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Chairman: Mr. Jiří NOSEK (Czechoslovakia).

AGENDA ITEM 29

Programmes of technical assistance:

(a) Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3613, A/3661, A/C.2/196) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) said that the achievements of the Expanded Programme in the past year had been outstanding. The amount of assistance furnished had reached a new peak, and administrative costs had been reduced to a minimum. The new country programming procedure and the policy of concentrating resources on countries in greatest need of technical guidance had brought good results. He suggested, in that connexion, that in the regional distribution of technical assistance, Africa's meagre share might be increased.

2. The basic problem facing the Programme was that of finding adequate funds. Current resources were inadequate to meet the demand for assistance, and the prospect that future programmes might have to be reduced for lack of funds was disheartening. As the Executive Chairman had said (471st meeting), it was to be hoped that the gravity of the situation would constitute a challenge to Governments, especially the major contributors. Liberia for its part had always given its full support to the Programme; it had increased its contribution for 1958 by 25 per cent and would continue to make increases whenever possible. Unfortunately, under-developed countries, like Liberia, depended for their revenue on the sale of primary products, and they suffered from the fluctuations of the prices of primary products on the one hand, and the ever-rising prices of imported manufactured goods on the other. More stable prices would mean greater earnings, production and buying power, enabling them to make use of such schemes as the Burma Plan and those offered under bilateral and multilateral agreements. That in turn would help to relieve the financial burden of the Programme. It was for the United Nations to establish the necessary machinery to ensure fair prices for primary products. The under-developed countries did not want charity; they wanted a fair opportunity to develop their re-

sources and to take their place among the advanced countries of the world.

3. In conclusion he expressed his Government's appreciation of the assistance it had received under the Programme and paid a tribute to all who had helped to make the Programme a success. He hoped that with the co-operation of all Member States, the Programme would continue to expand in the years ahead.

Mr. Hadwen (Canada) took the Chair.

4. Mr. KITTANI (Iraq) said that the technical assistance programmes were perhaps the most outstanding achievement of the United Nations and certainly enjoyed the widest support. As proof of its faith in the Programme, his country had doubled its last two annual contributions, and expected to contribute \$55,675 for the coming year.

5. The chief problem facing the Programme in the immediate future was financial. As the matter had been dealt with at length by many speakers, he would merely associate himself with the Netherlands representative's statement (479th meeting) that 1959 would be a crucial year and that Governments should endeavour to make the next pledging conference a greater success. On the other hand, he took issue with that representative's view that of the two alternative plans presented in A Forward Look (E/2885), the more ambitious one related to capital, rather than technical, assistance. Indeed, as the Canadian and Greek representatives had pointed out, the two types of assistance were interrelated and complementary, especially in the case of under-developed countries.

6. His delegation wished to stress the following points. (a) The Burma Plan should be expanded and applied more widely. Countries like Iraq which frequently had to seek paid technical advice on the international market welcomed the possibility of receiving such assistance under the Expanded Programme for remuneration, but at minimum cost. (b) The Administration's savings on administrative cost were commendable and it was to be hoped that the trend would continue. (c) It was most important that United Nations technical assistance should be co-ordinated with other forms of assistance as integral part of the countries' development. (d) The new policy of including an evaluation of the Programme in the Board's annual report was to be welcomed. Iraq had contributed to the first evaluation and would continue to contribute in the future. (e) While there should be no privileged categories of countries, requests from newly independent countries of Africa and Asia deserved special consideration. (f) Concentration of technical assistance on a few national projects — chosen with the agreements of the Governments concerned — was generally more beneficial to national development.

7. Turning to the assistance rendered to his country, he recalled that Iraq had emerged after the First World War beset by numerous political, economic and social problems. It was only a few years ago that, with the newly acquired wealth of oil royalties, his Government had been able to undertake a six-year programme of national development providing for a total expenditure of \$1,500 million over and above the country's regular budget for the period. Obviously, such a programme could not have been undertaken without outside technical help. His Government had found the help it had received from the Programme very useful in most instances, particularly in the fields of health, agriculture, civil aviation and social welfare. Where the projects had not been entirely successful, the failure had been due for the most part to lack of means to continue them after the experts' assignments had terminated. His Government therefore strongly felt that funds should not be diverted from a continuing project to a new one, and that projects once started, must be followed up until the countries concerned could continue them on their own without outside help. The three most important types of assistance Iraq had received were: (a) experts assigned to field projects, (b) fellowships and technical equipment.

