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GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
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provisional agenda\*  
REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE  
ARMAMENTS RACE AND ITS EXTREMELY HARMFUL  
EFFECTS ON WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION  
WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
Second regular session of 1985  
Item 3 of the provisional  
agenda\*\*  
GENERAL DISCUSSION OF  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL POLICY, INCLUDING  
REGIONAL AND SECTORAL  
DEVELOPMENTS

Letter dated 28 May 1985 from the Permanent Representative  
of Czechoslovakia to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

On behalf of the delegations of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Polish People's Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the declaration of the above-named socialist countries on the situation in the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The declaration gives an explanation of the position of those countries on the activity of ILO. Its text has been agreed upon with the national trade unions and with the organs which represent managers of socialist enterprises in ILO. The text of the declaration was transmitted to Mr. Blanchard, Director-General of ILO, in Geneva on 29 March 1985.

\* A/40/50/Rev.1.

\*\* See Economic and Social Council decision 1985/101.

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I would be grateful if you could have the text of the declaration circulated as an official document of the Economic and Social Council, under item 3 of the provisional agenda for the second regular session of 1985, and as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 12, 48, 84 and 90 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jaroslav CESAR  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Declaration of the socialist countries on the situation in the  
International Labour Organisation

The socialist countries - co-sponsors of this declaration - attach great importance to the promotion of international co-operation on issues within the competence of ILO. This is what motivates their numerous specific proposals designed to attain the aims and purposes of the Constitution of ILO as well as their desire to use this organization's potential for strengthening world peace and protecting workers' vital interests and rights. ILO has drafted and adopted a number of conventions and recommendations serving, in general, the interests of workers and their trade unions. The organization has made a certain contribution to the efforts of the international community to eliminate the odious system of apartheid. Some useful activities on a number of specific social and labour problems have been carried out. Yet, our overall assessment of the results of the activities of ILO and its secretariat administration remains negative; there is a need for a radical change in the organization's work.

Since their elaboration in 1919, the basic concept and structure of ILO have remained essentially unchanged. The organization has virtually ignored the admission of socialist and developing countries to its membership. By following its old course, ILO in effect serves the interests of only one socio-political system, that of capitalism, in an attempt to impose its will and ways on other States.

In its present form, the principle of tripartism does not reflect the realities existing in member States and, in addition, is used to discriminate against non-governmental representatives of many States.

The socialist countries are gravely concerned over the abnormal situation prevailing in the International Labour Organisation. The organization's activities, particularly in recent time, have been characterized by: a clear disregard for and a playing down of the importance of issues affecting workers' basic interests, above all the right to life and the right to work; attempts to use the organization for unseemly political ends against socialist and other progressive countries in order to interfere in their internal affairs; discrimination against socialist countries, making our full participation in ILO activities impossible; a number of politically biased decisions adopted by its bodies; and an absence of the necessary prerequisites and possibilities for equal co-operation of all countries and parties in ILO.

All this results in subverting the universality of ILO and its practical activities gradually failing to be in correspondence with the aims set in the organization's Constitution.

1. A steady growth of the armies of the unemployed in non-socialist countries with its attendant suffering, diseases, hunger and frustration among those left unemployed or even without their first employment ever calls for

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vigorous and urgent action on the part of ILO. The contribution of ILO in dealing with that problem remains, however, quite modest at best. The activities of ILO in the field of employment are marked by a dispersal of efforts among numerous issues and projects of secondary importance. The World Employment Programme proclaimed a few years ago has proved unable to influence essentially the solution of the employment problem in the non-socialist world.

ILO has made no progress either in an area where, it would seem, it is duty bound to be the first to act in the promotion of the right to work, the worker's fundamental right, which was long ago proclaimed by the United Nations in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1969 Declaration on Social Progress and Development and which was incorporated in international law in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to be inscribed in a convention. So far, ILO has not given the developing countries appropriate support for exercising the right to work. Nor has ILO been active enough on such important issues as protecting workers' incomes from inflation and safeguarding trade union freedoms at enterprises of transnational corporations. Everything that has been done so far in these fields is of no assistance even in exposing the real reasons behind the infringement of workers' rights and interests so as to help them to protect their rights.

Despite numerous proposals of socialist countries, the above issues, so crucial for workers of an overwhelming majority of ILO member States, have not been the subject matter of an ILO convention, thus severely impairing the potential of ILO to attain the purposes of its Constitution under present conditions.

