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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: Austria, Belgium, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Iraq, Netherlands, Romania, Tunisia.

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 Monetary Fund, World Health Organization.

AGENDA ITEM 3

World social situation (E/3489; E/CN.5/346/Rev.1, E/CN.5/346/Add.1-5, E/CN.5/357, E/CN.5/361)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. LESECHKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said the *Report on the World Social Situation* (E/CN.5/346/Rev.1) showed that useful preparatory work had been done on the collection of material, in the course of which visits had been made to a number of countries to study conditions on the spot. The *Report* not only reflected such world-wide social problems as education and health but also touched on such vital questions as balanced economic and social development and the financing of social measures. It was, however, an interim report, covering a period of only three years, and its conclusions must therefore be regarded as provisional. Moreover, it was marred by major defects. For instance, there were little or no data on social conditions in such countries as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the Mongolian People's Republic, the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of China, although such data were presented for Taiwan, South Viet-Nam, South Korea and the Federal Republic of

Germany. In the interests of objectivity, information should have been included on all countries of the world.

2. A lack of objectivity was particularly noticeable in chapter III, where the basic indicators used to measure economic and social development were per caput national income, per caput energy consumption, the infant mortality rate and the school enrolment ratio. The tables compiled on the basis of those indicators gave a distorted picture of the position in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, as they arbitrarily subdivided countries into groups without giving specific figures. In dealing with the question of national income, no mention was made of such important points as its distribution by classes and sectors of the population and its rate of growth. As yet, the national income of the United States was greater than that of the USSR, but the rate of growth was much higher in the USSR; in 1960, the national income of the USSR had been twenty-six times greater than in 1913, whereas that of the United States had been only three and a half times greater. By 1970, the Soviet Union would overtake the United States both in aggregate and per caput national income. The *Report* disregarded another important indicator of economic and social development, the cost-of-living index, which had risen considerably in many countries.

3. The section on health in chapter I was inadequate, since the information it contained was too general; for example, it simply quoted the total number of doctors in 186 countries and territories, thus ignoring the wide differences between the health services of different countries. The Soviet Union, for instance, had more than 400,000 doctors, or eighteen for every ten thousand inhabitants, and medical care was completely free. The sections on education, social security and employment in the same chapter should have included data providing a basis for comparisons and conclusions. If education had been more fully treated, it would have emerged that, in the central Asian republics of the Soviet Union, there were ninety-two students attending institutions of higher learning for every 10,000 of the population, a figure two-thirds greater than in France, Italy and western Germany. There was no mention of the fact that many newly independent countries were anxious to introduce free universal education and that some countries, such as Cuba, had succeeded in doing so. Some statistics were given about education in the Soviet Union, which did not, however, reflect the true state of affairs. To give a single illustration of the progress the Soviet Union had made: it had long overtaken all countries in the world, including the United States, in its output of engineers, while in 1961 there had been more than twice as many students in higher educational establishments in the Soviet Union than in all the capitalist countries of Europe put together.

4. The *Report* gave insufficient attention to the adverse effects of the arms race and military expenditure. As the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Krushchev, had frequently pointed out, military expenditure exercised a depressive effect on the world social situation and was responsible for the inadequate appropriations for health, education, housing and social security in many countries. The *Report* also failed to note the danger to health of the nuclear tests that were continuing to be held in Africa. Moreover, there was no mention of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1514 (XV). Instead, the authors tried to show that the granting of independence led to the breakdown of social services, citing the Congo as an example. They omitted to mention that the colonialists had done nothing to create a sound system of social services during their many years of rule in those countries. In discussing social obstacles to economic growth, the authors of the *Report* concentrated on such secondary factors as population growth and climatic conditions, overlooking those obstacles inherent in the political and economic structure of the State and ignoring altogether colonialism and the arms race.

5. In the sub-section of chapter II entitled "The effects of social programmes on economic growth" (pp. 33-34), the authors suggested that social welfare services for special groups in need might not only fail to promote economic growth, but might even cause inflation if the supply of goods could not be readily increased to meet the additional income put in circulation. Such a contention was both untrue and inhuman. Experience had shown that progressive social programmes helped to improve a country's economic situation.