8. Effective co-ordination between the different Government departments and the various agencies providing technical assistance had been assured from the start, even before the first resident representative had been appointed in 1953. The difficulties the Programme had at first encountered in Iraq through lack of trained local personnel and inadequate means of transportation, were gradually being overcome. Iraq attached great importance to the fellowship programme from which many of its nationals had benefited, but it believed that better results could be achieved if the duration of the fellowships was extended to give fellows more time to overcome language problems, study their new environment and specialize further in their respective fields.

9. Iraq was also concerned over the problem arising out of the division of the funds allocated to it among different specialized agencies. In some cases the "sub-agency target" system resulted in failure to use some funds because a particular agency was neither able to provide expert services in its field nor willing to transfer those funds to another agency which could put them to effective use.

10. Lastly, he appealed to the Board, when deciding on allocations, to take into account the applicant country's population, area and stage of development. In conclusion he fully endorsed the Executive Chairman's statement that the real test of technical assistance was to be found in the changes which resulted in the lives of human beings.

11. Mr. SOLANO LOPEZ (Paraguay) expressed his Government's gratitude for the technical assistance it had received. His delegation considered that two factors were particularly important in the organization of technical co-operation. First, in addition to analysing their own problems and drawing up their own plans, Governments should ensure that the maximum benefit was derived from the technical assistance furnished by providing the experts with adequate facilities and assigning officials to assist them. Secondly, the technical assistance agencies should supervise

the work of their experts. In that connexion his Government had recently welcomed the appointment of a resident representative in Paraguay.

12. In conclusion, he paid a tribute to the Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board (TAB), the Director-General of Technical Assistance Administration (TAA), the United Nations experts in the field, and the contributors, particularly the United States of America, without whose generosity the technical assistance programmes would be impossible.

13. Mr. NIKOI (Ghana) said that the United Nations technical assistance programmes were enabling millions of people the world over to build a better life. The main problem was, as the Secretary-General had recognized, how to reconcile increasing demands with inadequate resources. Ghana itself was acutely aware of the problem in its own efforts to implement ambitious social and economic development schemes. Both the United Nations and the recipient countries should endeavour to ensure that there was no wastage of scarce resources through the duplication of effort. Recipient countries had the further responsibility of making effective use of the help given them and of refraining from making requests for assistance which they could not properly absorb. They ought also, as the United Kingdom representative had emphasized, to co-ordinate technical assistance with their national development plans.

14. It was important, too, in order to make the best use of the Programme's resources, to give priority to the beneficiary countries' most urgent needs; his delegation looked forward to TAB's report to the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-sixth session and hoped that it would contain proposals on that subject and on the subject of the co-ordination of the Expanded Programme with other programmes of economic and technical assistance.

15. Ghana attached great importance to the Technical Assistance Programme not only because it was a recipient country but also because it knew what the Programme meant to peoples all over the world who were, with the help of the United Nations army of experts, fighting hunger, disease and illiteracy in the hope of building brighter lives in a new and better world. It was good to note that the recipient countries had been able, in the past year, to supply the Programme with a considerable number of experts; Ghana hoped soon to be able to supply community development experts to other parts of Africa and had indeed already begun to do so on a modest scale. Helping others to help themselves was, his delegation thought, the keynote of the whole programme. That was not to say that it made light of the technical and administrative difficulties; on the contrary, it was keenly aware of them; it emphasized the human aspect because that justified the whole enterprise.

16. Mr. LOUGH (New Zealand) observed that everyone connected with the Expanded Programme had cause to be proud of the results achieved during the past nine years. His country had watched with interest the steady increase in the Programme's resources and had been concerned to note that the Programme for 1958 was to be planned at a lower level than that for 1957. Realizing the need for a general increase in contributions to match the United States contribution, his country had increased its pledge by 25 per

cent and, despite its small population, was now one of the sixteen largest contributors to the Programme. Although the response to the Economic and Social Council's appeal for increased pledges had been disappointing, his delegation hoped that other countries would be able to increase their contributions at the next pledging conference in order to avoid curtailment of the Programme in 1959. Nevertheless, however much was contributed, available resources would always be less than the demands on them and the Committee should, as the Canadian representative had suggested, concentrate on the problem of how best to use the funds available.

