

# UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



24891

Distr.  
GENERAL



E/CN.14/278

29 January 1964

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
Sixth session  
Addis Ababa, 19 February - 3 March 1964  
Item 5 of the revised provisional agenda

## IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS ON LAND REFORM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ECA

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
PURPOSE AND SCOPE	1
LAND REFORM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	2
UNITED NATIONS CONCEPT OF LAND REFORM	3
UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS ON LAND REFORM	4
ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY MEMBER GOVERNMENTS	5
A. Request for Technical Assistance	5
B. National Land Reform Measures	6
C. Collaboration with the United Nations in Reporting the Conditions & Needs of their Land Reform Programmes	9
D. Financing Land Reform Programmes	10
E. Establishment of Regional Land Reform Institutes	10
F. Observance of Economic, Political and Social Equity	10
ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES	11
A. Reports	11
B. Studies	12
C. Technical Assistance	13
D. The Organization of Working Parties and Seminars	14
E. Dissemination of Information	14
F. The Establishment of Regional Land Reform Institutes	15
ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	15
BRIEF REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES PERTAINING TO LAND REFORM IN AFRICA	16

	<u>Page</u>
A. The United Nations	16
B. The Economic Commission for Africa	19
C. The Food and Agriculture Organization	20
D. The International Labour Organization	24
E. The United Nations Special Fund	24
F. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	25
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	26

## ANNEX

1. General Assembly Resolutions on Land Reform	13 pages
2. ECOSOC Resolutions on Land Reform	12 pages

IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS  
ON LAND REFORM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ECA<sup>1/</sup>

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. The Economic Commission for Africa at its fifth session held at Leopoldville in February-March 1963, decided to add to the programme of work of the ECA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division of the Economic Commission for Africa, the following project:

"In collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations Headquarters to carry out studies related to the implementation of land reform in Africa in conformity with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations."

2. Land reform resolutions adopted by the General Assembly as well as ECOSOC call for various actions to be undertaken by member governments themselves, the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other international bodies. In addition most of the African countries have gained their independence relatively recently and their attitudes towards land reform are in many cases not yet crystallized. The Economic Commission for Africa which was established in late 1958, is also still in the stage of formulating, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization and other United Nations bodies, its programme of work on land reform. For the above reasons an attempt will be made in this paper to review and analyse the United Nations land reform resolutions in order to indicate the kind of action expected from and the responsibilities of those concerned in initiating and implementing land reform measures. This will provide a basis for evaluation of United Nations activities pertaining to land reform and for making suggestions with respect to future lines of action in Africa, by governments and by international agencies.

3. It should be noted at the outset that the major task that confronts the United Nations and its specialized agencies is the economic and social development of its member states. Time, effort and resources

<sup>1/</sup> In this paper the contents of United Nations resolutions on land reform have been quoted in some cases with modifications to adapt the wording to the context.

devoted to the achievement of this goal are unprecedented. However this is a long-run proposition that will continue to engage the United Nations for many years to come.

#### LAND REFORM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4. In many less developed countries especially in Africa, the acceleration of economic growth necessitates at its early stages of development the undertaking of land reform measures designed to bring about the transformation of its agrarian structure. Appropriate land reform programmes can provide incentives to farmers to adopt improved techniques and raise agricultural productivity with the consequence of raising per capita income thus allowing increased private investment and improving the distribution of income. As agriculture is thus invigorated it can then contribute to the economic and social development of the whole economy in terms of providing to other sectors among other things: (i) labour force; (ii) market for manufactured products and (iii) food requirements for the growing non-farm population as well as "food capital" or agricultural exports to pay for the importation of capital goods needed for industrial expansion.

5. It should be pointed out at the outset that although one of the most important factors affecting living standards in developing countries is the agrarian structure or the institutional framework of agricultural production, land reform should not be considered as a panacea to economic development but rather as a catalyst that can accelerate this process and that it should be accompanied by a comprehensive plan whereby a different resource-utilization pattern is developed and non-farm activities are established.

