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Chairman: Mrs. Georgette CISELET (Belgium).

AGENDA ITEM 12

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters VI
and VII) (A/4143, A/C.3/L.764-766) (continued)**

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. CUEVAS CANCINO (Mexico) said he did not agree with those representatives who felt that it was impossible to separate the social and economic aspects of development. Every economic question was by definition social, but the reverse was not true. As he saw it, the aim of social policy was the happiness of the human being and the full development of his faculties. In some instances, the policy had economic repercussions; in others, it did not. It was in the light of that definition of the aim of social policy that he wished to review the social programmes of Mexico and those of the United Nations.
2. Mexico's policy had been to promote the well-being of the three cultural groups, the Mayas, the Aztecs and the mestizos, which formed the Mexican nation, and to ensure that the first two, which were essentially agricultural, and the latter which was urban, should be equally protected and prepared for life in the modern world. He outlined the measures which had been taken to that end.
3. He then described his Government's policy in the fields of health and public assistance, mentioning specifically the malaria eradication programme, in which UNICEF and WHO had participated and which had resulted in a sharp decline in the death-rate from that disease. The range of the services provided under the social security programme was growing rapidly, but even more important was the fact that the programme now covered the rural as well as the urban population.
4. The proportion of the total budget allocated to public education had been increasing steadily. The Government's aim was to eradicate illiteracy, to provide free compulsory primary education for all and the opportunity for every student to undertake higher vocational studies. The task was an enormous one, but progress was being made.
5. Considerable work was being done to assimilate backward indigenous groups into the life of the modern world, and various measures had been adopted to pro-

vide low-cost housing for the lower income groups and to improve the amenities of poor urban districts.

6. He felt he could claim that his Government, in working out its social development plans, was taking into account the multiple cultural strains in the country and was well aware of the difficulties inherent in the industrialization of a country whose social structure still retained many of its aboriginal and colonial characteristics. Its aim was to make the transition as easy and productive as possible without losing any part of the country's culture.

7. Many of the programmes which he had mentioned had their counterpart in United Nations programmes, and some of the latter were of particular importance to Mexico since Mexico needed international assistance to complete its work successfully. For instance, Mexico would welcome help with its community development projects, especially as regards the preservation of the characteristics of the various cultural groups. The Regional Centre for Fundamental Education for Latin America at Pátzcuaro had done considerable work on community development and there had been talk of altering its terms of reference so that it could concentrate on that subject. While his Government would welcome any development which made the Centre more genuinely regional in character, it did not wish to narrow the scope of its activities in any way.

8. Mexico was also very interested in the United Nations housing programme, from which it hoped to learn a great deal. The United Nations had co-operated with the Organization of American States in setting up a regional centre at Bogota. He felt, however, that more was required. The international programme ought to supplement national programmes in dealing with those aspects of housing with which Governments were unable to cope themselves, despite all their efforts. More generalized technical studies should be made and more technical assistance provided.

9. He appreciated the tremendous difficulties which UNICEF faced in trying, with its very limited resources, to meet the many demands upon it. He hoped that the United States might see its way to waiving the "matching" formula, upon which its contributions to UNICEF were based. When it was a question of raising the productive capacity of a particular group there was justification for insisting that it should make a proportional contribution, but when the work undertaken was entirely social, the criteria applied should be different. He also suggested that an appeal for additional contributions should be made to the wealthier States, rather than to all States. Unlike those representatives who felt that UNICEF should not extend its activities into new fields, he believed that every effort should be made to promote conditions in which the rights of the child, as described in the Declaration, could become a living reality.

10. Although there were some hopeful signs in the world social situation, the pace of social development

was slowing down and the housing situation, in particular, was deteriorating. The problem was in all cases much more acute in the less developed than the more highly developed countries. More international assistance should be provided as soon as possible and he accordingly welcomed the suggestions made by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual report for making the Economic and Social Council a more effective organ (A/4132/Adi.1, p. 3) and in particular the suggestion for short special meetings at the ministerial level, within or under the supervision of the Council. Instead of confining itself to pin-pointing the world's serious economic and social problems, the Council would be able to discuss them at the policy-making level and make a positive contribution to their solution. He would submit a draft resolution in support of the Secretary-General's suggestion.

11. Mr. AGOLLI (Albania) remarked that the world social situation was still unsatisfactory, inasmuch as in many parts of the world the vast majority of the population lived on the fringes of starvation and misery. In many instances that was due to the fact that the country's national wealth was in the hands of foreign monopolists.