6. Certain representatives had expressed dissatisfaction that the Council should concern itself at the current session with the solution of one of the most urgent world social problems, that of unemployment. Their reasoning was contradictory: while asserting their determination to eliminate unemployment, they claimed that the lot of the unemployed was tolerable in a capitalist country. But life could not be pleasant for the unemployed under any circumstances and the Soviet Union was in favour of an international programme for the speediest possible solution of the problem.

7. Social and economic development were inseparable and, in spite of the enormous resources devoted to the development of the economy in the Soviet Union, the greatest importance was given to the satisfaction of human needs. Instead of stressing the need for governments to show a greater concern for those needs, the *Report* argued that even a slight rise in the standard of living in the under-developed countries would present exceptional difficulties. According to its authors, with a population growth of only 1 per cent per annum and an objective of an increase of income per caput at the rate of 3 per cent, it had been estimated that an investment programme of as high as 16 to 20 per cent would be needed (p. 88). But capital investments could be increased by such measures as eliminating military expenditure and prohibiting or reducing the export of profits on foreign investments. The *Report* would have the effect of dis-

couraging the developing countries, instead of inspiring them to seek methods of improving their standard of living.

8. The *Report* maintained that political and Social institutions played no part in economic development, but that the rate of economic growth was primarily to be explained by the general state of education in a given country. Education was, of course, important, but the most rapid rates of economic growth had been achieved in countries where radical political and social changes had taken place.

9. The section of chapter II entitled "Social consequences of industrialization" (pp. 24-25) reflected an outdated attitude to industrialization and might give the impression that it was not indispensable in under-developed countries, particularly those with a very hot climate. The backwardness of an area such as Africa was due to colonial rule, not the climate. In fact, the development of industry helped to strengthen political and economic independence and to bring about a rise in the standard of living.

10. Much emphasis had been laid in the Council on the need for social reforms in the less developed countries. That was a matter for those countries themselves to decide. There was, however, no doubt that they needed practical help, particularly in the fields of health and education. The Soviet Union was doing its utmost to provide that kind of help.

11. He hoped that future reports would be more objective and more useful, and that they would be prepared by individuals from different parts of the world and representing different outlooks. His delegation supported the Social Commission's recommendation that the report should be published once every two years (E/3489, draft resolution I), and suggested that it should be discussed in the General Assembly as well as in the Council.

12. His delegation also approved the practice of issuing addenda to the *Report* containing the results of country case studies. One of them was devoted to balanced economic and social development in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (E/CN.5/346/Add.5). Although it contained some mistakes, which it was to be hoped would be corrected, it was in general accurate and objective. He trusted that the document would be of interest to other countries situated close to Uzbekistan.

13. The question of balanced economic and social development was not new either to the Council or to the General Assembly, which, in its resolution 1392 (XIV), had approved the Council's decision to amend the terms of reference of ECAFE and of ECLA to include the social aspects of economic development and the interrelationship of the economic and social factors. However, not all countries understood the same thing by "balanced economic and social development". Countries with a planned economy interpreted the phrase to mean proportional development, whereas the authors of the *Report* took it to mean the co-ordination of economic programmes with social goals, and social programmes with economic goals. The Soviet Union's experience had shown that a planned economy could advance incomparably more quickly than an unplanned economy and that it ensured a steady rise

in the well-being of the population. It also helped to strengthen a country's independence. But the effectiveness of planning depended on execution, and in the socialist countries, state plans had the status of directives, provision being made for checking their fulfilment. In the Soviet Union, that task was carried out by the Central Statistical Service. The countries of Asia and the Far East were interested in planning, and several of them had already adopted that system. A discussion of the question in ECAFE had resulted in plans for a conference of Asian countries to be held in 1961 on problems of economic planning. It was hoped that such conferences would take place regularly in the future.