2. Within its terms of reference, the International Labour Organisation ought to assist in dealing with the pressing problems of today, particularly by its contribution to the preservation and consolidation of peace and international security, the prevention of nuclear catastrophe and a halt to the arms race which places a heavy burden on workers' shoulders. We have witnessed recently, however, that the promotion of peace- and disarmament-related activities is being deliberately slowed down in ILO. Specifically, unlike other specialized agencies, ILO has taken no appropriate action to promote effectively the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/188 J on the institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament and other relevant decisions and resolutions of the United Nations and ILO.

Publication of several articles on the socio-economic aspects of disarmament and merely carrying out research can hardly be considered a fitting contribution to the cause of disarmament on the part of such a major international organization as ILO. A substantially stronger financial backing is required for the activities of ILO in studying the issues of peace and the socio-economic aspects of disarmament. In order to implement the resolution on the economic and social aspects of disarmament adopted by the ILO General Conference in 1981, the socialist countries put forward a proposal to elaborate a special ILO programme - socio-economic aspects of disarmament - which would provide a framework for analysis and dissemination of available information and for holding international conferences, symposia and seminars, including those on the regional level, on the socio-economic aspects of disarmament. Despite relevant proposals forwarded by the progressive

forces, neither the Governing Body nor the Director-General of the International Labour Office deemed it necessary to proceed duly with the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution.

At the same time, we have witnessed, especially in recent years, widespread anti-war actions involving the working people in many countries of the world and their growing awareness of the danger of nuclear conflict. To ignore the views of millions of workers and of their trade union organizations on this cardinal issue of today, including the views expressed at ILO General Conferences, is to preclude the International Labour Organisation deliberately from expressing or even reflecting workers' interests.

The socialist countries expect that ILO will be making a due contribution to international co-operation in the interests of peace and disarmament, in particular in view of the designation by the United Nations of 1986 as the International Year of Peace, and that this event will be reflected in its activities, including during preparations for the ILO General Conference.

3. The reactionary forces use the organization for ideological subversion against socialist countries and attempt to interfere in our internal affairs under the pretext of supervising compliance with ILO conventions, going as far as demanding changes - unacceptable in international relations - in the political and social structures of socialist countries.

Although called upon to promote equal co-operation among countries with different social systems, ILO has proved unable to secure conditions necessary for the attainment of that objective within its own framework and is even becoming what amounts to an instrument for undercutting such co-operation.

The unseemly role of ILO has been particularly visible in respect of the Polish People's Republic. The organization has openly sided with the imperialist circles most hostile to socialist Poland and has become an instrument for gross interference in the internal affairs of Poland, an instrument for destabilizing the situation in that country. Despite numerous warnings by the Polish Government and socialist and many other countries with regard to possible grave consequences that the continued anti-Polish campaign would have for ILO, in November 1984 the Governing Body took another decision hostile to Poland forcing the Polish Government to announce the decision to withdraw from ILO, a decision which was voted for largely by the representatives of Western countries, employers and reformist trade unions. The discussion of the so-called Polish question in ILO shows that the socio-political crisis in the organization has further deepened. Such actions call into question the very character of the organization, hindering equal co-operation of States with different socio-political systems and can start the process of the disintegration of ILO. Stating full solidarity with the Polish People's Republic and supporting its positions and measures against the anti-Polish campaign aroused by imperialism and other reactionary forces in ILO, the socialist countries shall take appropriate steps to cope with these forces and to wage a resolute struggle with them to prevent misuse of the organization as means of anti-communism by misrepresenting its aims and focusing its activities against the vital interests of the working masses, the socialist community and progressive forces of the world.

4. The socialist States and a number of other countries have on many occasions expressed their dissatisfaction with the composition and functioning of the so-called supervisory machinery of ILO charged with supervising the application of international labour standards. Instead of assisting the member countries in the effective application of international labour standards in the spirit of constructive co-operation, mutual understanding and dialogue, the so-called supervisory machinery is increasingly assuming the functions of a judicial body in respect of a certain group of countries. If implemented, the proposals of socialist countries on the restructuring of the so-called ILO supervisory machinery, submitted at the 1983 and 1984 ILO General Conferences, would strengthen the elements of co-operation in the organization currently overshadowed by the elements of confrontation, would improve and democratize that machinery and assure its credibility among all member countries. However, the Director-General completely ignored the views of all those who had expressed their support to the seeking of ways of improving the activities of the supervisory machinery.