17. From that point of view, the country programming procedure had been highly successful. It had encouraged the annual planning of technical assistance needs in recipient countries and had led to the establishment and strengthening of administrative machinery to co-ordinate technical assistance programmes and integrate them with national development plans. In that connexion his delegation endorsed the recommendation in Economic and Social Council resolution 659 A (XXIV) that recipient Governments endeavour increasingly to correlate the resources of the Expanded Programme with other programmes of economic and technical assistance in over-all integrated economic development programmes.

18. He had been discouraged to read in TAB's Annual Report (E/2965 and E/TAC/REP/103) that the majority of countries or territories covered by the Expanded Programme still lacked adequate national development plans and that consequently requests were related to individual projects. Too often the less-developed countries favoured short-term projects producing some immediate return over long-term surveys of resources and the preparation of orderly plans for economic development. He hoped that as Governments became increasingly aware of the importance of such plans, they would grant higher priority to requests for technical assistance experts who could assist with their preparation.

19. The resident representatives had made an important contribution to the efficiency of the programmes by ensuring maximum co-operation between the Expanded Programme and other aid programmes and TAB had expressed the view that ideally it should have a field officer in every country with an annual technical assistance programme of over \$150,000. However, the cost of maintaining a resident representative was high and, even if some of the expense was borne by the Governments of the countries concerned, the expenditure was a substantial deduction from the resources available for technical assistance. Other criteria should be taken into account before appointing a field officer to administer each \$150,000 programme. In the meantime, additional TAB correspondents selected from experts of the participating organizations already in the countries concerned might be appointed.

20. Commenting on TAC's concern at the high proportion of continuing projects, he observed that the high percentage in itself need not be a cause of concern because many projects overlapped programme years and were recorded as continuing projects. In New Zealand, for example, over 70 per cent of the fellowships awarded in 1957 under the Colombo Plan had been carried forward from 1956. Unavoidable

delays in the recruiting of experts also led to the cost of projects being spread over two programme years. In the case of continuing projects proper, it was gratifying that a number of long-term projects had been taken over by local authorities and that others were being progressively transferred. In that respect, TAB might usefully study the suggestion by the Brazilian representative in TAC (145th meeting) that recipient countries should gradually take over long-term projects after a certain period of time.

21. The merits or otherwise of continuing projects would no doubt receive attention in the evaluation of the Expanded Programme that was now a regular feature of TAB's annual report. His Government had been pleased with the evaluation in the current report, even though the cost and complexity of the task precluded a comprehensive and exhaustive study. In any case, such factors as the interdependence of the Expanded Programme and national development activities, and the difficulty of measuring the influence of ideas made a precise assessment impossible; furthermore, the significance of some projects might lie in pitfalls avoided rather than in results achieved.

22. His Government appreciated the efficiency with which the Programme had been administered and welcomed the further reduction in the proportion of administrative and operational service costs to total cost in 1956. He hoped that the rise in those costs estimated for 1957 did not foreshadow a reversal in the previously favourable trend. He also congratulated TAA on its successful work during the past year and on the reduction in its central administration costs.

23. The comments of the Executive Chairman of TAB (471st meeting) on the weakness of administrative co-ordination in some countries had reinforced the view that more training in public administration was needed to enable recipient countries to derive full benefit from technical assistance. His delegation had listened with interest to the remarks of the Director-General of TAA (471st meeting) on the use that was being made of the additional funds provided by the General Assembly for work in that field and looked forward to the report on United Nations training projects in public administration. The creation of efficient middle and lower strata of administrators was necessarily a slow process, and United Nations programmes might have to concentrate on easing bottlenecks, particularly at the higher and middle administrative and technical levels. Basic education programmes in recipient countries, assisted by the specialized agencies and such programmes as the Colombo Plan, would in time increase the supply of trained people needed for recruitment into public administration at the lower level.

24. Commenting on the suggestion made by the Netherlands representative at a previous meeting that technical assistance and capital assistance should not be merged, he said that New Zealand's experience in providing both forms of assistance under the Colombo Plan tended to support the Canadian representative's view that technical assistance and capital assistance could not be separated into rigid categories. In some cases, it was advantageous to combine both forms of assistance in a single project. For example, New Zealand had provided specialized training for a number of trainees and had also furnished the capital

to establish a training centre so that they could pass on their knowledge to others when they returned to their country. His delegation believed that an effort should be made to bring United Nations technical and capital aid programmes closer together rather than to isolate them. His Government considered that the sharing of knowledge and techniques between Members of the United Nations was making a significant contribution to human welfare which would become increasingly apparent in the years ahead.

