

# UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
LIMITED

E/CN.14/C.2/3  
29 February 1964

Original: ENGLISH/  
FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
Sixth session  
Addis Ababa, 19 February - 3 March 1964

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE II (SOCIAL) TO THE COMMISSION

### Social Development

#### (Agenda items 5 (b) and 5 (d))

1. The following documents were presented under item 5(b): (i) Social development: programme, trends and prospects (E/CN.14/C.2/2); (ii) Report of the Workshop on Urban Problems: the rôle of women in urban development (E/CN.14/241); (iii) Adult literacy and economic and social development (prepared by UNESCO) (E/CN.14/269); and, under item 5(d): (iv) Extract from the report on the world social situation (E/CN.14/244).
2. Opening the discussion, the secretariat briefly outlined the work of the Social Affairs Section since its inception, made reference to an evaluation of the activities that took place last year, and described the resultant re-definition of the objectives and the re-organization of the structure of the Section. The Section will give increasing attention to the development of basic urban and rural social development programmes within the framework of integrated national economic and social policies. The Section, as re-organized, would in future consist of four inter-related operational units: (i) Social Investigation Unit; (ii) Social Welfare Unit, (iii) Social Policy and Development Unit, and (iv) Rural Life and Institutions Unit. A noteworthy feature of the Social Policy and Development Unit is that representatives of the United Nations specialized agencies and The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will be associated

with it in an advisory capacity; they will also participate in the work programme of the Unit. The main task of this Unit will be to assist governments in the planning of social programmes needed to accelerate economic development, and generally to study ways and means of developing human resources for economic and social development. The Rural Life and Institutions Unit now takes the place of the former Community Development Unit and will concentrate upon the practical measures required for the upliftment of the rural population under a unified rural development programme, through the development of rural institutes for the training of village level workers, consumers' and producers' co-operatives, marketing arrangements, nutrition and health extension, home economics, rural industries and other rural institutions likely to strengthen the income resources and security of rural families.

3. The members of the Committee expressed their satisfaction with the statement of the secretariat, reiterated their conviction in the necessity of giving as much attention to social development as to economic development and generally favoured the widening of the terms of reference of the Group of Experts Committee on Social Welfare and Community Development, to embrace the total field, covered by the objectives of the Social Affairs Section, as re-organized.

4. The report of the Workshop on Urban Problems, with special reference to the rôle of women in development was generally well received. Comments were made upon certain recommendations of the workshop. The secretariat was requested to take into careful consideration all the positive and negative effects of implementing some of the recommendations. The delegates were of the view that the question of involving women in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the region was an urgent task and recommended that the whole subject should be kept under constant study and review, and that suitable measures should be taken to achieve these ends.

5. The recommendations set out in document E/CN.14/269 for the intensified fight against illiteracy within the framework of a world literacy campaign were favourably commented on and the secretariat was requested to co-operate with UNESCO in this matter. There was unanimity of view on the importance and urgency of enabling adults to become literate as rapidly as possible with a view to enabling them to participate in, and benefit by, the national programmes of economic and social development. While international assistance was essential, the main responsibility for the eradication of adult illiteracy must rest with national governments.

6. The secretariat then opened the discussion on the next item of the agenda (5 (d)) with a review of the world social situation with special reference to Africa (E/CN.14/244). Substantial though uneven progress was reported during the decade 1951-1960. Remarkable strides were made in the educational and health services. Per capita income had risen to \$120 per annum in the region, though there were marked variations in the standards of living from one country to another. When compared with the standards of living in the developed countries and regions of the world, African levels of social advancement still remained pitifully low in spite of the marked achievements of the last decade. However, a noteworthy feature of the decade was that, for the first time in many countries, efforts were made to rationalize the process of social changes through deliberate planning, and the objective generally was to achieve accelerated development in both the economic and social fields at the minimum financial and social costs. The task for the current decade will be one of finding effective solutions to the problem of developing human resources, the narrowing of the income gap between the relatively wealthy minority and the impoverished masses, as well as between the urban and rural sectors of the population. Solutions have to be found to the social problems accompanying industrialization and urbanization; as for example, rural migration, housing and juvenile delinquency. Equally important was the overhaul of social institutions and the re-adjustment of attitudes of mind in ways favouring rapid economic and social change.

7. The analysis of the social situation in Africa was well received and favourably commented upon. Delegates were concerned with the rural exodus and urged that the problem should be studied more intensively, and means found to solve it if balanced development was to be achieved. Concern was also expressed in respect of the low levels of income in African countries. It was felt that problems of employment, housing, transport, education, family welfare, health, nutrition, migration, and the growth of population should be studied and taken into account as essential elements in social and economic planning.

#### Housing, Building and Planning

##### (Agenda item 5(e) (iv))

8. The Committee proceeded to examine the progress report, introduced by the secretariat, on the work undertaken by the Commission in the field of housing, building and physical planning.<sup>1/</sup> In the discussion that followed the delegates referred to related aspects of the housing problem in developing African countries. Particular emphasis was laid on the need to define targets for national housing policies and elaborate short and long-term housing programmes, designed to meet the urgent needs of the rapidly growing population, particularly in the major urban centres. Examples were provided of the efforts devoted by African countries to contribute to the solution of the housing problem, with particular reference to the provision of housing for the lower income population. Further examples were quoted of the provision of temporary types of accommodation required to solve the more urgent needs of workers in urban areas. The problems arising from the creation of new industrial estates were mentioned, particularly the question of providing adequate housing and related facilities in this connexion. A

---

<sup>1/</sup> E/CN.14/251.

number of delegates referred to the shortage of financial resources required to meet housing needs and insisted on the necessity of expanding domestic resources, through savings, insurance schemes, co-operative organization, etc. in addition to applying for external financial aid. There appeared to be a consensus of opinion on the essential rôle to be played by governments and local authorities in providing houses and related facilities especially in the low income bracket.

