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at 3.10 p. m.



**NEW YORK**

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**Chairman: Mrs. Aase LIONAES (Norway).**

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. López (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

**AGENDA ITEM 12**

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapters VI and VII) (A/3613, A/C.3/L.609) (continued)**

**GENERAL DEBATE (continued)**

1. Mr. HUMPHREY (Secretariat) said, in reply to questions asked at the previous meeting by the representative of El Salvador, that the new human rights programme was still in the experimental stage. In organizing seminars on human rights, the Secretariat had been guided by the advice of three working parties which had in effect acted as preparatory commissions. He emphasized, however, that the initiative in such matters rested with the Governments and that the Government of a country prepared to act as host must issue a formal invitation to the Secretary-General to help in the organization of a seminar in its territory.

2. The results of the Bangkok seminar had already been commented upon; the other two seminars, yet to be held, would deal with a subject which the Commission on Human Rights had chosen for its main study and which therefore was closely connected with the work of the Commission.

3. Mr. CHAUDHURI (Pakistan) said that the world social situation must be considered against the background of conditions in the modern era, during which scientific progress had produced vast changes in a very short space of time. The world had shrunk and, instead of isolated nations, there was now a world community, in which the principle that the world's resources should be equitably shared among the world's population was recognized. It was also generally accepted that it was not only ethically desirable but practical politics for the developed countries to help the less developed. As the developed countries had accepted the obligations of mutual aid, the under-developed countries had awakened to the possibility of raising their living standards. Fatalism and resignation were giving way to a demand for a better life.

4. The Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) placed the problem in its true perspective. The three main enemies of mankind were disease, ignorance and poverty. If the money spent on arma-

ments had been devoted to combating those evils, enormous progress would already have been made. It was to be hoped that the major Powers would halt the armaments race and devote the resources thus saved to ridding the world of those three great evils.

5. It was gratifying to note that some progress had been made in the struggle against disease. Mortality rates had declined, particularly in the under-developed countries, and the mass campaigns against endemic and epidemic diseases had produced good results. On the other hand, other and more intractable diseases were causing growing concern in the industrialized countries, so that, although commendable efforts had been made, with the assistance of the World Health Organization, to solve the problem of disease, no satisfactory solution had yet been reached.

6. Great strides towards the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy had been made in recent years, and there had been a considerable, although uneven, expansion of education in most parts of the world since 1950. More than half of the world's school-age population was now attending school, but in some countries less than one-fifth of the school-age population went to school and universal primary education would not be achieved before the end of the century unless the rate of progress was accelerated.

7. As Pakistan well knew from its own experience, the lack of schools, rural transport and funds was an obstacle to the expansion of primary education in under-developed areas. The Pakistan Government had adopted a compulsory free education law but could not yet put it into effect owing to the shortage of teachers, finance and buildings. However, the matter was receiving serious attention. The popular demand for education and, with it, the need for trained personnel, were increasing in every country. The United Nations should devote more attention to the question and provide more assistance for the under-developed countries.

8. Progress in the struggle against poverty had been very uneven. In the developed countries, production and national income had increased, prices and wages had risen and working conditions had improved, whereas per caput income had actually dropped in the under-developed countries, where the majority of the population was dependent on agriculture. The decline in living standards in the under-developed countries had helped to widen the gap between them and the developed countries, with the result that the world economy was in a state of serious imbalance. Every effort must be made to remedy the situation.

9. One of the causes of the present low level of living in the under-developed areas was the increased rate of population growth, which, in its turn, was largely due to a decline in mortality unaccompanied by any decline in the birth-rate. The economic and social problems resulting from such an increase could be solved only

by a whole series of measures, which included an increase in food production, and the building of more schools, more hospitals and other facilities. The Population Commission was studying the problem, the answers to which would be found in economic development and education in birth control.

10. Another serious matter to which the Report on the World Social Situation drew attention was that of urbanization without concomitant industrialization in the under-developed countries, with such consequent social evils as poverty, unemployment, health and housing problems, changes in social structure, crime and, above all, migration from the country to the town. The only way to deal with migration was to ensure that the same facilities should be available to the population of rural areas as to that of the towns. Community development projects could be of the greatest value in that respect. In Pakistan, the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development Programme, comprising a series of such projects, was democratic and educational, and stressed mutual aid, co-operation and local leadership. The aims were to increase production through the introduction of modern methods, to provide more community services, to encourage self-help, initiative, co-operation and leadership, to enrich rural life through the organization of social activities, to co-ordinate and extend the work of various Government departments at the local level and, finally, to place more accent on welfare in administration. Pakistan was receiving some of the assistance it needed for that programme from the United Nations and also from the United States of America.

