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President : Mr. Foss SHANAHAN (New Zealand).

Present :

Representatives of the following States: Afghanistan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Jordan, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Observers for the following Member States: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, Netherlands, Tunisia.

Observers for the following non-member States: Federal Republic of Germany, 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 Civil Aviation Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 6

**Reports of the regional economic commissions
(E/3452/Rev.1, E/3466, E/3468, E/3486, E/3522)
(continued)**

1. Mr. ERCHOV (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said he wished to stress the importance of a question which directly concerned the work of UNESCO and of other specialized agencies: the necessity of strengthening and extending the co-operation between the regional economic commissions and the specialized agencies. The UNESCO was engaged in active co-operation with all the commissions. It was helping ECAFE to carry out the lower Mekong basin project, and had sent experts to help the Committee for Co-ordination of Investigations of the lower Mekong

basin in the preparation of a report on dam-building which had since been approved by the Special Fund. The Council, in its resolution 718 (XXVII), had also requested UNESCO to conduct a survey of the problems of providing technical assistance to the under-developed countries in the field of the development of information media, and UNESCO had convened a number of regional conferences with that end in view. At the request of ECA, it had begun a systematic study of Africa's natural resources, a project of the highest importance. Under an agreement with ECLA, UNESCO was supplying experts on educational planning to aid the advisory groups which the Commission sent to the countries in its area, and at the Commission's request, had organized a meeting of experts in Mexico City on the social aspects of economic development in that region, the results of which were to be published shortly. Lastly, at the request of ECE, UNESCO was conducting preliminary investigations into the exploitation of the hydroelectric resources of Europe.

2. The co-operation between UNESCO and the regional economic commissions had not only increased, but had also taken on a new quality. That was demonstrated by such joint undertakings by UNESCO and regional economic commissions as the Conference on the Development of Education in Africa, held in Addis Ababa in May 1961, and the conference to take place at Santiago, Chile, in December 1961, on education and economic and social development. Those conferences characterized the new UNESCO approach to education; and their great success, to which the commissions concerned greatly contributed, would have an important influence on UNESCO's future activities.

3. The aim of UNESCO was to establish the importance of education as an integral part of economic and social development. That aim was expressed in the resolution adopted at its eleventh General Conference on the role of education in economic and social development, in which it was stated that assistance to both general and technical educational projects should have the same consideration as aid offered for economic development to the less developed countries (E/3498, para. 85).

4. The UNESCO therefore welcomed the strengthening of the commissions' role in United Nations economic and social activities, and hoped that it would result in even closer co-operation between the commissions and UNESCO.

5. Mr. GREEN (New Zealand) said that the reports of the regional economic commissions confirmed the growing importance of their work, resulting from a fuller implementation of their terms of reference and from their greater operational role. In the course of natural evolution, the commissions' study of regional problems

had led to the formulation of operational solutions. The commissions were well placed to synthesize such research, advisory and operational activities. In one or two notable cases they had facilitated the co-ordination of those kinds of assistance as well as capital assistance available from within the United Nations and from bilateral sources. In the course of such joint action, they had developed closer relationships with the governments they served and with the various agencies providing technical assistance. It was the growing importance of the commissions' operational activities that had prompted the Council's resolution 793 (XXX) on decentralization of activities and operations. An example of the operational activities they were undertaking was the advisory and training assistance afforded by ECLA to Latin American governments in the techniques and practices of national and regional economic planning. Assistance in preparing the ground for regional and sub-regional co-operation had enhanced that Commission's influence. ECAFE, too, had played a positive operational role in various projects well suited to regional co-operation, both technical and social, of which the best-known examples were the Asian Highway and the lower Mekong basin projects. The latter project had attracted world-wide support and, at the recent session of the Commission, six governments, a non-governmental agency and a private organization had made offers of further contributions. The third instalment of New Zealand's aid was to be used for the purchase of field and laboratory equipment connected with subsidiary river surveys in Cambodia.