6. The most common features of agrarian structure and conditions in many under-developed countries and especially in Africa are:

- (a) Uneconomically small farm units;
- (b) Insecurity of tenure (including communal tenure);
- (c) Antiquated farming methods;

- (d) inadequate credit and marketing facilities;
- (e) extensive unemployment and underemployment;
- (f) decreasing soil fertility;
- (g) widespread malnutrition;
- (h) insufficient public services to the rural community such as health and educational services and
- (i) the bulk of agricultural production is not geared to the market.

#### UNITED NATIONS CONCEPT OF LAND REFORM

7. Land reform, as defined by the United Nations, is not, as often interpreted, confined to redistribution of land ownership but contains a multitude of measures. Due to great diversity of conditions of developing countries especially with respect to the relationship between density of population and the supply of land and other resources, no one standard measure or group of measures can be considered as best suited to all situations. Thus the United Nations concept of land reform is very broad indeed. It is regarded as comprising "an integrated programme of measures designed to eliminate obstacles to economic and social development arising out of defects in the agrarian structure. Included here are particularly:

- (a) the provision of opportunities for ownership;
- (b) measures to promote land settlement and security of tenure;
- (c) improvement of tenant conditions, e.g. by reduction of excessive rent or share payments;
- (d) improvement of employment conditions and opportunities for agricultural labour;
- (e) protection of cultivators living under tribal, communal and other traditional forms of tenure;
- (f) organization of farms of economic size - land consolidation;
- (g) land title registration;
- (h) extension of agricultural credit and reduction of indebtedness;
- (i) promotion of co-operative organizations used by farmers;

- (j) organization of farm machinery services;
- (k) fiscal and financial policy in relation to land reform, including tax measures to promote improved land utilization and distribution;
- (l) measures concerning land tenure as related to aspects of forestry;
- (m) measures to promote the equitable use of limited water supply;
- (n) other related measures such as, for instance, establishment or expansion of agricultural research or education services.<sup>1/</sup>

Land reform projects should also be linked with work in such supporting fields as marketing, extension, community development and land and water development.

#### UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS ON LAND REFORM

8. Although measures and forms of land reform have been executed since ancient times, recent and systematic attempts by the United Nations to advocate and promote land reform programmes in the context of economic development perhaps began in the late forties. Since then the following relevant resolutions on economic development have been adopted:

General Assembly Resolutions: 45(I), 52(I), 198(III), 200(III), 209(III), 304(IV), 305(IV), 306(IV) and 307(IV).

Economic and Social Council Resolutions: 1(III), 6(III), 26(IV), 27(IV), 29(IV), 32(IV), 36(IV), 37(IV), 51(IV), 103(VI), 106(VI), 109(VI), 139(VII), 140(VII), 179(VIII), 180(VIII), 184(VIII), 222(IX), 223(IX), 225(IX), 268(X), 294(XI), 297(XI) and 321(XI).

---

<sup>1/</sup> United Nations, Progress in Land Reform, First Report, New York, 1954 (Catalogue No. 1954. II.B.3).

9. Specific action on land reform by the United Nations may be considered to have started in 1950. Since then the following resolutions have been adopted:

General Assembly Resolutions: 401(V) of 20 November 1950, 524(VI) of 12 January 1952, 625 A (VII) of 21 December 1952, 826(IX) of 11 December 1954, 1426(XIV) of 5 December 1959 and 1526(XV) of 15 December 1960.

Economic and Social Council Resolutions: 370(XIII) of 7 September 1951, 512(XVII) of 30 April 1954, 649 B (XXIII) of 2 May 1957 and 712 (XXVII) of 17 April 1959.

10. These resolutions call for action to be undertaken by Governments, by the United Nations and its bodies and by other international organizations.

#### ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY MEMBER GOVERNMENTS

11. The General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions invite, urge and recommend the member Governments especially of developing countries to take the following action with respect to initiation and implementation of land reform programmes.