11. The illicit traffic in opium was the most important question in the international control of narcotics. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had proposed various measures for controlling the traffic, which Pakistan fully endorsed. The Pakistan Government had undertaken, under the 1953 Opium Protocol, to abolish opium consumption in Pakistan over a period of fifteen years. One of the most effective ways of dealing with the illicit traffic was undoubtedly the progressive reduction of opium production. Iran was to be congratulated on its courageous decision to ban the production of opium and should be given every assistance in solving the difficulties consequent upon that decision. The completion of the single convention of narcotic drugs would also be a step towards effective control.

12. Referring then to the question of human rights, he said that the emerging international social order would be judged ultimately by the value and definition it gave to those rights. Care must therefore be taken in formulating them. Periodic reports and special studies and such activities as seminars, organized within the framework of the advisory services on human rights, all helped to clarify people's thinking with regard to human rights. The draft International Covenants on Human Rights were also a step in the right direction; their completion by 10 December 1958 would be a fitting way in which to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

13. The Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women were to be commended for their excellent work. The adoption of the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women at the eleventh session of the General Assembly (resolution 1040 (XI)) had been another step forward. Pakistan recognized that the status of women was an important issue and

was endeavouring, in spite of many obstacles, to make its practice agree with its lofty ideals.

14. Mr. RAFIK (Afghanistan) pointed out that the Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) gave grounds for both satisfaction and concern. Although there had been much improvement in recent years, no solution had been found for some important problems, such as the relation between the growth of population in under-developed countries and food consumption and the gap between per caput incomes in developed and less developed countries. The Afghan delegation believed that a balance should be maintained between developments in the economic and social fields, as progress in one could cause difficulties in the other.

15. The Council had also laid particular stress on the problems raised by urbanization, which were due, to a great extent, to poverty and other difficulties in the rural areas of emigration. The Council had rightly recommended the integration of policies in dealing with those problems. The Afghan delegation also agreed with the Council's view that community development should be considered within the framework of long-term programmes of international action, and believed that community development could play an important part in the process of urbanization, by raising the level of living in rural areas. The close co-operation of the specialized agencies would be an important factor in expanding those activities.

16. Turning to the question of the international control of narcotic drugs, he recalled the request made by Afghanistan that it should be recognized as a State producing opium for export, which had been discussed at the tenth and eleventh sessions. Afghanistan had been a producer of opium for centuries but, for humanitarian reasons and in the interests of international solidarity, it had enacted a law in 1944 prohibiting the cultivation of poppy plants throughout the country. That action had led to great economic hardships and social unrest, and the Government had taken drastic steps to remedy the situation. Some of those measures had been successful, but no permanent remedy could be found to help the population of the northern province, where the opium poppy was the only possible crop; the standard of living had deteriorated, unemployment had increased and conditions had been further aggravated by the growth of the population. Under those unbearable conditions, it had been decided to repeal the law prohibiting the cultivation of the opium poppy in the afflicted areas, and to take all the necessary steps for strict control. The Ministries of the Interior, Finance, Trade and Health had been made responsible for the application of the law.

17. In 1953, the United Nations had held an Opium Conference, which Afghanistan had unfortunately not attended. The Conference had adopted a protocol listing the countries exporting opium, but Afghanistan had been omitted because of its absence. It had applied to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for redress, and the Commission at its eleventh session had adopted a resolution <sup>1/</sup> recognizing the justice of the Afghan claim and requesting the Secretary-General to revise the relevant provision of the draft single convention. The Economic and Social Council had decided (resolution

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-second Session, Supplement No. 8, annex II, resolution II A.

626 G (XXII)), however, that the question needed further study for technical reasons and had referred the matter back to the Commission; the latter had then decided to postpone action on the matter until its thirteenth session, <sup>2/</sup>pointing out that Afghanistan had shown its willingness to carry out the main obligations of international control and that, since the 1953 Protocol was not yet in force, Afghanistan did not require permission to produce and export opium for medical and scientific purposes.

