



C O N T E N T S

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 12:	
Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) (<i>continued</i>).....	255

Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters IV and V) (A/2686, A/C.3/573, A/C.3/L.432, A/C.3/L.433 and Add.1 and 2, A/C.3/L.434, A/C.3/L.435, A/C.3/L.436, A/C.3/L.437) (*continued*)

GENERAL DEBATE (*concluded*)

1. Mr. EL-FARRA (Syria), while commending the work of the United Nations Children's Fund, believed that assistance to the Palestine refugees should be augmented beyond the limited type of aid referred to in paragraph 573 of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/2686)¹.
2. He could not endorse the proposal for a special United Nations Children's Day, as the International Union for Child Welfare was intending to follow up the World Children's Day already held in 1953 and 1954, with the participation of UNICEF. The United Nations should not duplicate the ceremony and risk discouraging the organization which had taken the initiative.
3. In connexion with the section of the Council's report concerning narcotic drugs (A/2686, chapter IV, section IV), he was glad to announce that Syria had signed the International Opium Protocol (E/NT/8)² on 19 January 1954. The Protocol was an important advance in the international control of narcotic drugs.
4. Certain delegations had taken advantage of the general debate to reaffirm that they upheld the principle of equal rights and self-determination for peoples and nations; it was to be hoped that that statement would not be a mere declaration, but that the countries in question would work for the principle and promote it by all peaceful means. That was especially to be desired since certain great Powers had unfortunately voted against draft resolutions on the subject, based on the United Nations Charter, proposed by the delegations of African, Arab and Asian countries at the seventh and eighth sessions of the General Assembly. His delegation had joined with others in sponsoring a draft resolution

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Supplement No. 3.

² See United Nations Opium Conference, Protocol and Final Act, signed at New York, 23 June 1953. United Nations Publication, Sales No.: 1953.XI.6.

(A/C.3/L.437) on the subject and hoped that it could be merged with the Afghan draft resolution (A/C.3/L.435) submitted previously.

5. He had not intended to speak on the sections of chapters IV and V of the Council's report which were to be discussed as separate items, but at the 588th meeting the South African representative had raised issues of principle which required immediate reply. He had made a general observation on all United Nations reports relating to social, cultural and humanitarian matters and had referred to the sections of the Council's report dealing with freedom of information and forced labour by way of illustrating his criticism of the existing method of compiling reports. He had made a distinction between reports which were world-wide in scope and those which were concentrated directly on the domestic affairs of a Member State and therefore wholly unconstitutional. That distinction was not valid, since all United Nations reports were international in character. The test was whether or not they amounted to intervention in the domestic jurisdiction of a Member State, within the meaning of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Charter, but it was not for that State to decide the matter unilaterally. To allow a State to do so would be tantamount to giving it a veto power which happily did not exist in the General Assembly, a veto which would be exercised in all discussions on colonial or racial questions. The interpretation of Article 2, paragraph 7, fell within the competence of the organ responsible for the execution of the relevant provisions of the Charter in each particular case. It had been repeatedly raised by the South African Government and had been repeatedly decided. Those decisions should be respected.

6. All the reports impugned by the South African representative had been the result of mature deliberation by the United Nations. The majority had expressed its belief that the systematic and continued violation of human rights in the laws or practice of any Member State was contrary to justice and a threat to the peace.

7. The South African representative had asserted that reports relating to his country were inaccurate and lacked objectivity. But a Member State which refused admittance to fact-finding committees and compelled them to seek evidence from secondary sources was hardly in a position to impute carelessness or lack of objectivity to those who had done their utmost to find out the facts. Experience had shown that the South African Government had refused admittance to committees set up to study the *apartheid* problem.

8. Mr. COATON (Union of South Africa), speaking on a point of order, observed that the question of racial discrimination in South Africa was not on the Third Committee's agenda. The Syrian representative should confine his remarks strictly to matters within the scope of chapters IV and V of the Council's report.

9. Mr. EL-FARRA (Syria) replied that the South African representative had spoken of all United Nations

reports and had taken those on freedom of information and forced labour only as examples.

10. Mr. COATON (Union of South Africa), speaking on a point of order, observed that he had been speaking of world-wide reports in connexion with chapters IV and V of the Council's report. True, he had alluded in passing to his misgivings about certain other reports also, but he had made it clear that he considered that they were for other Committees to deal with.

11. Mr. EL-FARRA (Syria) replied that, whatever the South African representative said, the way was still closed to proper investigation. He hoped that the Government of the Union of South Africa would ponder his views on the collection of information for United Nations reports and then reconsider its stand in the interest of the international community.

