.

24. He had been greatly interested by the Indonesian representative's statement (927th meeting) of the policy which his Government had decided to adopt as to the proportion of expenditure on economic and on social advancement. He could not help wondering whether, in fixing the amounts of the budgetary allocations for social welfare and economic projects respectively, governments would really be influenced by the example of other countries, and whether there was really any value in such national comparisons.

25. There was one possible measure which might be of use. Enough experience had been accumulated by governments, by the specialized agencies and by the United Nations technical assistance organs to make possible the compilation of a cautionary list of mistakes that ought not to be made. But he felt that the agencies themselves would be able to advise governments on such points in the ordinary course of relations with them.

26. Finally, he was in full agreement with the conclusions of paragraph 15, which reflected an admirable development.

27. Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) said that he was sure that the Secretary-General's report would be studied in detail by the Social Committee, but he would like to make a few general observations. He felt it was a pity that so much time had elapsed before the work done on the social problems summarized in Council resolution 496 (XVI) was reviewed. The Secretary-General's report showed that co-operation had been given on all sides and that among the specialized agencies the work of ILO should be singled out. Much of what ILO was trying to do went beyond its strict terms of reference, to provide better wages and health for workers: it had investigated other problems such as the education of workers and the standard of living in many countries including dependent territories. The qualifications of the experts it had sent to Ecuador were in general higher than those supplied by other international organizations participating in the Technical Assistance Programme.

28. He hoped that FAO, which had also done most valuable work, would continue its assistance in Latin America with the problems of nutrition, agriculture and forestry which his country and others did not have the means to solve without international assistance. Ninety-five out of a hundred people in his country knew nothing of dietary laws, and in any case they did not have enough food to plan home economics. It was of course a matter of education, not only of teaching people to read and write but also how they could best make use of the food they had. Insufficient attention had been given to rural economy, and he believed that in Asia as well as in Latin America there was not enough knowledge of forestry, and that FAO could help.

29. He agreed with the United States representative that many problems were involved in public health and the battle against disease. In Ecuador, yellow fever had been eliminated, as in nearly all the Atlantic regions of Latin America, but his country lacked the means to eradicate malaria, especially as the mosquitoes went from place to place, no matter what systematic campaign was set on foot, and were moreover developing resistance to the insecticides supplied on a generous scale by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO. He hoped that the help of those organizations could be increased and Ecuador was grateful not only for the help they had already given but also for the help received from the United States under the Point Four Programme.

30. He also wished to emphasize the importance of UNESCO's help in elementary education. His country, like some others in Latin America, had a large indigenous

population in addition to people of mixed race and the white population. His Government was making a very considerable effort, as other governments in Latin America were doing, to educate the Indians and make them citizens, and he hoped that the help received in that direction from UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO could be increased. There was a great lack of university teachers, especially in mathematics, and while his country was doing its best in the social sciences not all could be done that should be done. In conclusion, as representative of Ecuador, he wished to congratulate the Secretary-General upon his report.

31. Mr. DE FREITAS-VALLE (Brazil) said that his delegation had constantly taken a special interest in the problem of co-ordinating the activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. No doubt that matter would be discussed in greater detail under item 3 of the agenda. In the social field the importance of such co-ordination could hardly be over-emphasized.

32. With regard to paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report, which drew attention to the importance of community development projects, his delegation was ready to support a directive from the Council asking the Secretary-General to include a recommendation for action on a long-term basis in the report which he had been asked to make in resolution 496 (XVI).

33. He recalled the statement made by the representative of Brazil at the tenth session of the Social Commission, in which he had stressed the extreme individuality of Latin Americans, which contrasted with the strong community feeling of settlers in North America, an historical fact best explained in terms of the parallel development of two different civilizations. That was why the countries of Latin America needed help to

develop a community spirit to promote their economic and social progress.

34. He also endorsed paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report. The formulation of "a long-range concerted programme in the field of urbanization" had an important bearing on the social consequences of the industrialization of under-developed countries. It was a complex problem, but one which could not be escaped since industrialization ultimately led to better living standards, despite the difficulties involved in absorbing new working masses in urban centres. One such co-operative programme was being carried out in Brazil, aiming not only at an increase of the urban population but at an improvement in the conditions of rural life and of the productivity of the countryside. Mr. João Goulart, Vice-President of Brazil, in an address which he had recently given to the Thirty-ninth International Labour Conference, had emphasized the need to improve conditions in rural areas as well as the contribution such a step could make to the general development of a country by redressing the balance between industry and a new agricultural economy.

35. With regard to paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's report he felt that it might be as dangerous to lay down an exact framework as it would be to confine the discussion to vague generalities. On the other hand, the gathering of factual information from the different under-developed countries was of great importance if their specific geographic, demographic, economic and social conditions were to be taken into account, and he was convinced that the Council would do well to promote work of that kind although executive decisions must be the responsibility of the government concerned.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.