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President: Mr. George DAVIDSON (Canada).

Present:

The representatives of the following States: Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Greece, Indonesia, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

Observers from the following States: Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, India, Israel, Italy, Laos, Liberia, Libya, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, United Arab Republic.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

AGENDA ITEM 6

Consideration of the establishment of an Economic Commission for Africa (E/3052, E/3086 and Add.1, E/3093, E/3095, E/L.780) (continued)

1. Mr. ALEMAYEHOU (Ethiopia) thanked the Council for the invitation extended to his country to participate in the discussion.
2. The urgent need to establish an Economic Commission for Africa had long been recognized, and he hoped that the Council would avoid any procedures—such as referring the matter to a committee—which might further delay an action that was long overdue. The African States and the United Kingdom had both suggested draft terms of reference for the proposed commission (E/3093 and E/3095), using the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) as their starting point. The main difference between the two drafts was that the African countries' draft also took into account some time-tested practices of ECAFE which were not expressly included in its terms of reference. Consequently, the draft contained nothing really new; every one of its provisions had at one time or another been approved by the Council. There was no doubt that the Economic Commission for Africa would function better if it were allowed to benefit by the experience of the older commissions. In that connexion, he fully associated himself

with the views expressed by the Sudanese representative (1004th meeting).

3. With reference to some of the remarks of the United Kingdom representative (1004th meeting), it should be noted that the African countries had no intention of curtailing the powers of the metropolitan countries; the provision to the effect that non-African members should not use their votes to oppose plans for African development was merely intended to ensure that the African peoples should benefit in full from all the services and facilities of the Commission, which after all was to be set up for that very purpose. The members of ECAFE had accepted a similar provision. He assured the United Kingdom representative that the purpose was not to discriminate between two types of members but to give equal opportunity to all.

4. The African States' draft (E/3093) specifically empowered the proposed Commission to concern itself with social development; the United Kingdom representative, on the other hand, thought that, even without such a provision, the Commission would be able to deal with the social implications of economic problems. What was involved was therefore merely a difference of emphasis. The experience of the other regional commissions—which now had social affairs units—had shown that an economic commission was obliged to consider social matters to some extent. The inclusion of an express provision to that effect would facilitate the work of the Commission by preventing debates on that issue in the future. The Commission should be told from the outset exactly what it was empowered and expected to do.

5. To the objection that the Commission might find itself encroaching upon the field of the specialized agencies he replied that safeguards against that very danger were to be found in paragraphs 1 (d) and 11 of the African States' draft. Political implications had also been mentioned; his reply was that the African countries did not want a political commission, but one that would promote the economic and social development of the African continent.

6. All the African States, with the exception of Liberia, had felt that the inclusion of the United States and the USSR with their vast economic power and technical knowledge, in the membership of the Commission would give the new Commission much-needed confidence and enhance its chances of success.

7. Mr. DE FREITAS-VALLE (Brazil) warmly supported the idea of creating an Economic Commission for Africa. Despite the great diversity of conditions on that continent, the Commission should be able to do fruitful work. The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) had shown that the Latin American countries had a number of common problems which they could solve through co-operative effort and also that economic theories originating in Europe had to be revised, sometimes drastically, to fit a new set of conditions. The proposed Commission should enable

the new nations of Africa and its many territories to gain a similar insight into the essence of their development problems. The peoples of the area, where per caput incomes were extremely low, would have to be made to understand that by making sacrifices for the sake of capital accumulation they would eventually achieve higher standards of living. Nevertheless, similar as the situation in Latin America and Africa were, care should be taken not to transplant Latin American experience to Africa, but to proceed from a careful analysis of the specific conditions prevailing in different parts of the African continent.

8. The future Commission would have to ascertain the basic general causes of the current low levels of development and study means of accelerating the process of economic growth. It would then have to unite the different Governments concerned in a great co-operative effort and propose a series of practical steps to be taken by them to that end. Given adequate terms of reference, the Commission should be able to accomplish that challenging and complex task.

9. While the terms of reference should, in the main, be based on those of the existing regional commissions, both their recent experience and the specific conditions prevailing in Africa must be fully taken into account. He was happy to note that the Sudanese draft resolution (E/L.780) met those requirements. In particular, it contained provisions enabling the future Commission to concern itself with the social aspects of economic development. As the Mexican representative had shown (1004th meeting), the connexion between economic and social problems was particularly close on the African continent, where any change in the economic structure almost inevitably involved corresponding changes in the social structure. Furthermore, the experience of both ECAFE and ECLA showed that it was impossible to deal with problems of capital accumulation and production without touching upon those of distribution and consumption. Accordingly, after ten years of operation, those Commissions had set up social affairs units with the Council's approval. One reason why ECLA had had such a tremendous impact on the economic thinking and government policies in Latin America was that it had devoted itself to the formulation and development of co-ordinated policies aimed at economic and social development, as the future Economic Commission for Africa would be asked to do under paragraph 1 (f) of the terms of reference proposed in the Sudanese draft. Furthermore, paragraph 11 of the Sudanese text ensured that the new Commission should not duplicate the efforts of other agencies in the social field.