##### A. Request for Technical Assistance

12. Member Governments are urged to avail themselves of the facilities available to them through the United Nations expanded programme of technical assistance, in order that they may obtain expert advice in the planning of such measures as improving their agricultural conditions. These include:

- (1) institution of appropriate land reform;
- (2) provision of financial aid to agricultural workers and tenants and to small and medium-sized farmers through cheap agricultural credit facilities, comprehensive technical assistance and the promotion of rural cooperatives;

- (3) construction or development, either by direct government action or suitably financed co-operative groups of
  - (a) small factories and workshops for the manufacture, maintenance, repair and servicing of the most essential agricultural machinery and for the storage of small parts and
  - (b) locally-based enterprises for the processing of agricultural products;
- (4) taxation policies designed to lighten, to the greatest possible extent, the tax burden on tenants and small and medium sized farmers and
- (5) promotion of family owned and operated farms and of co-operative farms, as well as of other measures to promote the security of tenure and the welfare of agricultural workers and tenants and of small and medium sized farmers.

B. National Land Reform Measures

13. Member Governments are urged to carry out the following recommendation embodied in ECOSOC Resolution 370(XIII)<sup>1/</sup> of 7 September 1951 in so far as they are appropriate to their particular technical and financial circumstances:

- (1) study the Secretary General's report<sup>2/</sup> in order to take full account of the experience of others in carrying out their own plans for economic development;
- (2) institute appropriate land reforms in the interest of landless, small and medium farmers and

---

<sup>1/</sup> Endorsed by General Assembly Resolution 401(V) and 524(VI).

<sup>2/</sup> United Nations Land Reform: Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development, New York 1951.



(3) take such of the following measures as may be appropriate to the circumstances in their countries:

- (a) assure security of tenure to the cultivator of land so that he may have the incentive to improve the productivity of the land and to conserve its resources and the opportunity to retain an equitable share of his production;
- (b) provide opportunity for the cultivator to acquire ownership of land;
- (c) promote the organization of land holdings into farms of an efficient size;
- (d) establish on undeveloped and newly reclaimed lands secure and equitable tenure conditions, including opportunity for ownership in family-sized holding;
- (e) establish or expand national and local institutions for providing agricultural credit at reasonable rates of interest and take legislative or administrative measures to assist in the reduction of agricultural indebtedness;
- (f) enact and enforce legislation which will prevent the charges of exorbitant rentals on agricultural land;
- (g) review their tax structure and administration with a view to eliminating inequitable tax loads and related charges on the cultivator of land;
- (h) promote co-operative organization, marketing and processing of agricultural products and for the purchase of farm supplies and equipment;
- (i) encourage diversification of agricultural production wherever this can help raise the living standards of the farm and non-farm population;
- (j) take steps directed towards rational diversification of their economies so that agricultural developments may proceed as part of an integrated programme of economic development;

- (k) encourage the establishment of industries in rural areas, including co-operatives, small-scale and cottage industries and especially industries using indigenous agricultural products as raw materials, and thus assure such industries a place in the economic life of the country;
  - (l) establish or expand, either through cooperative organizations or by other means appropriate to the economy of the country, factories or workshops for the manufacture, maintenance, repair and servicing of the most essential agricultural machinery and the storage of spare parts;
  - (m) expand and develop programmes of literacy and general education in rural areas;
  - (n) ensure that adequate agricultural research, through governmental services or otherwise is undertaken;
  - (o) establish or expand services for the education of the farmer in the technological and economic aspects of agricultural extension services and model farms; and
  - (p) improve the economic, social and legal status of agricultural wage labourers on plantations and other large estates.
- (4) To undertake practical steps for implementing land reform which would assist in increasing agricultural production, in eliminating food shortages, in raising the welfare of the population of the under-developed countries.
- (5) Include measures which will enable farmers to secure agricultural equipment, draught animals, seeds, fertilizers and low-interest agricultural credit and assist them in developing various types of cooperatives for the production and disposal of agricultural products.

- (6) Include the adoption of measures to enable agricultural workers, tenants and small and medium-sized farmers to reduce or liquidate indebtedness which may have arisen from unduly high rents, unfavourable conditions of land tenure, and usurious rates of interest and unduly high prices paid in the purchase of seeds, agricultural equipment, draught animals and other facilities.
- (7) Include the adoption of appropriate wage and other social legislation for improving the conditions of labour and for raising the living standards of agricultural workers.
- (8) Support the already existing agricultural associations and assist where appropriate, in organizing new associations of landless agricultural workers, tenants and small and medium-sized farmers whose principal interest is in and who have active part to play in the carrying out of all measures provided for under the land reforms.