14. Sir Samuel HOARE (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom Government had the utmost concern for the economic and social development of the underdeveloped countries and shared the oft-expressed view that the grievously low levels of living in various parts of the world must be raised as speedily as possible. That concern had been reflected in its support of the United Nations and other international programmes and of such bilateral assistance as the Colombo Plan and aid to the Non-Self-Governing Territories for which the United Kingdom was still responsible, as well as to newly independent countries. United Kingdom grants, loans and technical assistance to independent countries and Non-Self-Governing Territories in Africa had amounted in 1959-1960 to £30.6 million and in 1960-1961 to £48.2 million. The United Kingdom was helping the less developed countries in other ways; in 1959-1960, 11,500 Africans had been receiving higher education in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom was anxious that its efforts to supply technical assistance, either through the United Nations or through bilateral schemes, should have the greatest possible impact. A new ministry to be known as the Department of Technical Co-operation had been set up and would be functioning by the end of the month, for the purpose of co-ordinating, through a single channel, the supply of all United Kingdom technical assistance and thus securing the best service and eliminating administrative difficulties and delays. The department would be headed by a minister, but the administrative head would be Sir Andrew Cohen, who would be well known to some delegations from his service on the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

15. The *Report on the World Social Situation* was one in a remarkable series of reports which provided the Council with its only means of taking stock of the social situation and examining particular aspects of it. The *Report* under consideration had special reference to the problem of balanced social and economic development. Part I, which contained a general discussion of recent trends, was of an interim and summary character, because a full report on the subject would be due in the next issue. It was rather a statement of problems remaining to be solved than of achievement. Generally speaking, the picture drawn was not particularly encouraging, but it had some encouraging features; it was stated, for instance, that the health situation had on the whole improved and that more and more countries were concentrating on education as a human investment. Although the benefits of education could not be assessed in economic terms, it was an investment

which, the United Kingdom believed, would be invaluable, particularly in providing the leadership which would be required in all fields by countries in the process of development.

16. The United Kingdom had a special concern with balanced social and economic development because it had been the first country to achieve the industrial revolution, and that had highlighted the dangers of economic development not attended by social development. It therefore welcomed the authors' opinion that such mistakes need not be repeated. Thus it was suggested in the *Report* that conditions in the less developed countries were quite different from those which had obtained in the United Kingdom during the industrial revolution and that it was likely that industrialization, far from aggravating, would tend to mitigate the effect of migration from rural to urban areas. It had been the social conditions of the early industrial period in the United Kingdom that had given rise to the movement for social reform that had persisted throughout the nineteenth century and had led to the abandonment of laissez-faire and in the long run to the social revolution which had taken place at the end of and just after the Second World War. And it might be said that the social conscience of the twentieth century had been similarly aroused by the plight of millions of persons in the less developed countries, with whose betterment the United Nations was especially concerned.

17. On balanced development (chapter II), the *Report* was extremely lucid, a quality not always to be found in such documents. He had only one small complaint to make: the word "complementarity" was used on page 87, and it was stated that it was one of the classic concepts of economics. It might well be a classic concept of economics, but he very much doubted whether the word had ever been used by any of the classic writers on economics; it was to be hoped that the word would not reappear in any United Nations document. Otherwise he had nothing but praise for the inventive handling of the material, especially for the graphic presentation used in chapter III. If that chapter did not draw any specific conclusion, it at least gave food for thought.

18. The dissociation of economic from social development and the separate use of those terms would seem to be a mere habit of thought and terminology because, in any real development of the less developed countries, there must necessarily be a nexus between economic and social development, which were essentially two aspects of a single dynamic process. In actual practice, however, a division was imposed on planners and administrators, since the economic and social aspects of development were handled by different departments. The decision on a particular project would depend on imponderables, political, budgetary or such factors as the state of preparedness of one project as compared with another. There was a struggle for existence among projects and a survival of the fittest; but the one that survived was not necessarily that best calculated to advance development as a whole.

19. It might be asked whether a study which did not make definite suggestions as to methods by which balance might be achieved was of any real value. It was evident that the subject was highly complex and that there was no common standard of measurement that could be used;

but a review such as the one before the Council, which distinguished essential elements and presented the situation in various countries by the use of social and economic indicators in graphic form, would be of great value to planners and administrators in the less developed countries, by supplying a background against which an informed judgement might be reached. That was at present one of the most valuable ways in which the United Nations could help the less developed countries.