We flatly reject the allegations that socialist countries demand special treatment in ILO "supervisory" bodies. We have consistently held that these bodies should be objective in their activities, that they should impartially recognize the realities of socialism and of the socio-political development of our countries and should not cast any aspersions on our realities and achievements in our social policy benefiting all working people. There is a striking contrast in the approach towards dealing with representations and complaints lodged against socialist and imperialist States. Regardless of the subject under discussion - be it trade union pluralism or relations between trade unions and ruling parties - the former are in fact told to change the foundations of their social system, whereas gross violations of workers' rights in capitalist countries are either passed over in silence or cynically justified, as was the case, for instance, with the disbanded air traffic controllers union in the United States of America.

Representatives of socialist countries are not admitted to such important bodies of the so-called ILO supervisory machinery as, for example, the Governing Body Committee on Freedom of Association.

5. The socialist countries take a profound interest in changing the existing structure and methods of work of ILO and bringing them in conformity with the present-day political, social and economic realities.

The role of the General Conference as the supreme body of ILO is currently played down and the composition of the Governing Body violates the principles of equality which are generally recognized in the United Nations system. For instance, private employers are using their majority to block participation in the Governing Body of representatives of enterprise managers from socialist countries. In this context, organizations representing socialist enterprise managers express their profound concern over the fact that they are being denied the possibility of fully participating at all levels of ILO activities. Socialist countries will continue their efforts to ensure that the process of democratization of the structure of ILO involves the adoption of all those decisions which meet the concerns of countries and parties and take duly into account their legitimate interests.

6. National trade union organizations in socialist countries are deeply concerned about the stubborn reluctance of the ILO secretariat administration to contribute to the development of co-operation and understanding among trade union movements of various political affiliations. In their view, political bias alone lies behind the Secretariat's refusal to promote the dissemination of objective and truthful information about the role and place of trade unions in socialist society, their real participation at all levels of state management and their rights and possibilities in socialist countries. Even a very modest proposal along these lines to hold an international seminar on the situation of trade unions in socialist countries is resolutely opposed. National trade union organizations of our countries certainly have sufficient means, beside ILO, to reach world public opinion with true information about their activities. We, however, are deeply convinced that it is the duty of the organization toward countries and parties participating in its activities to protect them from slander and speculation.

7. The system of geographical rotation is applied inconsistently in filling elected posts in ILO bodies, thus clearly discriminating against socialist countries. It is contrary to any logic that socialist countries are barred from chairing major committees of the General Conference and that they have never held the chairmanship in the Governing Body in all their years in ILO. No similar situation can be found in any other organization of the United Nations system.

Socialist countries' national trade union organizations are gravely concerned about open discrimination against their representatives in ILO. Suffice it to point out in this context that socialist countries' trade unions are underrepresented in ILO bodies and elected posts. No trade union representative from socialist countries has ever been elected to the vice-presidency of an ILO General Conference or its committees.

If ILO is to function normally, it is crucial that all of its bodies with a limited membership should have an equitable composition. However, this problem is far from being solved. The unbalanced composition of the Industrial Committees is a prime case in point. For many years now ILO has been discussing the question of changing the composition criteria for these committees but a fair and non-discriminatory system of seat distribution in Industrial Committees has yet to be adopted since Western countries are unwilling to give up their privileged position.

8. Nationals from a limited group of Western countries hold key positions in the International Labour Office in violation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution generally recognized by the United Nations system. The Director-General of ILO is adamant in refusing to take effective action with a view to remedying this abnormal situation. The fact that Western countries are unjustifiably overrepresented in ILO only introduces a certain political and ideological bias in ILO activities which does not reflect in a balanced way the legitimate interests and aspirations of the entire ILO membership. It is no accident that the wealth of experience that socialist countries have gained in resolving social and labour problems is deliberately ignored in both practical activities and publications of ILO. As a result, ILO has increasingly become a tool for propagating and implanting Western models of social development, of

so-called social partnership actively used to the detriment of the workers' best interests. The organization that claims universality cannot tolerate a situation like this which should be remedied as soon as possible so as to ensure its secretariat's credibility among all member States.

9. ILO should strive to develop equal co-operation among States with different social systems in various regions of the world.

