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PROGRAMME OF CONCERTED PRACTICAL ACTION IN THE SOCIAL FIELD
OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Social Commission, at its ninth session, considered a report by the Secretary-General entitled "Programme of Concerted Practical Action in the Social Field of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies",^{1/} prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 535 (VI) of 2 February 1952 and Economic and Social Council resolution 434 A (XIV) of 28 July 1952. The Commission thereupon recommended^{2/} to the Council certain principles and essential elements of an international programme of concerted practical action in the social field.

2. At its sixteenth session, the Economic and Social Council, having considered the report of the Social Commission, adopted resolution 496 (XVI) of 31 July 1953, which states the conclusions of its examination of the social activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, undertaken in accordance with Assembly resolution 535 (VI), and sets forth principles and methods for carrying out an international programme of practical action in the social field. The deliberations that led to the adoption of the resolution are in the report of the Economic and Social Council to the eighth session of the General Assembly, paragraphs 590 to 608.^{3/}

^{1/} See E/CN.5/291 and addenda.

^{2/} See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixteenth Session, Supplement No. 7, chapter IV.

^{3/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighth Session, Supplement No. 3, document A/2430.

3. The text of the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council reads as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council,

"Taking into account the recommendations of its Social Commission on the programme of concerted action in the social field,

"Having considered the report by the Secretary-General on a programme of concerted practical action in the social field of the United Nations and the specialized agencies prepared in the light of criteria for, and priorities in the social field established by Council resolutions 324 (XI) and 451 A (XIV), the findings of the Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation, the views of governments and policies established by the United Nations and the specialized agencies,

"1. Informs the General Assembly that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 535 (VI), it has examined the social activities undertaken by the United Nations and the specialized agencies;

"2. Calls attention to the fact that progress has already been made through national, bilateral and international action in dealing with the age-old problems of ignorance, poverty and disease, but that in spite of all efforts, the need as pictured in the report on the world social situation is so great that resources available are still inadequate;

"3. Notes with satisfaction that the Secretary-General's report contains suggestions directed to increasing the practical effectiveness of the social programme which the Council commends to the careful consideration of the organizations concerned;

"4. Agrees with the views expressed by the Secretary-General and the Directors-General of the specialized agencies concerned that, in the programme of activities now being undertaken as part of a broader plan for the promotion of social progress and the raising of standards of living among the people, there is need for reorientation, further concentration of effort, wider geographical coverage, improvement of methods and techniques, additional resources and for achieving full governmental and popular co-operation;

"5. Considers that special attention should be devoted to the exploration for broader sources indispensable for international financing of social and economic development;

"6. Considers that international action in the social field should give special consideration to the needs of under-developed areas;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General and invites the specialized agencies to apply in matters of assistance to governments the following general principles:

"(a) The interrelated character of economic and social factors and the benefits to social progress resulting from a balanced expansion of world economy require that economic development and social development go hand-in-hand with a view to improving standards of living; projects financed by the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be selected bearing in mind this inter-relationship;

"(b) Such projects should be concerted with integrated plans for economic and social development prepared by each of the beneficiary governments;

"(c) Such projects should yield early and permanent results and reach a maximum number of people;

"(d) Such projects should be adapted to the geographic, economic, social and demographic conditions of the country concerned, and studies of these conditions essential to effective practical projects should be undertaken but should not delay action to meet urgent needs;

"(e) The participation of appropriate non-governmental organizations in the implementation of international programmes in the social field should be encouraged and their experience, competence and facilities utilized to the fullest extent;

"8. Considers that a concerted programme of practical action in the social field should, within the framework of criteria and priorities established by Council resolutions 324 (VI) and 451-A (XIV) and without prejudice to the priorities established in the economic field, concentrate on projects which:

"(a) Improve health and nutrition by increasing food supply and improving food distribution and dietary practices;

"(b) Strengthen national health services with greater accessibility of medical services, improve maternal and child health and prevent and control major communicable diseases;

"(c) Strengthen national family and child welfare services;

"(d) Introduce, extend and improve social security and social insurance measures such as assistance in old age, unemployment and disability;

"(e) Develop and extend services for the welfare of groups in need of special care;

"(f) Emphasize fundamental education, promote greater accessibility of education for the broad masses of the population, introduce or develop in the Member States of the United Nations free compulsory primary education for all and encourage scientific training and research;

"(g) Improve housing and community facilities, especially for persons in low-income groups;

"(h) Increase employment opportunities, improve labour standards, strengthen training and manpower services, assure respect for trade-union freedom so as to develop constructive employer-employee relationships and encourage any measures which will improve the social and economic status of workers;

"9. Considers it advisable, as an immediate objective, to pay particular attention to the use of the following practical methods and techniques for assisting governments in carrying out the activities set forth in paragraph 8:

"(a) The promotion and implementation of community development projects, particularly through the establishment of demonstration centres;

"(b) The rapid development of programmes and facilities for training both professional and technical personnel and auxiliary and community workers;

"(c) The development and strengthening of national and local organizations necessary for administering social programmes;

"10. Authorizes the Secretary-General to take early action, on an experimental basis and at the request of the governments concerned, to convene one or more small groups of senior policy-making representatives of governments having similar social and economic problems and of representatives of the Secretariats of the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned, to

plan concrete programmes for expansion of community development projects, including training facilities and the strengthening of organizations for administering social programmes related to community development in their respective countries;

"11. Requests the Technical Assistance Board to give sympathetic consideration, as resources permit, to such requests as the governments concerned may make regarding any particular aspects of these programmes;

"12. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Directors-General of the specialized agencies, to submit to an early session of the Council a report containing recommendations on further practical measures which might be taken to strengthen and make more effective methods and techniques of the type recommended in paragraph 9, taking into account the results of consultations provided for in paragraph 10."