C. Collaboration with the United Nations in reporting the conditions and needs of their land reform programmes

14. Governments are invited to cooperate with the Secretary General and the specialized agencies concerned in the preparation of the reports on progress of land reform and other related fields. They are also urged to include in their replies to the Secretary General's questionnaire<sup>1/</sup> on land reform relevant information on the financial implication of their programmes of agrarian reform and their development projects designed to implement such programmes, on their capacity to finance such programmes internally and on the extent of financial assistance needed from the outside world.

---

<sup>1/</sup> Questionnaires sent to member Governments in connection with the preparation of United Nations reports on Progress in Land.

D. Financing land reform programmes

15. Recognizing that land reform programmes require large financial outlay various United Nations resolutions urge the governments of member states, in working out their fiscal policies, to give active consideration to making funds available for this purpose.

It also recommends that member states pursue fiscal and investment policies with a view to the expansion of area under cultivation and the improvement of the methods of agricultural production.

Other external methods of financing land reform will be indicated later.

E. Establishment of regional land reform institutes

16. The ECOSOC adopted resolution 712(XXVII) of 17 April 1959 which was also endorsed by the General Assembly to recommend to state members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies to consider the establishment, where appropriate, of regional research and training centres to assist with the continuous study of land tenure and land use.

It also called on United Nations and its specialized agencies including regional economic commissions to cooperate with such members in the work of these centres.

F. Observance of economic, political and social equity

17. Member states urged, by various relevant United Nations resolutions - in implementing land reform programmes in the process of their economic development - to observe the principle of equitable treatment in the economic political and social fields with a view to improving the conditions of the rural population.

ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS  
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

18. Various United Nations resolutions on land reform call for action on the part of the United Nations and specialized agencies to assist in the initiation and implementation of land reform programmes especially in the developing countries. The main United Nations agencies responsible for such action are the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Regional Economic Commissions including the Economic Commission for Africa, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The activities of the United Nations and its specialized bodies on land reform which are called for by these resolutions may be classified for the purpose of this report into the following six categories:

- A. Reports
- B. Studies
- C. Technical Assistance
- D. The Organization of Working Parties and Seminars
- E. Dissemination of Information
- F. The Establishment of Regional Land Reform Institutes

These will be considered below:

A. Reports

19. These include (1) In 1950 General Assembly Resolution 401(V) called for the preparation of a report to be submitted to the thirteenth session of ECOSOC on the analysis of the degree to which unsatisfactory forms of agrarian structure and in particular, systems of land tenure impede economic development and thus depress the standards of living especially of agricultural workers and tenants and of small and medium-sized farmers. A report was prepared in 1951 entitled, Land Reform: Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development.<sup>1/</sup>

---

<sup>1/</sup> United Nations Publication Sales No. 1951. II.B.3.

The theoretical as well as practical aspects of land reform and the relationship of agrarian structure to economic development were outlined and proposals for remedies advanced. (2) Progress reports on land reform: Many United Nations resolutions on land reform have called for the continuous study of the progress achieved by countries which have carried out or are carrying out programmes of land reform for the transformation of their agrarian structure in order that countries may benefit from the experience of others and that relevant problems and needs of various countries may be brought into focus. The United Nations and its specialized agencies have prepared so far three progress reports on land reform published in 1954, 1956 and 1962 respectively. It is requested that a comprehensive analytical survey of land reform programmes and conditions should be prepared every three years starting with that of 1962 and (3) The United Nations and its specialized agencies have been requested to prepare reports on co-operatives, agricultural credit, extension and other related fields which have impact on land reform measures.

#### B. Studies

20. Many studies have been undertaken or are being contemplated by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in accordance with various United Nations Resolutions on land reform. To illustrate, only a few are mentioned below:

1. The impact of the measures of land reform already undertaken on agricultural employment and output, on the pattern of production in the rural economy, on the standard of living of the rural population and economic development in general.

2. Ascertaining the demographic, legal, social, economic or other principal factors which may impede or expedite structural changes in the system of land tenure.