9. The crucial problem of developing the production of local materials and of substituting building materials and components at present imported was stressed by several delegates. The secretariat was requested to devote greater attention to this question within the framework of the over-all policy of the Commission to promote industrial development in Africa on a co-ordinated basis.

10. Emphasis was also laid on the specific character of the traditional dwellings built by the African population and on the desirability of improving them without substantially disrupting existing social and cultural patterns. While it was recognized that urban housing might have to receive priority in the years to come, the question of improving rural housing conditions should not be overlooked.

11. The importance of the rôle that the Commission could play in providing direct assistance to African governments in technical and economic matters related to housing, building and planning was stressed. While not minimizing the interest of general and specialized studies, the view was expressed that the secretariat should devote more attention to responding to governments' requests for assistance in practical matters of concern to one country or to several countries sharing common problems and a common approach.

12. The representatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and of the World Health Organization (WHO) took part in the discussion and confirmed the interest of their respective organizations in the problems

of housing. The representative of WHO mentioned in particular that his organization had undertaken to appoint a public health engineer to work with the housing, building and planning section of the secretariat. The observer from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions referred to a programme launched by his organization for the encouragement of housing co-operatives in urban areas and the assistance to be provided to the rural population in improving its housing conditions.

13. The Committee took note of the report of the second session of the Housing, Building and Planning Committee<sup>1/</sup> of the Economic and Social Council and of the covering note prepared by the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs, which highlighted the main points of interest to the Economic Commission for Africa.

Public Administration

(Agenda item 5(g))

14. In introducing the subject of public administration the secretariat referred to the Report on activities on public administration (E/CN.14/254) and to the relevant part of the programme of work and priorities for 1964-1965 (E/CN.14/267). He stated that the Division of Public Administration, being a new one, had not yet made the impact that the other divisions had already made in Africa. The rôle of the Division was then briefly defined as one designed to contribute to the efficiency of the machinery of government by strengthening the civil service and improving training facilities, as well as by streamlining the practices and procedures of government operations.

15. Several delegations stressed the need for a sound public administration for the effective preparation and execution of economic and social development plans and programmes. They also expressed satisfaction that the programme concerning public administration was well geared toward the goal of improving the machinery of government and that its impact would gradually be felt.

---

<sup>1/</sup> E/3838, E/C.6/25

16. Interest was also expressed in the forthcoming African Conference of Directors of Central Personnel Agencies and Civil Service Commissions and of Directors of Institutes of Public Administration. (Addis Ababa, 18-29 May 1964)

17. The need for greater research and comparative studies in public administration subjects was stressed since this would result in future in a better understanding of the problems involved.

18. A number of other suggestions were made which the secretariat noted for inclusion in its detailed plans for future activities.

Training<sup>1/</sup>

(Agenda item 5 (d))

19. Following introductory remarks by the Chairman, the Executive Secretary stated that the problems of training had been somewhat difficult since the establishment of the Commission. Some African research workers within the secretariat were considered as trainees and others were sent to other regional commissions for similar studies. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary indicated that the scope of the Training Section did not include formal schooling, but primarily concerned vocational and technical training.

20. In order to become acquainted with training programmes available to Africans, circular letters were sent to member and associate member States of the Commission requesting information concerning the facilities available, and another such letter was sent to foundations, bilateral and multilateral agencies. The information sent to the secretariat was being compiled in a handbook which would show all training facilities available to Africans. The Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of submitting requests for scholarships or information immediately and not waiting for the appearance of the handbook. He also requested that the Training Section be informed when and where these applications had been made, in order that duplication of efforts might be avoided.

---

<sup>1/</sup> E/CN.14/258

21. Measures would be taken to utilize as fully as possible the existing facilities. For this purpose member and associate member States of the Commission were urged to submit the names of candidates to the secretariat.

22. The Executive Secretary insisted that national correspondents be appointed by each member and associate member State and their names submitted to the secretariat so that they could keep in touch with the Training Section and become continually aware of the needs and facilities available.

23. The Committee appreciated the initiative of the secretariat in the field of training. The delegations accepted the suggestions of the Executive Secretary and confirmed that immediate action would be taken to inform their respective Governments.

24. It was suggested that consideration be given to the training of surveyors and road engineers.

25. In reply to a reference to the quality and standards of training institutions in Africa, the Executive Secretary **noted** that most African institutions were modelled after those in the former metropolitan centres, and that conditions of entry were sometimes more difficult in the former than in the latter. He emphasized that confidence must be placed in African institutions, especially as several delegations stressed that some of their citizens who had studied abroad had certain difficulties to re-adjust themselves on their return.

26. The programme and efforts of the International Labour Organization (ILO) especially in the field of vocational training, were outlined. Attention was drawn to the International Vocational and Technical Training Centre for Developing Countries which has been opened at Turin, Italy.

27. It was pointed out that the School for Animal Husbandry in Mali should be upgraded to the level of an institute of animal husbandry; and enabled to play its full part as an inter-African establishment.



28. It was requested that a clarification be made concerning the total amount of time necessary for the training of civil servants. The Executive Secretary pointed out that the secretariat's concern was not only the training of civil servants, but of workers of all levels. He recalled the need for middle-grade personnel, without which professionals were quite ineffective. As to the time required for the training of workers, it would depend upon the type of skill to be acquired and individual abilities.

29. The Committee adopted unanimously draft resolutions E/CN.14/L.181/Rev.1, L.183/Rev.1, L.184/Rev.1, L.186 and L.191/Rev.1.

- - - - -