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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: Australia, Colombia, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Romania, United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia.

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

Representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization, Interim Commission for the International Trade 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. KIMURA (Japan) observed that, with the increased emphasis on United Nations activities of an operational character, through the Regular and Expanded Technical Assistance Programmes, the Special Fund and other means, the regional economic commissions had come to play an even more important role as a focal point for co-ordinating such activities.

2. His own country, as a member of ECAFE, attached particular importance to the Commission's work in strengthening ties between countries within the region and at the same time promoting closer relations with countries outside it. He noted with satisfaction that, in pursuance of ECAFE resolution 31 (XVI),<sup>1</sup> the theme

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 2, part III.*

of regional co-operation was being given tangible expression in the Commission's activities — e.g., in intraregional trade promotion and the development of joint industrial ventures.

3. Substantial progress had been made by ECLA in promoting and co-ordinating the economic policies of countries in Latin America, and the working pattern it had adopted might well serve as a model for other regional commissions, particularly ECA.

4. Valuable work had been done by ECE in the sphere of economic research and analysis, and the observations and recommendations made in chapter V of the *Economic Survey of Europe in 1960* (E/ECE/419), entitled "Europe and the trade needs of the less developed countries", were most pertinent and instructive.

5. In view of the fine record of the regional economic commissions, his delegation would continue to support resolutions recommending decentralization of United Nations activities in the economic and social fields.

6. Mr. AYARI (Observer for Tunisia), speaking at the invitation of the PRESIDENT, said that the annual reports of the regional economic commissions were a useful source of information and an accurate gauge of progress achieved. The Tunisian delegation naturally took a special interest in the work of ECA. It was apparent from the report of that commission (E/3452/Rev.1) that the record of the Commission's activity since 1958 was not wholly satisfactory. However, that inadequacy did not seem to be entirely the fault of the Commission, which had to deal with a great many problems in the shortest possible time; the Secretariat itself seemed to bear some of the responsibility. The greatest inadequacy in the Commission's work seemed to be in the matter of research on industrialization, which was a prerequisite of all economic development. The recent work of the Committee for Industrial Development had amply demonstrated the interest which the industrialized countries, the under-developed countries and Headquarters itself took in that question. The Committee's discussions had brought to light a genuine awareness of the need to ensure the industrial advancement of the less developed world. However, although Headquarters had done a great deal of work on the subject, including the preparation of a report on proposals for a longer-term and expanded programme of work in the field of industrialization (E/C.5/1) and a document setting forth a research programme (E/3213 and Add.1 and 2), the part played in research on industrialization by ECLA, ECAFE and ECE had evidently been much greater than that of ECA, which had done almost nothing. Thus, ECLA was associated with such research activities as the programming of and promotion of industrial

development; studies on steel and on the paper-pulp industry; studies on cement, the food-canning industry, and metallurgy; and studies on the management of industrial enterprises, especially those under government control. The ECAFE participated in projects concerning the paper-pulp industry, iron and steel technology, recent technological developments in machine-tool manufacture, basic chemical and related industries. All that ECA's report contained on the subject of industrialization was a few generalities. True, there had been some talk of undertaking a thorough study of the prospects for establishing an African development bank and a study on ways to improve the marketing of African products; however, industrialization as such and the study of its planning on an Africa-wide scale would be worthy of a special effort by ECA. It was time for that commission to give more prominence in its work programme to research relating to industrialization in Africa.

7. He would warn the Council against piecemeal and unrelated activities undertaken without co-ordination and with no long-term aim in view. The industrialization of Africa could not be thought of in terms of a few large-scale projects designed to serve political ends. It would be a mistake to divide Africa into as many economic areas as there were nations and to think of Africa's industrialization in terms of national projects; and it would be a mistake to try at all costs to reconcile the various elements of economic activity with short-lived alliances of political interests which were contrary to the interests of the African peoples. Economic action conceived on an Africa-wide scale should be based on the need to give more than 200 million inhabitants a chance to live like human beings again. The stress should be laid on co-ordination in order to avoid a situation in which some countries, by acting independently, might create a production surplus in one sector of the economy and shortages in other sectors.