Meanwhile, the organization's activities in the European region have been reduced to a very low level, although every ILO member can benefit greatly from co-operation among European countries which have accumulated considerable and varied experience in economic development and in handling social, labour and union problems. Numerous specific proposals of European socialist countries to intensify those activities and to work out appropriate institutional arrangements to that end (the establishment of a European advisory committee) have yet to be incorporated in ILO programmes. And as far as the decisions of ILO on regional co-operation are concerned, in particular those adopted by the Third European Regional Conference, they are being carried out in a lopsided and unbalanced way and to the West's political advantage. The socialist countries mentioned above insist that ILO take specific measures with a view to developing constructive and equal co-operation among European countries.

10. An alarming aspect of the activities of ILO is its increased assistance to employers' organizations, which is inevitably detrimental to the needs of workers' organizations. Socialist countries hold that employers' organizations in ILO must assume specific obligations to apply at their enterprises ILO-drafted social and labour standards aimed at improving the status of workers. Every attempt made within ILO to ensure an equal treatment of workers' and employers' problems runs counter to the spirit of its Constitution and the very *raison d'être* of the organization and raises the question as to which interests - those of labour or capital - ILO is primarily serving today. The employers, too, can certainly have their own special problems dealing with management and organization of the work process, which may be and are under consideration by ILO, but this should not be done to the detriment of its main activities and, surely, not in the context of assistance to employers' organizations.

11. An ever-increasing share of financial resources available to ILO, including those from its regular budget, is being spent on technical co-operation programmes. However, policies pursued by the Office administration in this major field of the organization's activities can only cause grave concern.

On the one hand, recently, a trend jeopardizing the attainment by developing countries of their economic independence has begun to emerge more and more clearly in ILO, a trend to give preference to projects basic to the activities in developing countries of Western private companies, primarily the transnationals. In the field of technical assistance, ILO is made increasingly dependent on the international financial institutions which are a tool of neo-colonial policies pursued by imperialism in developing countries.



On the other hand, socialist countries' participation in the technical assistance projects of ILO is being intentionally and artificially restricted. Under various contrived pretexts the Office administration has prevented the organization from applying the wealth of experience gained by socialist countries in their social and economic development and, in particular, from using their experts.

The position of socialist countries on ILO technical assistance is widely known. They are in favour of ILO activities in this area promoting the social and economic development of developing countries, rather than subjecting their economies still further to the domination of capitalist monopolies, above all of transnational corporations, ILO technical assistance should be closely tied with the national social and economic development plans of developing countries.

The socialist countries are prepared to participate actively in the activities of ILO to provide technical assistance to developing countries on a fair basis in the framework stipulated in the Constitution of ILO.

12. The socialist countries, like many others, have repeatedly voiced their concern over the problems of an efficient use by the organization of its budgetary resources. They are convinced that ILO must take effective action to stabilize its budget, seeking maximum streamlining of, and austerity in, spending, particularly in administrative costs. The programmes of ILO, if tailored to the needs and requirements of the day, may well be expanded and should be carried out within the available resources on the basis of a more flexible reordering of the organization's priorities and discontinuance of obsolete and low-efficiency programmes.

The socialist countries demand that ILO enhance the efficiency of its activities, focusing on major social problems of vital importance to workers all over the world, establishing truly equal and non-discriminatory co-operation among all countries and parties in the social and labour fields and actively promoting peace and disarmament.

Otherwise, the organization will stray further and further away from the path leading to the attainment of its primary objectives which are to improve living and working conditions of working people and support for the worker and international co-operation in the labour field, isolate itself even more from the broad masses of workers and once and for all become a tool of unseemly political manipulations.

The socialist countries are prepared fully to co-operate in radically improving ILO activities so that ILO could effectively implement the goals of its Constitution.

(Signed) Anatoly Nikitich SHELDON  
Permanent Representative of the Byelorussian  
Soviet Socialist Republic to the United Nations

(Signed) Jaroslav CESAR  
Permanent Representative of the Czechoslovak  
Socialist Republic to the United Nations

(Signed) Harry OTT  
Permanent Representative of the German  
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(Signed) Pál RACZ  
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People's Republic to the United Nations

(Signed) Boris TSVETKOV  
Permanent Representative of the People's  
Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations

(Signed) Jerzy M. NOWAK  
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of  
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(Signed) Guennadi Iosipovich OUDOVENKO  
Permanent Representative of the Ukrainian Soviet  
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(Signed) Oleg Aleksandrovich TROYANOVSKY  
Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet  
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