10. He did not think, however, that associate members should be permitted to serve on the proposed Commission's subsidiary bodies; since they would outnumber the full members, they would be given a power incompatible with their constitutional status. If necessary, the Council might introduce that system later, in the light of experience.

11. The PRESIDENT invited the representative of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) to address the Council.

12. Mr. BARRATT-BROWN (World Federation of United Nations Associations) remarked that, in recent years, the international community had taken an increasing interest in African problems. Studies on economic and social development in Africa had been

made by the United Nations and the specialized agencies; Africa had received some technical assistance and considerable aid from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Nevertheless, the effort had not been planned or comprehensive. The necessary co-ordination could best be achieved by a regional approach, and his organization would therefore welcome the establishment of an Economic Commission for Africa.

13. Mr. COUILLARD (Canada) expressed the earnest hope of his delegation that the Council would take prompt and favourable action at its current session for the establishment of an Economic Commission for Africa in response to General Assembly resolution 1155 (XII). The Council's decisions should be constructive and designed to improve most effectively the economic situation of the peoples of the African continent. Towards that end, the Council should draw, as appropriate, on past United Nations experience, in particular, on that of existing regional economic commissions, whose terms of reference had proved sufficiently flexible to enable them to do useful work in their respective areas. Subject to possible future requirements, the same terms of reference should be adopted for the new Commission.

14. The scope of the new Commission should be limited geographically to Africa, and its membership to African States and States responsible for the administration of African territories. In formulating opinions on other organizational matters, Canada intended to give full weight to the views on which those two groups of States agreed, and wished to assure them of its desire to play an active part in assisting the work of the new Commission. Its final position would depend on the extent to which solutions agreed upon in the Council would contribute to the economic development and well-being of the African peoples.

15. Mr. SASTROAMIDJOJO (Indonesia) emphasized that the true significance of the establishment of an Economic Commission for Africa should be assessed in the light of the determination of the African peoples to improve their economic and social conditions; prompt assistance in implementing that objective would lead to international co-operation and peace, while delays would add to existing tensions. The urgency of such assistance had been recognized by the Asian-African Conference held at Bandung in 1955 and by the General Assembly when it had unanimously adopted resolution 1155 (XII). Indonesia strongly supported the establishment of the new Commission, not only because it considered that the wealth of Africa should be developed in order to meet the needs of a growing world population and because it had benefited greatly from the work of ECAFE, but also because it had close religious and cultural ties with many African countries and looked forward to the attainment by all the territories of Africa of their rightful place as fully independent States in the international community.

16. Recalling earlier United Nations efforts to initiate some machinery for economic and social assistance to Africa, he pointed out that the success of the Economic Commission for Africa would depend not only on co-operation among its members and associate members in exchanging views on common problems and sharing experience, but on the assistance it received from other sources. Indonesia commended the United Kingdom for its pledge of maximum co-operation and welcomed

assurances from countries without direct responsibilities in Africa that they would provide economic aid, encourage private investment and arrange for cultural exchanges. In that connexion, it was significant that the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development had declared himself deeply impressed by the investment possibilities in Africa and had forecast more Bank operations there. It was hoped that the International Finance Corporation, the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance would follow that example.

17. Reviewing the terms of reference suggested for the new Commission by eight African Member States (E/3093), he was gratified that they took into account the economic interdependence of all African peoples and he was confident that points of difference with other members of the Council could be resolved if it were borne in mind that those terms of reference had been based on the experience of the existing regional economic commissions and had been adapted to the specific needs of Africa. In that connexion, emphasis on the provision in paragraph 1 (f) of the draft terms of reference was fully justified. United Nations experience in dealing with economic development problems had shown how closely the economic and social aspects of development were linked and how important it was to give full attention to the social implications of economic improvement. That was especially true in Africa, where social problems were even more complex than in other under-developed areas.

18. The Indonesian delegation hoped that the Council would complete action on the establishment of the economic Commission for Africa at its current session so that the Commission could hold its first organizational meeting before the end of 1958. It also hoped that the Secretary-General would secure the services of an outstanding person as Executive Secretary of the new body.