6. Backed by the experience of the other commissions, ECA might be able to telescope the evolution of a regional commission's basic functions and to combine consultative and operational activities from the outset. The Commission was at a particularly interesting stage of development. The countries of the region needed not only technical, pre-investment and capital assistance, but also guidance concerning the priority to be attached to the various possible lines of development. His government had noted with interest ECA's work, in co-operation with resident representatives, in helping governments to integrate assistance projects into mutually supporting programmes of economic and social development. His government, aware of the problem of new African States, was prepared to extend further assistance in appropriate forms. The examples he had given illustrated the kind of operational activity his delegation had had in mind when it had spoken the previous year of the need for further experimentation in use of various types of machinery for co-ordination of multilateral planning and bilateral assistance, and had recognized the increasing importance of the role of the commissions in carrying out certain joint projects.

7. The Council at that time had endorsed the development of the commissions' operational functions, but there had been no proposal to define their exact spheres of competence. In endorsing the enlarged role of the commissions in its resolution 1518 (XV), the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to consult the commissions and to submit a report on the steps taken in implementation of Council resolution 793 (XXX) on

decentralization of activities and operations. Although the regional commissions' conclusions (E/3522, annexes IV-VII) showed a diversity of approach which reflected their different personalities, there appeared to be general agreement that there was scope for continued experiment. He noted that the commissions were able within their terms of reference to exercise considerable discretion in carrying out operational work and that they were geographically well placed to perform field functions. His delegation endorsed, however, the concern expressed by ECAFE in its report (E/3466, para. 423) that any arrangements to implement the resolutions on decentralization should not tend to create any enclosed regional blocs.

8. Whilst it was clear that the commissions were ready to assume a measure of responsibility for technical assistance activities, as was desired by the majority of governments, they had not yet reached the stage of defining the boundaries of their responsibilities in relation to the work of the central secretariat and the specialized agencies, particularly in the matter of avoiding duplication of effort. The relationship agreements entered into by the United Nations and the various specialized agencies were binding on all United Nations organs, both central and regional, and the regional commissions and the specialized agencies clearly had a duty to work in close co-operation with one another, in spite of the problems that that might entail.

9. Although there undoubtedly was room for greater use of the services of the regional commissions, the question of the extent to which certain technical assistance functions, such as for instance, the recruitment and control of experts or administrative and financial responsibilities, should be delegated to the regional commissions called for considerably more thought and clarification.

10. His delegation felt that the time was not ripe for the definitive establishment of the commissions' spheres of competence in technical assistance or pre-investment matters. As it had done at previous sessions of the Council, it recommended continued experimentation by the commissions, particularly in respect to regional projects, and endorsed the Secretary-General's pragmatic approach to the devolution of responsibilities to the commissions.

11. From the point of view of economic management, the United Nations technical assistance and pre-investment activities appeared to be satisfactorily administered, and the arrangements for control and management and for effective liaison with the specialized agencies had been brought to a high standard of efficiency; excessive decentralization would thus be both unnecessary and wasteful. He could not, moreover, accept the view that a far-reaching process of decentralization could be achieved by the transfer of staff from Headquarters to the regions, because far more staff would be needed to decentralize forthwith all phases of United Nations technical and pre-investment functions than could be spared from Headquarters and, if the organization was to fulfil its tasks of preserving peace and meeting the needs of the developing countries, the viability of the United Nations and the effectiveness of the central secretariat must on no account be impaired. His delegation believed that the basis of decentralization and

its appropriate boundaries within each regional commission should continue to evolve in the light of experience, and it therefore supported the trend of progress outlined by the Secretary-General in his note on decentralization activities (E/3522) as well as the draft resolutions recommended for adoption by the Council in the commissions' reports.

12. Mr. DIAS CARNEIRO (Brazil) said that his delegation wished to give its full support to the tendency, already apparent in the General Assembly, to accentuate the decentralization of United Nations economic and social activities, and to strengthen the autonomy of the regional economic commissions. He had listened with interest to the statement made by the United States representative at the 1155th meeting, and entirely agreed with the latter's observations on the essential differences between the four regional economic commissions, which were at separate stages of development and were dealing with economic conditions sometimes so completely diverse that it would be a mistake to force them all to conform to a single pattern of decentralization.