12. Mr. COATON (Union of South Africa), in exercise of his right of reply under rule 116 of the rules of procedure, said that only the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee was competent to deal with the report to which the Syrian representative had alluded and the South African delegation's attitude with regard to domestic jurisdiction had already been clearly stated in that Committee. So far as the Third Committee was concerned, the South African delegation had dealt only with reports that were world-wide in scope and had confined its remarks specifically to that context. It had expressed its serious misgivings about the trend of United Nations reporting in general and had referred to another report only in passing. In any case, he entirely disagreed with the Syrian representative that it was not for the State concerned to decide unilaterally whether a particular report did or did not infringe its domestic jurisdiction. The South African Government was not at all unwilling to define its attitude towards the report to which reference had been made, but would do so only in the appropriate Committee. Where no legal obstacle existed, as was indeed the case with world-wide reports as distinct from reports focused specifically on the domestic affairs of a single Member State, the Union Government had, in fact, found it possible to co-operate with the United Nations in the past. An example of that was to be found on pages 403 to 413 of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Forced Labour².

13. Mr. EL-FARRA (Syria), speaking under rule 116 of the rules of procedure, replied that the South African representative had clearly implied in his statement at the 588th meeting that he was calling in question the whole method of United Nations reporting and had used the two reports merely as illustrations. He himself had used another report as an illustration. What in fact was at issue was the existing methods employed by the United Nations in compiling its reports.

14. Mr. COATON (Union of South Africa) explained that he had referred only to reports of a world-wide character; his reference to other reports had only been in passing. Reports coming within the domestic jurisdiction of a State were irrelevant to the discussion.

15. Mrs. RÖSSEL (Sweden) drew attention to the part played by the International Union for Child Welfare and other voluntary, governmental and inter-gov-

ernmental organizations in helping needy children in the difficult period following the Second World War. At that time, the Swedish Government had decided to conduct its work for children along two lines, governmental action and support of recognized voluntary organizations. The reason for the latter course had been that the Swedish people as a whole had wished to contribute to activity on behalf of children and could participate more directly in that way than they could have done by having part of their taxes spent for the same purpose.

16. As head of the international relief activities of the Swedish Save the Children Fund, she had had experience of co-operation with inter-governmental organizations, such as the International Refugee Organization and the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, and had had an opportunity of following the work of UNICEF from its first years. She wished to point out, however, that the eagerness to promote the work of UNICEF by establishing a World Children's Day might create a somewhat awkward situation. The International Union for Child Welfare had inaugurated a World Children's Day, which had been celebrated in 1953 and 1954, in association with UNICEF. It would be undesirable, therefore, to establish another World Children's Day in competition. The Indian and Uruguayan delegations could have had no such intention and might be willing to support the concept of the existing World Children's Day endorsed by UNICEF.

17. She did not approve of the proposal to make the day a holiday; the best way of helping children was to devote working days to their cause. In the immediate post-war years, Swedish wage-earners had contributed a full day's pay twice a year, with matching contributions from their employers. That had proved a very successful method of raising funds and she commended it to the Third Committee.

18. The reports of UNICEF showed that only 25 per cent of the total available amounts was spent on maternity and child welfare activities. Although programmes for combating disease and for milk conservation were essential, provision should be made for parallel diversified activities for the every-day care of children, for health control and for advice on how to increase children's resistance to disease. A tendency to increase allocations for broadly prophylactic purposes would therefore be welcome. Thus, for example, although the action taken to combat trachoma in Tunisia was praiseworthy, it would be interesting to know whether the necessary steps had been taken to prevent the recurrence of the disease, by setting up health and child welfare centres and training nurses and social workers.

19. In her opinion, the discussion in various United Nations organs as to whether the Commission on the Status of Women should deal with matters relating to maternity and child welfare was largely due to the fact that women experts on that subject were not sufficiently represented in the Social Commission and in the policy-making posts of UNICEF. Such representation would go a long way towards eliminating the fears of some representatives that the matter could not be dealt with satisfactorily except by the Commission on the Status of Women. Of course, questions concerning working mothers and their children would remain within the Commission's purview in connexion with the problem of economic opportunities for women.

20. The Swedish delegation fully appreciated the work of UNICEF and would therefore support the joint

² Joint United Nations and International Labour Organisation document. *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixteenth Session, Supplement No. 13 and No. 36 in the Studies and Reports (New Series) of the International Labour Office.*

draft resolution on the subject (A/C.3/L.433 and Add.1 and 2).