12. He agreed with those representatives who had criticized the Council's report on the grounds that it did not pay sufficient attention to the experiences of socialist countries in the social field and to the remarkable results which they had achieved in a comparatively short period.

13. His Government had taken the view that it was necessary to build up the country's economy in order to satisfy the needs of the population. To do this, special attention had been paid to industrial development. Within a period of fifteen years Albania had been transformed from a purely agrarian country into an agrarian-industrial State. Both industry and agriculture had made remarkable strides, the latter under the collectivist system, with a corresponding improvement in the people's level of living. He gave figures relating to industrial and agricultural output and per caput income, in support of his statement. At the current time there was no unemployment in Albania; in fact, there was a shortage of labour in some areas.

14. Turning to the subject of public health, he said that malaria, which had been a very serious problem, had been virtually stamped out in Albania, as had venereal disease, and progress had been made in the control and eradication of tuberculosis. The network of health institutions, which previously had existed only in the towns, now covered the country and a striking increase in the number of medical personnel had been achieved. A system of old age and invalidity pensions, to which the people made no contribution, had been instituted. The death-rate had declined sharply, while the birth-rate had gone up.

15. He recognized that UNICEF had done useful work in promoting child welfare, but he believed that the primary responsibility for such services lay with the individual Governments concerned. Children in Albania were protected by the Government and by society. Pregnant and nursing mothers received protection by law and medical services for children and mothers were free.

16. Before the liberation of Albania, 85 per cent of its population had been illiterate. At the current time

education was free at all stages and elementary education was compulsory, as was secondary education in areas where there were secondary schools.

17. The rapid social progress made by Albania had been made possible by the assistance which it had received from the other socialist countries. In that context, the failure of the Survey of Programmes of Social Development (E/CN.5/332)^{1/} to make any reference to the gigantic strides which had been made in social development in the People's Republic of China constituted a serious omission.

18. He recognized the valuable work that was being done by the Commission on the Status of Women but noted with regret that there were still a number of countries in which women did not enjoy equal political and civil rights with men.

19. The report of the Economic and Social Council (A/4143) made no mention of the important subject of scientific, technical and cultural exchanges between States. He would support any proposal designed to bring about an increase in such exchanges.

20. Mr. SADRI (Iran) said that the debate on the Council's report provided an opportunity for States which were not members of the Council to express their views on the vital matters with which that body dealt. The keen interest of the Iranian Government in those matters was a natural consequence of its determination to pursue a policy of economic, social and cultural progress with a view to a steady improvement in the level of living of the population.

21. His delegation welcomed the indications in the report that the various organs of the Council had devoted increased attention to social programmes and services, as it shared the view that a balance should be maintained between economic and social development. The problems connected with social and economic needs were great, especially in the under-developed countries. The United Nations was facing those problems with modest financial resources, a limited administrative apparatus and sometimes a lack of co-operation. However, its endeavours, together with those of the specialized agencies and Governments, offered good prospects for increased international co-operation and for the future solution of those problems. It was to be hoped that continuous efforts would be made to overcome the shortcomings referred to in the report, especially with respect to the housing shortages in the face of the unprecedented growth of the world's population and the mass movement from rural to urban areas. His Government welcomed any encouragement of possibilities of supplying drugs and preventive medical preparations at a cost within the reach of low-income groups. It also supported the recommendations of the Social Commission which had led to the Council's adoption of resolution 731 H (XXVIII) concerning the planning and implementation of national social service programmes for family and child welfare. Similarly, the community development concept could play a vital role in the life of under-developed countries during their transition to the conditions of a modern society and deserved to be expanded. It was therefore important that the specialized agencies should concentrate on that field and co-operate in the training of specialized community development teams.

^{1/}United Nations publication, Sales No.: 59.IV.2.

22. His delegation wished to pay a tribute to the valuable humanitarian activities of UNICEF and to support the programme described in the excellent statement of the Chairman of the Executive Board (931st meeting). The Iranian Government, which felt concern over the decline in the resources of UNICEF during the current year, was proud of its continuous association with the Fund, both as a member of the Executive Board and as a regular contributor. It would continue to make its modest contribution to UNICEF and would, whenever possible, increase it. While his delegation noted with satisfaction the intention of expanding UNICEF programmes to cover wider areas and new activities, it wished to emphasize that such new programmes should not endanger the principal goals and aims of UNICEF in any way.