3. To determine how tax, financial and budgetary factors, as well as the present utilization of land, can impede or expedite the execution of national land reform programmes in the under-developed countries.

4. Evaluating the role of co-operatives and credit agencies in facilitating programmes for the transformation of the agrarian structure.

C. Technical Assistance

21. The United Nations and its agencies are urged to and have been providing technical assistance to member governments with respect to land reform programmes. The following fields of activities are indicated for the purpose of illustration:

1. Recruitment of professional staff competent to advise governments on the problems of land reform.

2. Furnish assistance to governments wishing to adopt domestic measures which would contribute to land reforms, particularly:

- (a) the development of legislation relating to land tenure, settlement of titles, conditions of tenancy, problems of the size and organization of land holdings, settlement on publicly owned land, and financing of the redistribution of land;
- (b) the development and extension of agricultural credit;
- (c) the development and extension of co-operative organizations for essential agricultural services such as financing, marketing, processing of agricultural products and purchasing of farm implements and supplies;
- (d) the promotion of agricultural extension services;
- (e) the establishment of rural industries;
- (f) the development of programmes for improvement of agricultural labour standards and security of employment and
- (g) the expansion of programmes for training of teachers and educational leaders in techniques of mass education especially in rural areas.

3. Improvement of fiscal systems with special reference to measures designed to prevent the imposition of inequitable taxes and other assessments and fees on the cultivated land.

4. At the Development Centre on Land Policies for East and Central Africa co-sponsored by FAO and ECA which was held in Uganda in 1960 it was recommended that member governments should consider the possibility of strengthening evaluation and research in the field of land tenure and land policy by receiving assistance from FAO in cooperation with ECA.

D. The Organization of Working Parties and Seminars

22. Many working parties and seminars have been organized by the United Nations and its agencies. Emphasis on this type of activity was made in recent United Nations resolutions on land reform to take further steps to:

- (1) Set up working parties for making on-the-spot studies of special problems.
- (2) Arrange conferences for the pooling and exchange of information
- (3) The organization of seminars and training courses on problems to assist in the promotion of sound national land policies.

E. Dissemination of information

23. The following methods of dissemination of information on land reform are called for by various United Nations resolutions:

1. Collaboration of United Nations bodies with the Food and Agriculture Organization in maintaining and strengthening the central repository of information relating to land reform and land policy.

2. The dissemination of information regarding the experience of individual countries with respect to national measures of land reform.

3. The promotion, both nationally and internationally, of collaboration by institutions on research related to land reform.

4. The promotion, with the aid of technical assistance from the United Nations and specialized agencies of appropriate pilot projects and studies in individual countries.



5. It was also recommended at the Development Centre on Land Policies in East and Central Africa, which was cosponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Economic Commission for Africa in 1960, that the Food and Agriculture Organization in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa should assist in the coordination of interchange of information in the field of land policy on a regional level.

F. The Establishment of Regional Land Reform Institutes

24. As has been mentioned before member governments are urged to establish regional research centres for land reform. ECOSOC Resolution 712 (XXVII) of 17 April 1959 invites United Nations bodies to cooperate with state members of the United Nations in the establishment, where appropriate, of regional research and training centres to assist with the continuous study of land tenure and use. ECOSOC Resolution 840 (XXXII) also called for "the possibility of extending regional training and research programmes on rural development, including community development, cooperatives and land reform, by establishing courses, seminars and regional institutes in those fields." Several regional land reform institutes have been already established, such as in Latin America, but so far none exists in Africa.

ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

25. Most measures to be undertaken by various international organizations with respect to the promotion and implementation of land reform programmes in developing countries are of a financial nature. Various United Nations resolutions on land reform call for the following actions:

- (1) Existing United Nations organs for technical and financial assistance and any new organs which may be set up by United Nations give as much assistance as possible and the necessary high priority to projects connected with the execution of agrarian reform programmes.