25. Mr. CHA (China) expressed appreciation of the helpful statements made by the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA in opening the debate. It was gratifying that contributions to the Expanded Programme had increased in recent years but the total sum pledged for 1958 fell far short of the \$50 million level envisaged in TAB's report, A Forward Look (E/2885). That meant that yet further increases in contributions were required. It was to be noted, however, that ever since the Programme's inception in 1950, recipient Governments' contributions in counterpart expenditures had been considerable, amounting in 1956 to over \$77 million, more than three times the cost of all field programmes. Although some Governments lacked the resources to make substantial contributions, none, he was glad to see, expected outright gifts and all endeavoured to use the Expanded Programme's resources to the best effect. The provision of technical assistance on a reimbursable basis was an encouraging development and showed how much Governments appreciated the quality of the services rendered through the technical assistance organization. Many Member States had made fund-in-trust arrangements with various members of the Technical Assistance Board for such services.

26. His Government had benefited considerably from the fellowship programme and was grateful to the participating agencies for the awards they had granted and the training they had given its fellowship holders. Although six months was perhaps not long enough to allow for any worthwhile training he was pleased to note that the participating agencies were ready to consider a request for an extension of the fellowship period when it seemed warranted. That revealed the flexible nature of the fellowship programme which he hoped would be maintained in future years.

27. Some doubt had been expressed as to the wisdom of continuing projects over a great number of years; his delegation would be prepared to agree to the termination of any project or to the transfer of responsibility for it to the recipient Government if either course were clearly justified. The judgement ought surely however to rest with the recipient Government and its request for the continuation of a project should be respected. In any case, no hard and fast rules could be laid down; a project initially of limited scope might well prove to be of such value that its extension and continuation were eminently worthwhile.

28. His delegation was pleased that the Secretary-General had stressed the importance of an international administrative service and that the Economic and Social Council would discuss the question of public administration in connexion with that service at its next summer session. It appeared that a number of requests for experts in public administration to join national administrations had been received by

TAA. It was possible, however, that in view of Council resolution 661 (XXIV) on the subject nothing had yet been done about those requests. But a delay of a whole year would be a great loss to the requesting countries. If the need were urgent the General Assembly ought to make interim arrangements to meet the requests, perhaps using funds earmarked for public administration purposes in the Organization's regular budget.

29. With regard to the principles of an international administrative service, his delegation believed that an expert joining the national administration of a recipient Government should be responsible only to that Government for the duration of his service with it and should resume his connexion with the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration only at its conclusion. It should be stressed that the public administration expert must be of the highest calibre, technically competent, willing to adjust to the living conditions of the country to which he was sent and prepared to win the confidence of the national officials with whom he would be working. The selection of such experts was therefore particularly important but his delegation had every confidence in the capacity of TAA to choose the right men. His Government had for many years, in fact since the beginning of the century, enjoyed the services of experts from other countries, in particular in the fields of cost accounting and civil service and could record excellent results in both. His country's experience might be taken as an example by Governments contemplating requesting experts, but he would point out that their assistance would be required for long periods of time.

30. His delegation had been greatly interested in the statement made by the United States representative at the 481st meeting and looked forward to the proposals he had promised on the subject of the expansion of the scope of the Expanded Programme, for there could be no doubt that such an expansion would help to accelerate the economic development of the underdeveloped countries.

31. The United States representative had mentioned the first technical assistance programme established by his Government outside Latin America. The programme had been the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction in China, established by the United States China Aid Act of 1948, one year before the initiation of the Point Four Program. He could say that it had been of immense benefit to his country in the matters of rural health, land reform, education, livestock production, food and nutrition, water use and control, forestry and soil conservation and economic research and statistics and he would like to express his delegation's appreciation to the initiator of the programme, the United States representative. The Joint Commission's success would, he felt sure, be a source of inspiration to all those who were now seeking to promote the well-being of peoples all over the world.