23. The report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs^{2/} and that of the Permanent Central Opium Board^{3/} gave grounds for satisfaction but also for concern. They showed that the general control position was better than in the previous year. However, some Governments were still experiencing difficulty in fulfilling their obligations in the matter. It was also regrettable to note the Board's complaint concerning the absence of certain statistical data and the delays which marked the arrival of certain returns. Those difficulties were connected with the marked differences between countries as regards statistical systems, medical traditions and progress in medical and social security services. The situation was particularly serious where such gaps occurred in respect of countries which were important producers or exporters of narcotic drugs.

24. The Iranian Government had always been interested in narcotics control and followed trends in the field very carefully. Figures in the Board's report showed that, during the past four years, the annual production of raw opium had been below the average for the twelve-year period following the Second World War. That trend was attributed to a sharp drop in Turkish production and to the cessation of Iranian production after 1955. The Committee was aware of the repercussions of the decisions taken by certain Governments to cease or ban production. It was regrettable that Afghanistan, which had taken such a decision, had not yet been given sufficient assistance to help it to cope with the consequences. His Government reiterated its offer to furnish the Government of Afghanistan with advice and experts and supported the idea that a reasonable sum should be provided annually in the regular budget of the United Nations for technical assistance in narcotics control. The Iranian Parliament had passed a bill ratifying without reservation the Protocol for Limiting and Regulating the Cultivation of the Poppy Plant, the Production of, International and Wholesale Trade in, and Use of Opium.^{4/}

25. Mrs. CHERNYAVSKAYA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) observed that the debate on the Council's report (A/4143) was evidence of the interest of Member States in the problems of peaceful social development. Such an interest was understandable, as the general well-being of a people depended on the solution not only of economic problems but also of

such social problems as health, education, social security and housing. She noted with satisfaction that in recent years the United Nations, and especially the Council and its functional commissions, had been devoting increasing attention to social problems, and she welcomed the relevant resolutions which the Council had adopted at its twenty-eighth session. At the recommendation of the Council, and with the co-operation of the Secretariat and the specialized agencies, a number of studies and reports had been prepared on various social problems. Such documentation contributed to an exchange of information and experience and facilitated planning on the international and national levels. Lastly, the benefits of regional seminars, advisory services and technical assistance had been noted by a number of speakers.

26. Along with those positive aspects, however, there were a number of shortcomings in the activities of the United Nations, and especially of the Council, in the social field. One such deficiency was the inadequate attention given to working out practical measures for implementing social programmes. Much more attention was devoted to analytical activities, such as the compilation of information, to the co-ordination of programmes and to the preparation of reports and surveys than to practical recommendations which might be of use in drawing up and carrying out national and international social programmes. A further shortcoming was the Council's failure to exercise adequate supervision over the implementation of its resolutions, as for example those advocating expanded international co-operation in scientific, cultural and educational matters. Nearly all the reports and studies on social subjects—including the Council's report and the International Survey of Programmes of Social Development—were purely descriptive in character. The authors of those documents rarely stated their own views or made any evaluations of the programmes they described. As a result, the utility of the documents as a means of exchanging information was greatly impaired. It would therefore be desirable to recommend the merging of the International Survey of Programmes of Social Development and the report on the world social situation into a single study in which the operation of the various programmes would be illustrated by factual material.

27. Her delegation was also unable to agree with the stress laid by the authors of those reports on the role of private initiative and voluntary organizations in attaining such goals as cheap housing, higher levels of living, social security, health and education. In the modern world, the main emphasis in the solution of social problems—especially with respect to their financial aspects—should be placed on States and Government agencies.

28. The Council also, regrettably, dissipated its energies in the analysis of a number of problems of secondary importance, to the detriment of such major undertakings as the elimination of illiteracy, the introduction of free medical services, the prevention and eradication of a number of diseases, and the raising of family levels of living. She could not agree with the view of the authors of the various reports that the major causes of the difficulties encountered in the social field were population growth, urbanization and lack of trained personnel. In her opinion, the causes were the inequitable distribution of national income and the disproportionate amount of that income devoted to unproductive military expenditures. The

^{2/}Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 9.

^{3/}Permanent Central Opium Board, Report to the Economic and Social Council on the Work of the Board in 1958 and Addendum (United Nations publication, Sales No.; 58.XI.5 and Addendum).

^{4/}United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1953.XI.6.

adoption of the proposals for general and complete disarmament made by Mr. Khrushchev before the General Assembly (799th plenary meeting) would make substantial resources available for the realization of national and international social programmes.