8. Some attempts at planning had already been made in Africa; they should have been accompanied by consultations between the different planning authorities. The first step should be to define the main groupings in Africa and subsequently to work out national development plans in such a way that those of several countries could be increasingly integrated. It was not a matter of organizing African economic integration immediately, or of preparing a single comprehensive plan of development, but it was essential to avoid the waste of effort which the simultaneous production of separate national plans would involve. The function of ECA should be to chart a practicable and rational course of development, to evaluate production costs, the economic viability of projects and the productivity of industries. The idea of industrialization through a gradual process of integration had great merit; it would be conducive to a sounder industrialization policy at the national level and would introduce an appreciable element of balance in Africa's relations with the industrialized countries. To facilitate the work of ECA it would be desirable to establish a number of economic research centres closely associated with the Commission. Such centres would be responsible for preparing an inventory of the financial and human resources and the industrial potential of the African

countries; they would determine, on the basis of purely economic criteria, what groupings should be encouraged. They would co-operate with existing United Nations bodies and with national research institutes, and would hold regular consultations under ECA auspices.

9. The need for decentralization and for the strengthening of ECA should also be stressed. His delegation had firmly supported General Assembly resolution 1518 (XV) concerning measures to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 793 (XXX) regarding the decentralization of activities. Such decentralization would enable the regional economic commissions to plan work programmes suited to their task and to the needs of the countries in their areas.

10. Miss SALT (United Kingdom) said that her delegation wished to emphasize once more the reciprocal benefits to be gained by close practical co-operation and exchanges between Headquarters, the Council and the General Assembly on the one hand, and the regional secretariats and commissions on the other. The headquarters organs were the administrative and budgetary centres of the United Nations, and could call on the global experience and resources of all Member States, including those which were not members of any regional commission. The regional centres, on the other hand, had local and continental knowledge and experience which, however efficient their reporting systems might be, could never be entirely shared by those who worked at Headquarters. The head and limbs were interdependent, and effective mobilization of the principal assets of each to their mutual benefit was the true meaning and purpose of decentralization.

11. There was, perhaps, an element of truth in the criticism sometimes expressed that the Council and the General Assembly might from time to time run the risk of flying too high or going too fast, even sometimes of insulating themselves from the hard truths of practical reality. Whenever that happened, the regional commissions could impose, and indeed had imposed, a salutary restraint on what might otherwise become an excessive devotion to theoretical or unattainable perfection. On the other hand, the converse was also sometimes true. The regional commissions had from time to time been over-concerned with detail and over-absorbed in parochial matters, ignoring changes elsewhere in the world and the effects of their own actions on others. It was essential therefore that discussions in the Council and the General Assembly should be illuminated by the reports of the regional economic commissions, both oral and written, and that the commissions in turn should discuss in their own plenary sessions resolutions and decisions of the Council and the Assembly which were of immediate concern to them.

12. The regional economic commissions differed not only from Headquarters, but also radically one from another. One striking example was the difference in the steps taken by each of the four regional commissions in pursuance of Council resolution 793 (XXX) and General Assembly resolution 1518 (XV) concerning decentralization. That was as it should be. The problem of United Nations administration in Latin America

were patently different from those in Africa, Europe or Asia and the Far East, and there was no advantage in imposing either on the regions or on the centre an arbitrary and pre-determined system for allocating primary responsibility for a given administrative problem. The Council should recognize that the only essential principle to uphold in the relationship between the regions and the centre was that United Nations resources and machinery should be used for the most effective benefit of the recipients. One useful criterion which might be applied was whether a field of action contemplated was of purely regional or wider — even global — concern.

13. With regard to the composition of the commissions, she was glad to note that ECA had unanimously agreed to admit to associate membership Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland — four territories for whose international relations her government was responsible — thus enabling it to fulfil completely the request of ECA<sup>2</sup> that all such territories on the continent of Africa should participate in the Commission's work.

14. Her delegation had noticed with equal satisfaction that, since the second session of ECA, Nigeria had advanced from associate to full membership and that Sierra Leone, which had become an independent State, was also eligible for full membership. She hoped that, following its admission to the United Nations, Sierra Leone would participate as a full member in the forthcoming session of ECA, of which it had been a foundation associate member, and that the same would be true of Tanganyika in 1962.