18. The Afghan delegation was aware of those facts, but had raised the question because it believed in international co-operation in narcotics control. It maintained its claim to recognition of its rights and was sure that such legal recognition would only help to promote control of illicit traffic. If the decision of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was unfavourable, Afghanistan would raise the matter again in the General Assembly. Meanwhile, it was grateful to all the Member States which had supported its case in the Commission, the Council and the Assembly.

19. Mr. EPINAT (France) said that, since his delegation was represented in the Economic and Social Council, it was interested in hearing the views of States which were not members of that body, so that it might be guided by them. His comments would therefore be very brief.

20. As the Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) showed, the world's social needs were great and its problems acute, and not in under-developed countries only. The United Nations faced those needs and problems with modest financial resources, a limited administrative apparatus, much good will and a structure enabling it to be of some assistance to Governments. In the early years of its existence, it had established its scope of action in economic and social matters. Once that had been done and a system of priorities and a comprehensive programme of future activity had been worked out, it had become clear that the United Nations did not, and would not in the near future, dispose of the fabulous sums that would be needed to enable the under-developed countries to catch up rapidly with the more advanced countries. On the other hand, the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies had at least resulted in a common awareness of the world's social problems and a common desire to solve them. The fact that, in facing those problems, representatives of all countries now spoke the same language was perhaps the most important social attainment of the United Nations so far.

21. At the current stage, Member States must be content with such minor but valuable results as had already been achieved: the serious study which the Social Commission was giving to a selected list of subjects, the growing acceptance and application of community development, and the seminars on human rights. His delegation was well aware that such action represented but a modest beginning in the fight that would have to be waged against poverty and suffering, but it cherished the hope that by dint of patience and unremitting effort — to which, for its part, it was pledged — and through a recognition of their common problems, the nations would one day achieve a solidarity which would enable them to shape the world to their desire.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 10, annex II, resolution II.

22. Mr. BRATANOV (Bulgaria) observed that all Member States were directly interested in the further development of international co-operation in science, technology, culture, education and tourism referred to in the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/C.3/L.610). The problem of disarmament and of the prohibition of atomic weapons gave rise to the need for establishing an atmosphere of trust among all nations, irrespective of their social systems. The expansion of cultural, scientific and other relations was one of the best means to that end.

23. In view of the great importance which the Charter of the United Nations attached to international cultural co-operation for creating the necessary conditions for friendly relations among nations, a resolution on international cultural and scientific co-operation had been unanimously adopted by the General Assembly at its eleventh session (resolution 1043 (XI)). Unfortunately, no further measures had been taken in that direction. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 663 I (XXIV), had also recognized the need to develop personal contact between specialists in social matters. The existing situation gave reason to hope for the favourable development of contacts in various fields. For example, the ice had been broken in the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America; there had been exchanges of agricultural and building delegations and plans for visits of students, journalists, television experts and so forth. It was to be hoped that such co-operation would develop, along with the conviction that it was essential to eliminate war from the modern world.

24. Great changes had taken place in the international situation from the cultural point of view. For example, Bulgaria had recently been visited by many tourists and eminent representatives of the cultural and scientific circles of Western countries. A large cultural delegation from India had also visited Bulgaria towards the end of 1956, not to mention the constant cultural and intellectual ties which were maintained with the Soviet Union and other peoples' democracies. Mr. Todor Zhivkov, an eminent Bulgarian politician, had stressed his country's concern for the establishment of cultural and other relations with the United States of America. Furthermore, Bulgaria was anxious to establish similar relations with its neighbours, and some success had been achieved in that respect, by means of a tripartite convention between Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia to co-ordinate the campaign against malaria and other communicable diseases in frontier regions, and in other ways, for instance, by an exchange of theatrical companies between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, visits from journalists, and sports events. A trade agreement had been concluded with Turkey and steps had been taken towards scientific and cultural co-operation with Turkey and Greece.

25. In view of those experiences, Bulgaria warmly supported the draft resolution for the further expansion of international scientific, cultural and technical co-operation, with a view to creating an atmosphere of fuller trust among nations.