29. In the Byelorussian SSR, the solution of social problems took place within the context of the triumph of socialist productive relationships. Citizens were entitled to work, leisure, free education, free medical services, social security and many other social benefits. Within the coming seven years the work day and the work week would be reduced. Illiteracy had been eliminated, compulsory eight-year schooling was in force and a far-flung network of higher educational establishments and medical institutions had been created. The difficulties confronting her country in the matter of housing were the result of the tremendous amount of destruction during the Second World War. State appropriations for housing construction had been increasing year by year. During the period 1959-1965, State funds would finance the construction of over 15 million square metres of living space. The Government was determined to solve the country's housing problem within the next ten to twelve years.

30. The achievements which she had described showed the great experience which had been gained by the socialist countries in solving social problems and in planning the organization of the national economy. She realized, however, that some countries, recently liberated from the yoke of colonialism, were not in a position to solve their problems in such a rapid and radical manner. The United Nations and the specialized agencies must help them to cope with that task. To that end, the United Nations should make more rational use of its resources, increase its technical assistance to the under-developed countries, organize more seminars and intensive exchanges of information relating to social services. The experience of the countries of the socialist camp and of certain highly industrialized countries would be of great use to the under-developed countries.

31. International co-operation in scientific, cultural and educational matters should be another of the Council's principal concerns; yet it was inadequately dealt with in the Council's report and the various social studies. The Byelorussian Government, considering such co-operation to be one of the principal means of strengthening international understanding, maintained economic and cultural relations with over thirty countries. Byelorussians had taken an active part in many international congresses, festivals, conferences and sports events and a large number of foreign delegations, and theatrical and artistic groups had visited the Byelorussian SSR during 1958. The bonds of friendship and cultural co-operation between the Byelorussian people and the peoples of other countries were growing steadily. Unfortunately, however, not all countries were doing everything possible to promote contact between peoples and, in the view of her delegation, the activities of the United Nations in that sphere were inadequate. For all those reasons, her delegation supported the Czechoslovak proposal (A/C.3/L.766) reaffirming United Nations responsibilities in the development of further international contacts in the fields of science and culture.

32. Mr. MAHMUD (Ceylon) said that he wished to comment on only a few aspects of chapters VI and VII of the Council's report (A/4143), one of which was

land reform. In Ceylon, the new legislation, which had given the peasant many of the rights previously enjoyed by the landlord, had produced remarkable results, particularly in the form of increased yields. That method of land reform would repay study.

33. The rapid increase of world population had already been mentioned by several delegations. One aspect of that problem was how to feed the increased number of people and new types of food were being sought. The possibilities of the sea as a source of food might be drawn to the attention of the under-developed countries.

34. He welcomed the efforts already made to improve the international control of narcotic drugs and the substantial results which had been achieved. He thought that a change in the treatment of persons accused of narcotics offences by the courts might yield good results; a less stringent standard for the establishment of guilt might be applied to them. Many countries have already taken some steps in that direction. The question of including the regulations concerning the carriage of narcotic drugs in aircraft engaged in international flight in an annex to the Convention on International Aviation signed at Chicago in 1944 might be considered.

35. In connexion with the activities of UNICEF, the importance of supplying children's books to countries engaged in literacy campaigns could not be overstressed. In Ceylon, education was free and compulsory up to the end of the middle school stage and free through the university level. Furthermore, the ancient system of "pirizena" education had recently been placed on a university basis, thus opening higher education to certain pupils who had previously been unable to enter a university.

36. In Ceylon, not only did the Government play an important part in rural development and social services, but many voluntary organizations were engaging in such work.

37. Mr. MAQUEIRA (Chile) stated that, for the time being, he would confine his remarks to chapter VI of the Council's report (A/4143), which was fuller and contained more practical guidance for Governments than in previous years. He welcomed that fact, as it proved the usefulness of exchanges of information regarding the measures taken in different countries to improve social conditions. As a member of the Council, Chile had learned much and made a modest contribution, on the basis of its own experience. It did not consider the Council so much as a platform from which to appeal for social assistance, although that was needed in Chile, but as a forum for an international exchange of information, which enabled it to compare its own progress with that of other countries.

38. He subscribed to the principle that a balance must be established between economic development and social progress. In Latin America, some of the most serious problems were social. Backwardness as regards education, public health and housing, lack of trained personnel, the great distances to be overcome and over-centralization were common to all the Latin American countries. It was obvious that Latin America needed to achieve better social standards but, in his view, that should come gradually. Considerable progress had already been made by different Governments, with the technical advice of international organizations and under the general guidance of the Council. The

Chilean Government, for instance, had realized the need to lay down certain basic principles in social and educational matters. For that purpose a wide technical and social training programme had been worked out for the University of Concepción, which had been very favourably received by some international organizations.