15. She would thank ECLA for admitting British Honduras to associate membership, and hoped that in less than a year's time the Federation of the West Indies, currently an associate member, would be admitted to full membership of ECLA as an independent and sovereign State.

16. Her government would support all the draft resolutions submitted for the Council's consideration by the four commissions; but she would suggest that operative paragraph 2 of part I of the draft resolution submitted by ECA (E/3452/Rev.1, part IV) should be amended to read "*Takes note* of the recommendations and resolutions of the Commission and endorses the programme of work and priorities. . . ." To enable the General Assembly to consider and approve the necessary budgetary allocations, it was customary for the Council to endorse the programme of work and priorities adopted by the commissions; but it was not customary for the Council to endorse the recommendations and resolutions of the commissions themselves, since those were internal matters in which the commissions had full liberty to act in accordance with the wishes of their members. The amendment she had suggested would bring the ECA draft resolution into line with those recommended at the current session by the other commissions.

17. Mr. LESECHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) welcomed the reports of the four regional economic

commissions and the informative statements made by their respective executive secretaries at the 1153rd meeting. One of the questions raised was the difficulty experienced by under-developed countries in exporting their products at fair and stable prices and in sufficient quantity owing to the recession in the capitalist countries. Some members of ECA had good reason to ask whether their countries were indeed sovereign States or rather mere appendages of world monopoly capitalism. The United Nations must provide an answer and the answer must take the form of concrete measures. The economic advancement of under-developed countries could best be assured by helping them to develop their own resources. It had been suggested that a volunteer corps could be of use in that work; such flights of fancy were no substitute for the real help those nations needed. The ECA report showed the Commission's increasing preoccupation with the complex economic problems affecting the countries within its area.

18. Each region had its own characteristic problems, with the result that the regional commissions had each developed a distinct personality and devised its individual methods. The main emphasis in ECE had been on economic and technical co-operation and exchange of experience in numerous fields, on the development of trade inside Europe and with other regions and on the study of such vital topics as automation and labour productivity. The ECAFE, on the other hand, was concentrating on the study of problems of economic development and its planning, the conservation and development of resources, regional technical assistance projects and commodity price stabilization.

19. The Soviet Union delegation broadly approved of the work of the regional economic commissions during the period under consideration. However, in the light of its experience as a participant in the work of ECE and ECAFE, it considered that the commissions were still not taking full advantage of the opportunities for developing economic trade and technical co-operation, expanding the exchange of experience on a regional basis and, above all, broadening their role in the provision of technical assistance to the under-developed countries.

20. His delegation attached particular importance to Council resolution 793 (XXX) and General Assembly resolution 1518 (XV) on decentralization and the strengthening of the regional economic commissions. Thorough implementation of those resolutions would help to improve, expand and intensify the work of the regional economic commissions, which would then be in a better position to help the under-developed countries to solve such important problems as the training of national cadres, the prospecting for and exploitation of natural resources, the creation and development of national industries and the expansion of trade and economic co-operation. The need for such action was particularly well demonstrated in the ECAFE report. The part played by the regional economic commissions in the technical assistance programmes should also be extended.

21. The Council should pay particular attention to the fact that if the economic and social activities of the United Nations were to be really decentralized and the role of the regional economic commissions strengthened,

<sup>2</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 10, part III, resolution 5 (II).*

it would be necessary to enlarge their staffs, even at the expense of Headquarters; and the process of transferring extra posts to the commissions' secretariats must be completed in the very near future.

22. With regard to the ECE report, resolution 1 (XVI) (E/3468, part III) was especially important, since the members of the Commission had expressed their readiness to facilitate by all possible means the preparation of the study on the economic and social consequences of disarmament to be undertaken under General Assembly resolution 1516 (XV). In view of the extreme importance of that problem, all the regional economic commissions should tackle it and assist the United Nations

Secretariat in preparing the study requested by the General Assembly.

23. Finally, it was to be regretted that not all the countries within the respective regions were represented in the regional economic commissions. The German Democratic Republic was not admitted to membership of ECE, and the People's Republic of China did not occupy its rightful place in ECAFE, which also excluded the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Mongolian People's Republic.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.