26. The Bulgarian delegation welcomed the considerable attention that had been paid to the Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/324/Rev.1) in the Council's report to the General Assembly (A/3613). The publication of such reports had the great advantage of attracting the attention of world public opinion to

social problems and needs and promoting international co-operation. The authors of the report had tried to provide general data for the whole world; unfortunately, however, they had deliberately ignored certain countries whose inhabitants represented nearly one-half of the population of the whole world. Thus, the report contained no data on such a vast country as the People's Republic of China and shed practically no light on the social situation in the peoples' republics. That fact could be attributed to the absence of qualified personnel from those countries in the Secretariat, a situation which should be remedied as soon as possible.

27. The Bulgarian delegation considered that the statement in the introduction to the report that the available data on social progress tended, by and large, to give a favourable bias to the world picture was incorrect. An important fact stressed in the report was that in some of the less-developed countries, pre-war levels of *per caput* food production might not yet have been recovered. The report should also have analysed in greater detail the fact that although an abundance and even a surplus of foodstuffs existed in some countries, they were not offered on the world market. The report also stated that housing had probably become worse in much of the world because of rapid urbanization. The data on education showed that 45 per cent of the world population was illiterate and that nearly half of the children of school age did not attend schools. Despite the progress made in combating communicable diseases, the report showed that in many under-developed countries some of those diseases still represented a serious problem.

28. The authors of the report had unfortunately failed to study the causes of unsatisfactory aspects of the world situation, although such a study would have made it easier to take appropriate national and international measures. Moreover, they had shown a surprising superficiality in their approach to the economic and social difficulties arising out of the rapid increase of population. Although the report stressed the interdependence of economic and social development, it also referred to the irregularity of the development of various sectors of the economy of different countries and groups of countries and to the increasing imbalance in the distribution of national income. No stress, however, was laid on the conclusions to be drawn from those extremely disturbing facts. He suggested therefore that in future the report should be drawn up by specialists representing all the social systems of the world, in order that a profound and competent study might be made of the social situation of various classes and groups of the population. Such an approach to the question would show that in some so-called advanced countries the overwhelming majority of the population did not have the social status which modern developments in the industry and agriculture of those countries could lead them to expect.

29. In conclusion, the Bulgarian delegation recommended the serious study of the increasing imbalance in the development of certain countries, which created a real danger of armed conflict, in view of the size of their military budgets. It was therefore regrettable that the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-fourth session had not adopted the proposal for an appeal to Governments to discontinue nuclear arms tests.

30. Mrs. HENSMAN (India) expressed her delegation's satisfaction at the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of resolution 663 D (XXIV), on the concepts and principles of community development. Her country's own experience with community development programmes could be very useful to other countries, although some adjustments to local conditions would no doubt be required.

31. Council resolution 642 B (XXIII) in which the Council called upon the Secretary-General to explore the possibilities of encouraging wider co-operation in demographic work in Africa and of establishing demographic research and training centres in that region was based on a resolution initiated by India and Egypt in the Population Commission. She was glad that two delegations which had abstained in the Commission had found it possible to support the resolution in the Council, so that it had been adopted unanimously. She hoped that the demographic research and training centres to which it referred would be established in Africa in the near future, since the demographic data collected by them would be of invaluable help to the emerging African States in planning their economic and social development.

32. With regard to the request of Afghanistan to be recognized as a State producing opium for export, her delegation had always maintained that Afghanistan had a just claim, the recognition of which would, moreover, help to control illicit traffic in opium. She expressed the hope that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs would grant the request of Afghanistan at its forthcoming session.

33. India had signed the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery and she hoped that many other States would do likewise.

34. She noted with satisfaction that the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women had come into force and also that the Council had adopted a resolution on free consent in marriage and on the compulsory registration of marriage and divorce (resolution 652 G (XXIV)).

35. She drew attention to the fact that in several countries women did not yet have the right to inherit movable and immovable property — a form of discrimination which should be eliminated. She was confident that the Commission on the Status of Women would make useful recommendations on the establishment of a minimum age for marriage, a subject on which it was engaged. Women were becoming increasingly active in public life and in volunteer work and had already created a wholesome public attitude towards maternity and child benefits and various other allowances for married working women.

36. With reference to the draft Declaration on the Rights of the Child, she drew attention to the desirability of an investigation into juvenile delinquency, which was a growing problem everywhere in the world.

37. Speaking of human rights generally, she said that the individual should never be sacrificed to the interests of the State.

38. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that the nations of the world would engage in whole-hearted co-operation in solving their common social and humanitarian problems.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.