39. His delegation welcomed the United Nations demographic studies, which would help to improve basic statistics. Chile was particularly interested in the subject, as was clear from the fact that it had agreed to act as host to the United Nations Seminar on Evaluation and Utilization of Population Census Data in Latin America which would be held at Santiago at the end of the current year.

40. Chile had taken steps to deal with the problems of population growth and migration from the rural to the urban areas. The Government was giving special attention to the north and the south of the country, which were very much isolated from the capital.

41. His Government was also greatly concerned with housing; profiting by the experience of both the advanced and the under-developed countries, it had adopted a realistic and middle-of-the-road approach. A housing programme for the entire country, based on the principles recommended by the United Nations, had been laid down by decree.

42. There was a close relationship between the funds available for social programmes and the improvement of national social services. Therefore, future budgetary appropriations, particularly for technical assistance in the social field, should be as generous as possible.

43. The work of UNICEF had been highly beneficial. He concurred with the view expressed in the Council's report that, because of the type of aid UNICEF provided and the manner in which the work of UNICEF was co-ordinated with that of other organs of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, its activities had become an essential complement to technical assistance (A/4143, para. 456).

44. Mrs. NYUN HAN (Burma) said that the slowing down of social programmes in many of the countries where they were most needed was regrettable; but it was encouraging that there was new interest in land reform and in raising the levels of living of rural populations in some parts of the world and that there had been an improvement in education, public health, social security and housing in others. Burma had made great efforts to raise the level of living of the low-income groups in rural areas. It was fortunate in not suffering from over-population, but there was a tendency for rural inhabitants to migrate to the cities. They were attracted mainly by the educational facilities which were now available there, as free State schools had been opened in most of the towns of Burma and the graduates from those schools preferred to become white-collar workers rather than agricultural labourers.

45. The housing problem had been acute until recently when the Government had created two satellite towns outside Rangoon to relieve the congestion there. The people who had been living as squatters in shanties on public and municipal land and on the streets of

Rangoon had been given plots of land and light building materials for their houses, as well as free electricity, water and medical services. Schools had been built and a hospital was planned. Voluntary agencies helped to distribute milk powder supplied by UNICEF. Rangoon had now been cleared of the shanty dwellings and a campaign to educate its population to keep the city clean had been highly successful. The National Housing Board had helped to provide housing for low-income groups in the city but building could not keep pace with the increase in population, although the Government Purchasing Board had made building materials available at reasonable cost to low-income groups.

46. Although she concurred with the view that Governments should be responsible for the financing and planning of social programmes, such programmes could not be successful without the participation of the people themselves. That co-operation had been extremely fruitful in Burma, under the supervision of the Social Welfare Directorate. Mass education training centres had been set up, where men and women were trained in the techniques of community development, the four main aims being the eradication of illiteracy, health education, the improvement of agricultural methods and the promotion of self-help. There were now 300 such centres, each meeting the needs of about 2,000 villagers, but more were needed. One community development project, north of Rangoon, had been so outstandingly successful that the experience gained had been made generally available through the organization of seminars with United Nations participation.

47. The rehabilitation of the physically handicapped was also a matter of major concern and grants were made to voluntary organizations dealing with the blind, lepers and other physically handicapped persons. Health centres were being organized by the Government in the rural areas, in which 85 per cent of the country's population lived and where medical facilities were still inadequate. A government maternity, child health and school plan had been put into operation and had expanded enormously between 1952 and 1957, with a resultant increase in the number of maternal and child welfare societies and health centres, and in the number of midwives and health visitors trained and appointed. The results over the last seven years had been most encouraging and were evidence of the progressive implementation of the provisions in the Burmese Constitution regarding the protection of mothers and children and the improvement of public health.

48. Turning to human rights, she remarked that the Burmese Constitution guaranteed women equal rights with men. The only field in which women lagged behind men in Burma was that of participation in public life. The seminar on the civic responsibilities and increased participation of Asian women in public life, held at Bangkok, had been of the greatest interest and help to Burmese women; it had opened their eyes to new horizons and enabled them to establish contact with women of other countries. She welcomed the recent acquisition of political rights by Austrian and some Swiss women; that was one more step in the right direction.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.