13. Having drawn the Council's attention to the references, in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Secretary-General's note on decentralization (E/3522), to steps which had been taken to delegate further administrative and financial functions to the regional secretariats, and to the need for strengthening the regional secretariats, either through reassignment or additional staff, he expressed his regret that the Council had so little time at its disposal for discussing item 6 of the agenda. He hoped that the Council would still be able at the current session to consider and adopt a resolution requesting the General Assembly to give further consideration to the problem of decentralization. He was certain that that hope was shared by other members of the Council and, if time were available, he would like to co-operate with other interested delegations in drafting a suitable text.

14. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) thought that the reports of the regional economic commissions, and particularly that of ECAFE (E/3466), tended if anything to under-estimate the progress made in the less developed countries. In order to make a true assessment of the achievements of the regional economic commissions in assisting the less developed countries, it was essential to look back to the time when the commissions had been established and to measure the progress made in the intervening period.

15. But though much of the information contained in the reports was extremely encouraging, his delegation wished to draw attention to some disquieting aspects of the position of the less developed countries in Asia and the Far East. The Polish representative had said at the 1155th meeting that the less developed countries suffered not only from poverty but from the predatory policies of the colonial powers. That might or might not be true. What was certain, however, was that the less developed countries, particularly those which did not belong to either of the two political blocs, were placed at a serious disadvantage by the bias which the major powers in each bloc displayed in deciding which of the less developed countries should receive assistance, and

how much. His own country did not belong to either of the political blocs; in fact, it entertained cordial relations with members of both. It was therefore in a position to state frankly and objectively that, in consequence of the political policies of the countries offering assistance, the uncommitted countries received a very small share of the total amount of assistance available in the region, although they were full and equal members of ECAFE, and that political factors also constituted a serious obstacle to intraregional co-operation.

16. With regard to decentralization, his delegation did not believe that the best use of United Nations resources could be achieved by organizational or administrative changes alone. On the other hand, as most members of the Council appeared to be in favour of decentralization, his delegation would not oppose it.

17. He agreed with the Brazilian representative that the question of decentralization should be discussed as thoroughly as possible; if the Council could not allocate sufficient time for its discussion at the current session, he hoped that the matter would be raised again at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly. He would only warn the Council that, if decentralization were not carefully controlled, the adverse effects of the competing policies of the two major political blocs would be intensified.

18. Mr. MORALES CRESPO (Venezuela) said that the statements by the executive secretaries of the regional economic commissions at the 1153rd meeting had given a clear picture of the existing world economic situation. A study of the valuable reports of those commissions made it clear that the different regions had a number of problems in common, for example, in regard to finance and education, which hampered efforts towards economic development.

19. To deal more particularly with Latin America, the ECLA report (E/3486) showed a satisfactory balance sheet. However, in his statement, the Executive Secretary of ECLA had dwelt on certain questions which gave cause for concern about future economic prospects in that part of the world, where the discontent among the masses of the people and the inadequacy of resources and investment capital were posing an increasing number of difficult problems. A radical transformation of methods had to be contemplated and solutions urgently sought particularly for the problems presented by the system of land tenure and the shortage of capital. Where the solution of the former problem was concerned, it would also be necessary to provide for the re-absorption of the manpower released by the mechanization of agriculture. In his view, ECLA could make a major contribution towards finding solutions to those problems and thus to overcoming the present crisis.

20. Other difficulties peculiar to Latin America included the familiar problem of the instability of commodity prices. It was essential that when those prices fell, producers should be able to offset the fall by an increase in the volume of exports. It should further be noted that the problem was aggravated by the continual rise in the cost of manufactured goods.

21. Referring more specifically to Venezuela, he said that his country was among those which had an adverse balance of payments and was threatened by a recession caused by the decline in oil prices. His government was taking energetic steps to remedy the balance-of-payments deficit. He wished to thank the Executive Secretary of ECLA for the account he had given of the extremely serious economic crisis threatening the Venezuelan people.

22. Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) said that, in the short period of its existence, ECA had already established in the minds of African leaders a vivid image of its role in the continent's economic and social development. His government had wholeheartedly endorsed the Commission's decisions to develop statistical methodology, to publish a periodical economic bulletin for Africa, and to embark on programmes which ranged from highly specialized technical problems, such as the workshop on low-cost housing, to problems of a general nature, such as development policies and programming.

23. At the same time, the question arose whether ECA's resources would be sufficient to meet the requirements of future years. At the Commission's third session, the Executive Secretary had given a very frank account of the problems involved in finding and recruiting qualified personnel. His delegation appealed to the governments of all members of the Council which were in a position to do so to facilitate the United Nations task by finding suitable personnel from among their own nationals. He had been particularly glad to learn, from a statement made at the 235th meeting of the Technical Assistance Committee, that the United Kingdom Government was establishing a department within the Ministry of Labour to recruit United Kingdom nationals for service under United Nations technical assistance programmes; he hoped that other developed countries would follow suit. The ECA had also asked that the possibilities of establishing an African development bank be investigated and, as one of the main difficulties likely to be encountered would be that of finance, he hoped that all friends of Africa would offer their assistance.

24. In his delegation's view, the Council's discussions on decentralization suggested that there was some misunderstanding with regard to the intended objectives of decentralization, as conceived by the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 1518 (XV). There was a growing feeling among African governments that the United Nations agencies responsible for carrying out assistance programmes had become too cumbersome and complicated and that the United Nations was trying to do too much at once with too little money. The United Nations efforts were, it was believed, thinly spread over a wide range of objectives. There was no selection of clear-cut aims, no concentration of efforts and no mobilization of resources. Further, recipient countries were faced with serious administrative difficulties in their dealings with the United Nations. The Organization as a whole and its related agencies had each developed separate administrative structures and procedures, and each had its own charter and terms of reference; his own government, for instance, had to employ experts to advise it on what each agency was doing and how

each operated. To obtain assistance, many governments had to sign basic and operational agreements with different United Nations agencies. To give another example, before his government had been able to secure the services of a single executive under the programme for the provision of operational, executive and administrative personnel (OPEX), it had had to sign an agreement with the Technical Assistance Board, and, since the agreement was of an international character, it had been necessary to seek constitutional approval for it.

25. It was above all essential that a clear idea of the objectives of EPTA should be established; and that could only be achieved by simplicity. The delegations of African countries, at least, regarded decentralization as meaning that United Nations operations should be simplified. General Assembly resolution 1518 (XV) did not represent an attempt to weaken the central authority of the United Nations, nor, on the other hand, had its sponsors hoped merely to achieve a formal re-distribution of functions, as the note by the Secretary-General on decentralization seemed to suggest. What the sponsors had in mind was a basic structural change, and he regretted that the note by the Secretary-General did not contain any reference to any change of that type. He himself doubted whether, in fact, the resolution could be complied with at all, without a structural change which would assign certain operational functions, especially in the field of technical assistance, to the regional economic commissions. Many representatives from African countries believed that a change in that direction would help to solve the problem of priorities, from the point of view both of the United Nations itself and of the recipient countries. From the United Nations standpoint, the regional commissions were nearer to the scene of operations and better able to assess country, regional and continental needs. The recipient countries, for their part, would perhaps find it easier to establish their own priorities by exchanging opinions with other countries in the same continent.

26. The PRESIDENT announced that the general debate on item 6 was concluded. Further consideration of the item would be deferred to a later meeting, in order that delegations so desiring might have the opportunity to submit resolutions for the Council's consideration.

AGENDA ITEM 21

Non-governmental Organizations

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON APPLICATIONS FOR HEARINGS (E/3528)

27. The PRESIDENT drew attention to the report of the Council Committee on Non-governmental Organizations concerning applications for hearings (E/3528). In the absence of comment, he assumed that the Council unanimously approved the Committee's recommendations.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.