19. Mr. PHILLIPS (United States of America), reviewing the almost limitless potential resources of Africa, said that it constituted a new and challenging area for economic development, and that the proposed new economic commission was a symbol of the historic changes taking place. Although the African economy had expanded at an average rate of about 5 per cent since 1950—a rate which compared favourably with development in other parts of the world—and living standards were beginning to rise, they were still far below the desired levels. Except for the Union of South Africa, no country in Africa had a per caput income of more than \$200 a year. Even incomes at the upper end of the scale, that is, mainly in areas for which metropolitan countries were or had been responsible, were far below the standard to which Africans were entitled to aspire. Total capital investment was between 15 and 20 per cent of the continent's total output, and much of it was private investment. Although current expansion was uneven, the outlook for the entire continent was challenging and hopeful.

20. The proposed Economic Commission for Africa could bring into focus the problems of Africa as well as its opportunities by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and techniques. It could carry out research on specifically African problems, facilitate the discovery and effective utilization of resources, deal with questions of agricultural productivity and industrialization, assist in the development of trans-

portation and communications and open up new channels of trade.

21. The United States delegation did not underestimate the close link between economic and social progress. On the contrary, it believed that the ultimate objective of all economic development was the well-being of the individual and the family, the attainment of higher standards of living, higher per caput incomes, better education and better health. Thus it recognized the basic interrelationship. It also believed that especially in Africa, economic development could be achieved only by taking into account available human resources and social patterns. Social conditions and social objectives should never be lost sight of in any plan for economic development. However, it would be a disservice to the peoples of Africa to attempt to establish an economic and social commission. In that respect, the United States view differed from that of the eight African States not in substance, but in method.

22. The United Nations had provided special machinery to deal with problems of social development: it included the Social Commission, the Population Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Bureau of Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the specialized agencies and UNICEF. To avoid loss of time and duplication of effort, the work of any regional economic commission had to be fitted into that established framework, with the Council itself ensuring general co-ordination. That co-ordination had been successfully achieved in respect of the existing economic commissions, and they had not been prevented from giving adequate attention to the social aspects of economic development. It would be noted, however, that they did not initiate specific projects, that they received their policy guidance in social matters primarily from the Social Commission, and that they were supervised in their work by the Bureau of Social Affairs. The United States delegation would suggest amendments to the terms of reference proposed by eight African States (E/3093) which should satisfactorily reconcile the divergent views on that point.

23. The United States appreciated but could not accept the suggestion that it should become a member of the new Commission. It would not be in the best interests of the Commission for any country, other than the independent States of Africa and the metropolitan countries with responsibility for African territories, to serve on it. Africa should develop as the Africans wished it to develop; outside countries were likely to introduce elements of political conflict and economic controversy with which the African people should not be burdened. He appealed therefore to those African States which had suggested United States membership in the new Commission not to press their invitation and to allow the United States to make its contribution to the well-being of the African peoples in ways which would not interfere with the work of the Commission.

24. As a nation which strongly supported the interests of the peoples of all under-developed areas, and as a nation one-tenth of whose population was of African descent, the United States was keenly interested in and would do everything to assist in the development of the resources of Africa. Growing interest in African affairs had been demonstrated in the Press and periodicals and among educational and civic groups, and an increasingly large number of students from Africa were attending American schools. Since the end

of the Second World War, United States economic and technical assistance to Africa had amounted to some \$800 million. The sum provided for that purpose for the current fiscal year was \$75 million, and Congress was being asked to increase that sum by one-third in the next fiscal year. In addition, the United States would be making aid available to Africa through loans from the Export-Import Bank and the Development Loan Fund, as well as through its participation in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, the specialized agencies and the Special Fund.

25. United States diplomatic and consular missions in Africa were being strengthened, and a separate Bureau of African Affairs was to be established in the Department of State. The United States wished to see Africa develop for the Africans as a free community of nations.

26. The PRESIDENT invited the representative of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) to address the Council.

27. Mr. THORMANN (International Federation of Christian Trade Unions) said that economic and social conditions in Africa were in general so backward that a concerted effort to raise living standards there was of vital importance, and one of the best ways of achieving that goal would be to establish a regional commission along the same lines as ECAFE, ECLA and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which had proved their worth in the areas which they served. General Assembly resolution 1155 (XII) had been a timely one, for with the great changes taking place in Africa it was essential not to delay action.

28. At its meeting at the end of November 1957 the General Council of the IFCTU had expressed its appreciation of the General Assembly's action in a unanimous vote. At the same time, it had requested the Secretary-General of the IFCTU to study, in close co-operation with the African organizations affiliated to it, questions pertaining to the organization and functioning of such a commission for Africa so that it could inform the United Nations of its views. Since that time the IFCTU had had the opportunity of considering the communications from the eight African States (E/3093) and the United Kingdom (E/3095) which dealt *inter alia* with the terms of reference of the proposed Commission.