20. The chapter of the *Report* on balanced development should be considered in relation to the resolutions adopted year after year by the Council, proclaiming that economic and social development should go hand in hand. The previous *Report*¹ had revealed that no country, and, in particular, none of the less developed countries, had achieved any such balance. The latest *Report*, while showing that economic and social development had no common standards of measurement, had nevertheless shed light on certain situations which it was possible to regard as situations of imbalance. The *Report* indeed was a valuable corrective to the perhaps unduly glib statements made in past General Assembly resolutions.

21. His delegation approved in general the Secretariat's proposals for further study. One of the most obvious problems for planners and administrators in the less developed countries was the possible social consequences of economic developments; that subject would seem to be eminently suitable for study and formulation of advice. He would not, however, press that suggestion, but would leave it to the consideration of the Secretariat. The whole subject of balance in development was a fascinating one and there might be some tendency to allow the academic approach to override the practical, especially as the latter was more difficult. He was sure, however, that the Secretariat would avoid that danger.

22. Mr. REVOL (France) said that the *Report on the World Social Situation* represented a remarkable synthesis of economic and social data, a matter of particular satisfaction to France, which had always attached great importance to balanced development.

23. Unlike economic factors, the various factors contributing to a social situation were difficult to assess quantitatively; yet any analysis of the economic situation which failed to take them into account would be incomplete and consequently distorted. There was therefore no alternative but to adopt the criterion of the level of living, though its inadequacy must always be kept in mind.

24. From the end of the Second World War until 1958, there had been a practically continuous rise, varying in degree, in living standards throughout the world. No country had remained outside the general rising trend, but at the same time none among the least favoured countries had witnessed any notable improvement in its relative position. Since 1958 there had been a slight change in the situation. The upward movement had slowed down, though since 1960 it had shown a clear tendency to regain momentum. But that slowing down, which had been, moreover, very relative, was less significant than the

irregularities which for some years had seemed to mark the rising curve of living standards in some countries. That phenomenon had been particularly in evidence in Latin America, where a subsistence economy had already been replaced in almost all countries by a market economy based on commodity exports; it was less noticeable in the countries of Africa and Asia, doubtless because a subsistence economy was still much more prevalent but also perhaps because in those countries statistics were less highly developed and did not fully reflect the real situation. Two observations might be made in that connexion. The first was that the commodities problem had even more serious effects in the social than in the economic field. The second was that countries which were moving beyond the stage of a subsistence economy ought to proceed as quickly as possible to industrialization, which alone could guarantee them a minimum of stability.

25. Viewed against that general background, the situation in France had been characterized by a continuous improvement in levels of living since 1948. There were two striking aspects of that development, the first of which had been a renewal of vitality. In passing, it should be noted that table 3 on page 45 of the *Report* which showed infant mortality rates in selected countries might lead to erroneous conclusions unless it were borne in mind that the French average for the period 1945-1959 (67.8 per thousand) was abnormally high due to the difficult years immediately following the war; in 1959 the rate had fallen below 30 per thousand. Secondly, that improvement had been achieved by rather original methods representing an attempt to achieve a compromise between planning and liberalism.

26. With regard to the problems raised by urbanization, and particularly by the disparity in the trend of levels of living in urban and rural areas, generally speaking, urbanization was linked to industrialization. That was why the French delegation in the Social Commission had suggested that functional links should be created between the United Nations organs dealing with those two matters. But the connexion between them, though obvious, was sometimes difficult to define. In some cases, urbanization was the progressive result of long-standing industrialization; in others, it was a concomitant of the establishment of industry, and in yet others, it stimulated or preceded industrial development. In other words, urbanization, though it raised fundamental human problems, also had some positive aspects, for it might be the expression, if not the instrument, of the industrialization which was recognized as indispensable.

27. The *Report* devoted several pages (19-22) to the growing disparity between agricultural and non-agricultural incomes, which was probably one of the continuing causes of urbanization. That was, however, an indirect cause, since in the countries still awaiting industrialization, the masses of urban workers derived only a very partial advantage from that disparity. In fact, the progressive decrease in the share of the total national income accruing to the agricultural sector was reflected in many still essentially agricultural countries by a fall in the general level of living and by a widening of the gap separating them from the industrialized countries. Normal industrial development was not, however, possible unless

¹ *Report on the World Social Situation*, United Nations publication, Sales No. 57.IV.3.

based on a healthy and, if possible, expanding agriculture. Finally, from the purely human angle, a relatively long transitional period was necessary if the transfer from a rural to an industrial environment was to be achieved without disruption.