21. The Swedish delegation did not consider that the question of self-determination fell within the scope of the covenants on human rights or of the Commission on Human Rights and, having stressed its full endorsement of the principle of self-determination in the First Committee, had nothing to add to that statement in the current debate. She could not, therefore, vote either for the Afghan draft resolution (A/C.3/L.435) or for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.437).

22. She would vote for the draft resolution on the establishment of a United Nations narcotics laboratory (A/C.3/L.432).

23. Mrs. TOMSIC (Yugoslavia) agreed with the delegations which had stated that the Third Committee should discuss all United Nations social activities. The United Nations should not act to solve social problems, since that was the responsibility of States, but it could contribute constructively to the solution of social questions, particularly by research and planning. The work already done had proved the necessity of acting positively to raise living standards. Economic development was the main instrument for solving social problems and eventually eliminating international tension, which often stemmed from the inequality between the economically advanced and the under-developed countries.

24. Yugoslavia fully agreed with the principles underlying the programme of concerted practical action in the social field as outlined in chapter IV, section I, of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2686). Co-ordination was necessary, especially in less-developed countries and for improving the social conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The interdependence of economic development and the solution of social problems had been generally recognized and social action aimed at solving a single problem might well prove a mere humanitarian gesture with no lasting effect.

25. Aid from an international agency could be effective only if it stimulated the initiative of those receiving assistance. The resources of local units and of voluntary organizations should be used to reach a lasting solution. The social policy of Yugoslavia was based on such principles. The first efforts had been devoted to overcoming economic backwardness, and the increase in wealth was facilitating the solution of social problems. In Yugoslavia, responsibility for solving most social problems lay with local government bodies. The people themselves allocated the funds for social needs and decided how they should be spent.

26. Through UNICEF the United Nations had become known even in the remotest villages in Yugoslavia. The United Nations Children's Fund had at first carried out its humanitarian mission there on an emergency basis, but had later changed to long-range programmes, which had been welcomed because of their effect on the country's economy.

27. The aid provided by UNICEF was particularly useful when it served to launch a programme that was later taken over by the national authorities and when the matching principle ensured that programmes would be continued. Long-term programmes had the added advantage of enabling countries to avoid an unduly heavy financial burden in the initial stages.

28. Thanks to the UNICEF milk-production programme, the quality of milk in Yugoslavia had been improved and the price lowered, personnel had been

trained for the dairy industry and great progress had been made in the organization of milk collection, distribution and processing. Yugoslavia expected equally good results from the maternal and child welfare programmes that were being implemented. Many organizations were active in the field of child welfare. The National Council of Child Welfare Associations alone had more than 700 branches. The organizations were actively participating in the work of similar international organizations. The World Congress of the International Union for Child Welfare, held at Zagreb in 1954, had done much to stimulate interest in that work.

29. Yugoslavia had for many years had a Children's Day but in 1954 it had adopted the official date proposed by the International Union for Child Welfare. She agreed with the views expressed by the Syrian and Swedish representatives on the observance of a World Children's Day.

30. Yugoslavia welcomed the extension of the activities of UNICEF and considered that the slightly increased administrative expenditure was justified. As a member of the Executive Board, it was in a position to know what great work UNICEF was doing.

31. She agreed with delegations that had criticized the procedure the Economic and Social Council had adopted with regard to the question of self-determination. It had merely postponed the solution of an acute problem.

32. With regard to the control of narcotic drugs, the elaboration of a single convention was proceeding too slowly. The convention should include various international agreements and promote the gradual unification of domestic legislations.

33. The Yugoslav delegation supported the establishment of a United Nations narcotics laboratory in Geneva, but it was not to be supposed that such a laboratory could do much to check the illicit opium trade. The question of fighting the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs appeared to have been treated rather as a subject for political controversy in the current debate than as a problem requiring solution.

34. It had been maintained that Governments could not impose the principle of equal pay for equal work without impairing the workers' freedom to bargain, but no such argument was advanced when it was a question of prohibiting child labour or limiting night work. The Yugoslav delegation was happy that the principle of equal pay for equal work had been recognized as one of the fundamental human rights, but its implementation should be given priority both by the Commission on the Status of Women and by the International Labour Organization. All the rights of women depended on it.

35. Miss AGUILAR (Peru) noted that UNICEF was conducting 200 programmes and aiding 25 million mothers and children. The aid to rural mothers and children was of particular interest to the Latin American countries.

36. Although a BCG injection cost only 15 cents, many children had still not been immunized against tuberculosis. Campaigns for funds should be organized by the municipal councils in the Latin American countries. The contribution which Peru had made to UNICEF and its legislation for the protection of mothers and children were proof of its interest in such problems.