32. Mr. BERCKEMEYER (Peru) stressed his Government's interest in the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme and its gratitude for the services of the experts sent to it in 1957. The past year had also seen the establishment in his country of the office of a Resident Representative, with good results. The amount of money devoted to Peru in technical assistance had risen and Peru had responded with co-operation and the provision of facilities. Furthermore,

as a complement to technical assistance activities, it had recently adopted legislation on such subjects as industrial development and a national development fund. Peru had been particularly grateful for the assistance given to it in connexion with the Andean-Indian programme, whose difficulties had been immense owing to the drought in that area, and in the fields of public administration, statistics, natural resources, meteorological services and, more particularly—for his country's industrial development was in full swing—in that of industry; the fellowships granted in that subject had been especially welcome.

33. Referring to the statements made by the Executive Chairman of TAB and the Director-General of TAA (471st meeting) he said that his Government was particularly interested in the question of administrative costs and applauded the concern of those two bodies to co-ordinate their services to the greatest extent possible, and to co-ordinate their work with that of private institutions in the matter of technical assistance. In that connexion he would remind the Committee of the suggestion his delegation had made the year before in the General Assembly (394th meeting) concerning the possibility of co-ordinating the technical assistance services under the United Nations with those of certain private companies operating at an international level; he would be grateful for TAB's views on that point.

34. The fellowship programme was becoming increasingly important, and rightly so, since it constituted the best and most lasting way of providing technical information. His delegation would therefore support any effort to extend or improve the fellowship system. Any extension, however, would call for increased resources or a better use of present resources. To that end, his delegation would urge, in addition, the improvement of the fellowship system which might, perhaps, form the subject of a special international agreement providing for automatic compensation on the lines of the Fulbright Plan; the use, wherever possible, of the radio, television and cinema to disseminate technical information in place of experts; the use of semi-voluntary services drawn from universities and technological centres and the cataloguing of the technological resources of the less developed countries, where such resources were very often badly distributed or imperfectly used.

35. The fundamental problem was that of spreading techniques and technical information; ever since the nineteenth century all countries had been seeking more and more technical knowledge, for technical advancement meant economic health. The United Nations and its technical assistance programmes had an important part to play in that respect, but it might be well to ask whether the Organization should confine itself to applying techniques elaborated in countries already boasting a high technological level. It might be useful if the Organization used its experience in countries with a low technological level and related it fruitfully to the work of technological research centres. Any new activities would of course involve new programmes and further costs but although their

benefits might not be immediately apparent they could ultimately mean great savings for the Organization. In that connexion it was satisfactory to note TAB's reference to the possible establishment of technological research laboratories and technical colleges; his delegation would be grateful for more information on those subjects.

36. In the light of such possibilities his delegation wondered whether it was not time to remove from the concept of technical assistance the notion of first aid, of emergency help. There was nothing provisional about the assistance now being given; the process was a long one and its effects were permanent. The United Nations task was to recognize the natural process and to help transplant techniques wherever they could take root and combine with other factors to solve the social and economic problems which could have such grave international consequences.

37. Mr. DIPP GOMEZ (Dominican Republic) paid a tribute to the Expanded Programme and to the persons who had helped to make it a success. Besides furthering national economic development, technical assistance promoted international good will and understanding through the interchange of fellows and experts. In view of the growing demand for assistance, the number of experts and fellowships should be increased; his delegation was pleased to note the efforts made in that regard and hoped that they would be continued as a matter of policy. The selection of experts and fellows naturally took some time; nevertheless the procedure ought perhaps to be accelerated to avoid undue delays during which the applicant's circumstances might change. The Administration's efforts to reduce administrative costs were most commendable, but economy must not be achieved at the expense of the Programme's efficiency and of the quality of the services rendered. Regional programmes offering common services to a group of countries with similar needs might be a good way to combine economy with efficiency. A number of such programmes were already operating successfully. In that connexion, his country might well serve as a regional programme centre; it was conveniently situated, and its facilities for international meetings had been repeatedly used in the past. The extensive installations recently made for an international cattle show might, for example, be conveniently used, at little additional cost, for a Caribbean cattle breeding centre. Such a centre would be useful, not only to the Central American countries where cattle raising played an important part in the economy, but as a model for further centres to be established in other parts of the world.

38. In conclusion, expressing his country's concern for the financial status of the programme which threatened to curtail technical assistance at a time when needs were greater than ever, he announced that the Dominican Government had decided to make an additional contribution of \$28,000 to the Programme for 1958, and that the contribution might be further increased in the near future.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.