28. A balance also had to be found between the alleged agricultural over-production, which was resulting in a decrease in the number of agricultural producers and in their total income, and the shortage of food which affected more than half the world. That complex problem would be discussed under item 8 of the agenda; he had mentioned it only to stress its social as well as its economic implications.

29. There was no need to emphasize the importance of the human factor in economic development. The *Report* brought out those factors but studied them mainly from the standpoint of social "obstacles" to economic development. Although large populations were in some respects a hindrance to economic development, viewed from a wider angle they represented an incentive to progress. Opinions were divided in regard to the relationship between population growth and population density on the one hand and levels of living on the other. The essential point to remember was that the problem was a complex one which presented itself in different terms according to the time and the place; the wisest course was to leave each government to find its own solution. The French delegation considered that every effort should be directed towards discovering new sources of power and new natural resources in order to meet current and future needs.

30. It was not enough for a country to possess an abundant labour force; it needed individuals capable of carrying out increasingly specialized tasks consistent with constantly improving techniques. The French delegation, which had been one of the first to emphasize in the Council the importance of vocational training for developing countries, was happy to note that the United Nations and the specialized agencies were now stressing such training in their programmes of work. However, vocational training would not fully achieve its object unless, in each country, there was an awareness at both the national and the local level of the need for mobilizing all energies; therein lay the value of community development, which was neither a panacea nor an end in itself but rather a means whereby the new countries could build up a substructure through obtaining, without recourse to coercion, popular support for programmes designed to achieve social progress.

31. Mr. ALVAREZ OLLONIEGO (Uruguay) said that he had made detailed observations on the *Report on the World Social Situation* in the Social Commission and did not intend to cover the same ground again. He would emphasize that the social problem was a problem of the community, rather than of the individual. The community was not, however, autonomous; it was an organization spontaneously created for the purpose of serving human beings, who had inherent rights and duties, in particular, the rights to life, to liberty and to freedom of thought and

association. The basic factor in the exercise of those rights was the family, to which the United Nations should pay special attention in future reports on the world social situation. The solution of the problem of family unity would lead to the solution of all other social problems with which the Social Commission was confronted. The United Nations had not the resources to meet all calls for assistance, but if it concentrated on one aspect of social development — the family — success there would lead to further success in industrialization, urbanization, housing, education, literacy, health and social services, which were all problems bearing on a single aim, the betterment of mankind.

32. Special attention should be paid to the development of the child. That had been provided for, as had the protection of the other basic human rights, in the Uruguayan Constitution.

33. It was gratifying that the *Report* had dealt more specifically with the problem of balanced social and economic development. No rigid distinction could be drawn between the two; human beings were involved in both cases. Any integration of economic and social development should take account of the special characteristics of each region, country and even town. In his delegation's view, however, priority should be given to social development, as being more directly concerned with human welfare.

34. A recent Papal Encyclical showed that problems which were of concern to the United Nations had found an echo everywhere. The emphasis placed on the reduction of inequalities and on social development was most gratifying. Strictly speaking, it was impossible to talk of developed countries, under-developed countries and countries in the course of development, since all countries were in the course of development. All countries must struggle to improve levels of living, since disequilibrium in one region engendered disequilibrium in other regions and also envy and even hatred, as had been pointed out in the Encyclical. The wealthier countries were in duty bound to help the less wealthy and thereby to improve their own levels of living. In Latin America, as in other regions, economic assistance or large-scale investment would be fruitless unless urgent efforts were made to hasten social development, without which economic development would lack a human basis.

35. For that reason, the Social Commission should meet more often to provide the Council with more frequent and more ample material on social problems, matching the material it received on economic problems. He supported the proposal made at the 1167th meeting by the United States representative that the Council should debate the economic and social situation together since the two embraced a single problem, the betterment of the lot of mankind. All the bodies concerned, whether the United Nations, the specialized agencies or the non-governmental organizations — whose work incidentally was not usually accorded adequate recognition — must work together to that end.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.