37. The Peruvian Government had adopted a series of regulations for the purpose of slowly eradicating the

use of the coca leaf and had established strict control of cocaine, which could be used only for medical purposes.

38. Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq) regretted that once again the Committee did not have time to deal adequately with the question of concerted action in the social field and that the Economic and Social Council had devoted a scant two paragraphs to the subject in its report (A/2686). The Council had been requested to increase the number of the Social Commission's sessions and to expand its membership, but the report gave no detailed reasons for rejection of that request. It was deplorable that, despite frequent statements about the interdependence of economic and social conditions, the social activities of the United Nations were absorbing less and less of the Committee's time and attention.

39. The great movement towards social reform that was noticeable throughout the world was not reflected in the United Nations. In Iraq, for example, expenditure on social work had been three times greater in 1954 than in 1953. A system of community centres had been established, staffed by agricultural experts, social welfare workers, nurses, architects, pharmacists and teachers. After the floods, some landowners had given sites for houses and local farmers had provided labour for their construction. Such examples showed that profound changes of attitude were taking place. Those who feared the consequences of unduly abrupt changes in under-developed countries should see for themselves how immediate material advantages stimulated the populations and how education became not a mere necessity, but an exciting new adventure. It was important for world peace that the United Nations should maintain leadership in social matters. Member States should, of course, retain their national cultures and traditions, but emphasis on their social differences had caused too much conflict in the past; it was for the United Nations to harmonize national activities in the social field.

40. As the representative of an Arab State, she expressed gratitude to UNICEF for the assistance it had given to Arab refugees of Palestine when another refugee organization had refused to come to their aid. The emergency assistance rendered by UNICEF during the floods in Iraq and Lebanon had also been welcome. The fact that the activities of UNICEF extended beyond the bounds of the United Nations, to 78 countries and territories, was especially gratifying. As a member of the Executive Board of UNICEF, Iraq was glad that the membership of the Board had been increased to include some non-Member States. With regard to criticism of administrative expenses, her delegation considered that the increase in those expenses was justified by the extension of the activities of UNICEF and by the fact that some of them related to programmes of more than a year's duration.

41. Iraq had received UNICEF assistance for tuberculosis and malaria control, maternity and child welfare services and children's nutrition and milk-conservation

programmes. The Iraqi Government had made matching contributions. As a result of the co-operation of UNICEF with the local authorities in Iraq, school meals had been provided for 27,000 children in 1953 and it was hoped to raise the figure to 60,000 in 1954. Although that was but a small percentage of the total school population, the stimulus to the general school feeding programme was incalculable.

42. The co-operation between UNICEF and the specialized agencies showed what could be achieved by an organization with supplies and equipment at its disposal, on the one hand, and organizations which were able to provide technical assistance only, on the other. That served as an indication of the potentialities of organizations which would be able to provide both types of assistance.

43. The Iraqi delegation had co-sponsored the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.437) and hoped that the Afghan representative would agree to combine his draft resolution (A/C.3/L.435) with it. Many delegations which doubted the expediency of including an article on the right to self-determination in the covenants seemed to agree that measures should be taken to promote respect for the right and might vote for the joint draft resolution. The majority of the Committee had on several occasions agreed on the principle of self-determination and on the need to stress the permanent sovereignty of every people and nation over its natural resources.

44. Mr. MARTÍNEZ CABAÑAS (Secretariat) stated, in reply to the Netherlands representative's question at the 586th meeting, that the Technical Assistance Administration unfortunately did not have sufficient funds to meet all requests for technical assistance for social services. In 1953, a total of \$1,171,000 had been allocated for social services; \$768,000 had been appropriated under General Assembly resolution 418 (V) and \$402,500 had come from the funds of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. In 1954, according to the estimates drawn up at the end of October, the total amount had been \$868,000, of which \$768,500 had been appropriated under resolution 418 (V) and \$130,000 under the Expanded Programme. It was estimated that in 1955, out of a total of \$1,409,000, \$466,000 would be appropriated under the Expanded Programme, but the Technical Assistance Board had not yet approved that figure. Approximately \$550,000 of the funds allocated under resolution 418 (V) would be required for 1954-1955 projects. Approximately 20 per cent of the total funds had been used for social services in 1953, and approximately 18 per cent in 1954. The services concerned were community organization, population, housing and town and country planning.

45. The CHAIRMAN declared the general debate on chapters IV and V of the Economic and Social Council's report (A/2686) closed.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.