29. The IFCTU attached the greatest importance to a specific reference to the promotion of social development among the objectives of the Commission. The case for so doing had already been ably put by the representative of the Sudan (1004th meeting). The United Nations had recognized that economic development was not an end in itself but should be made to serve the interests of individual human beings and society. Moreover, in its work on industrialization and productivity it had included a study of the social and demographic aspects of industrialization. The existing regional commissions had played a valuable part in that work. The social affairs units attached to ECAFE and ECLA, and the fact that it was intended to establish a similar unit in ECE, provided further proof of the recognition of the close connexion between economic and social development.

30. For all those reasons the, IFCTU hoped that the

Council would approve the draft terms of reference recommended by the eight African States (E/3093), including the suggestion made in paragraph 1 (f) of the draft. The experience of ECLA had fully proved the value of including a reference to the necessity of co-ordinated policies as a basis for practical action in promoting the development of the region.

31. The IFCTU was convinced that the geographical scope of the proposed Commission should encompass the whole of Africa, including Madagascar and the other African islands. It also believed that since there were very great differences between countries and territories in different parts of Africa suitable subsidiary bodies and sub-regional offices should be established. Actual decisions on the point would of course have to await the formal organization of the new Commission; it wished to draw attention to the value of establishing as soon as possible a subsidiary body responsible for the study of problems confronting the African countries whose economies were largely oriented towards the Mediterranean basin. Such a body could, through ECE, work in close co-operation with the countries of Europe bordering on the Mediterranean.

32. The IFCTU considered the question of membership vitally important. It was essential that provision should be made for the closest possible association of the Non-Self-Governing Territories with the activities of the Commission. The Council could perhaps include in its final resolution an invitation to the Administering Powers to forward promptly any application for associate membership made by territories under their administration.

33. With regard to relations with inter-governmental organizations other than the specialized agencies, he did not believe that those organizations should in any way be considered an adequate substitute for the action of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. For instance, while appreciating the value of the work done by the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara, the IFCTU had had occasion in the past to express its misgivings about certain of its activities. Those misgivings had been based on the experience of the indigenous populations. The kind of relationship to be established between such bodies and the Commission therefore required very careful consideration.

34. He hoped that a satisfactory procedure governing relations between the Commission and non-governmental organizations would be worked out, and assured the Council that the IFCTU would give the Commission its fullest support.

35. The PRESIDENT invited the representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to address the Council.

36. Mr. PATTEET (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) said that the rapid changes which were taking place in Africa at the current time made it imperative for the United Nations to take prompt action to establish a regional commission for that area.

37. Referring to the communications submitted by the eight African States (E/3093) and the United Kingdom (E/3095) respectively, he felt that the wishes of the African States should be given first consideration. Further, he believed that any proposals which were

made in connexion with the establishment of the Commission should be studied on the basis of what Africa needed rather than on the grounds of precedent. While there was a certain similarity between the problems of Asia and those of Africa, the problems were by no means identical. Allowance for the differences must be made in drafting the terms of reference of the new Commission.

38. He shared the view expressed by the representative of the Sudan (1004th meeting) that an economic development programme must seek to achieve the simultaneous improvement of social, living and working conditions and attached particular importance to paragraph 1 (f) of the draft terms of reference submitted by the eight African States (E/3093). Co-ordination was of vital importance and it was missing in the recent plans which had been made for the development of the hydroelectric potential of a number of the largest African rivers. Each project included plans for the construction of vast aluminium plants. Apart from the lack of capital to finance such developments, no effort had been made to ascertain whether Africa needed such vast aluminium plants. One of the functions which the new Commission could perform would be to co-ordinate the planning, financing and execution of such projects in the interests of the African people.

39. Since co-ordination was essential, the Commission should cover the whole of Africa, together with Madagascar and the other African islands.

40. In view of the current debate, he felt that the recent decision of the International Labour Organisation to establish a tripartite African Advisory Com-

mittee whose membership was to be limited to Africa South of the Sahara was a mistake. He hoped that the Council would invite the ILO to review its position.

41. Referring to the question of membership, he was inclined to agree with the representative of the United Kingdom (1004th meeting) that there should be no first and second class members but he also felt that the Administering Powers should not be allowed to stand in the way of proposals, primarily concerning the region, which had the support of the African members. He found it somewhat hard to understand why seven of the eight African members submitting the communication had proposed to offer membership to two countries which were neither African nor responsible for the international relations of African territories, and hoped they would reconsider their decision. There should be ample opportunity for the Commission to avail itself of the experience and assistance of those two countries under the provisions of paragraph 9 of the draft terms of reference. He welcomed the proposal to bring in the dependent territories as associate members.

42. He could assure the Council that the ICFTU and its affiliated organizations would give the Commission their fullest possible support though the extent of that co-operation might well be influenced by the choice of the Commission's headquarters. He hoped that the site selected would be in a country where trade unions existed and where they could function without government interference or control.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.