- (2) The United Nations Special Fund gives as much assistance as possible on the most favourable terms compatible with their resources, to projects connected with the execution of agrarian reform programmes by member countries.
- (3) That the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development give sympathetic consideration to loan applications from under-developed countries for development projects which are designed to implement their programmes of agrarian reform, including projects designed to bring new lands under agricultural cultivation, and invites the Bank, consistent with its maintenance as a self-supporting entity, to consider making any such loans in terms of interest and amortization designed to place the smallest feasible burden on the borrowing countries.
- (4) The World Food Programme is another source of obtaining external aid for financing land reform projects. The increase in demand for food often associated with the transitional period of executing land reform projects due to rise in food consumption by the beneficiaries of land reform and/or a temporary decline in agricultural output can be partially or totally met by food aid from the World Food Programme. The World Food Programme is an experimental programme, but it seems possible that the use of food surpluses may prove to be a substantial source of financing land reform projects.

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES PERTAINING TO LAND REFORM IN AFRICA

A. The United Nations

26. The activities of the United Nations in relation to land reform may be grouped under four headings: (1) land reform as an element in over-all development planning; (2) community development, (3) specific aspects of institutional change considered as part of the process of land

reform itself, particularly taxation; and (4) the fields of local government, rural economic infrastructure, rural industry, rural housing and rural social services, which are separate from land reform but are associated with it in the rural economic and social development context.

(1) Land reform as an element in over-all development planning:

The responsibility of the United Nations for providing assistance in economic and social development planning as a whole implies consideration of all major problem areas such as land reform from the standpoint of their place in a comprehensive form of reference. The regional economic commission including the Economic Commission for Africa have devoted considerable attention to the relation between agricultural development and planning on the one hand and over-all national planning on the other. The economic development and planning institutes such as the one being established in Africa will necessarily be concerned with problems of agricultural - industrial and rural - urban balance and with the development role of key agrarian reforms.

Advisors have been supplied to the Governments of Ghana and Sudan to assist in rural development.

The United Nations is also active in the field of basic research required for effective development planning. This includes assistance and advice in the fields of national agricultural censuses; censuses of population and housing; sample surveys; population projections and employment policies and problems.

(2) Community Development: A major field of work relating to land reform, in which the United Nations is actively engaged in collaboration with other agencies, is that of community development. Many studies have been published by the United Nations on various aspects of Community Development and its role in economic development. A Preliminary Progress Report has also been issued on Community Development and Economic Development in Africa by the Economic Commission for Africa.

Information and views on progress and problems in community development are being exchanged at the regional level in several ways. The Economic Commission for Africa is establishing an information clearing house for the purpose and has set up an Expert Group on Social Welfare and Community Development. A training course in community development methods and techniques for supervisory and administrative personnel was given in West Africa in 1961 and in north Africa in 1962.

(3) Agrarian institutional reform: Fiscal and financial policy as it relates to land reform measures forms a part of the general responsibility of the United Nations. Reviews of tax and other fiscal measures affecting land, land income and land produce in various parts of the world have been published by the United Nations. Case studies of the financing of land reform such as the one in Sudan were carried out in connection with the preparation of the third report on Progress in Land Reform. Experts have been provided to many African countries to advise on land valuation, tax reform in relation to agricultural and general economic development or other fields involving aspects of agricultural taxation.

The Economic Commission for Africa recently issued a comprehensive study prepared in collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization on the Co-operative Movement in Africa (E/CN.14/133 of 15 January 1962).

(4) Other prerequisites for rural development: Activities in this field which are concerned with changes that often have to be introduced together with land reform and technical agricultural progress in order to achieve successful rural development include (rural) public administration; the infrastructure of power, transport, water resources, etc.; manufacturing; housing and social services. The United Nations provides technical assistance in all these fields such as assistance to Togo in ground water development. The Economic Commission for Africa has organized a workshop on low-cost housing in Africa.

B. The Economic Commission for Africa

27. The ECA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division of ECA, established in 1959, is concerned mainly with the economic aspects of African agriculture. Its activities are aimed at speeding up the transition and development of African agriculture in order to raise the level of living of the African farmers within the context of balanced economic growth.

The programme of work of the Division which is carried out in close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization includes various projects, studies and meetings which deal with land reform and agricultural development. Limited technical advice to Governments may also be extended. A brief review of these activities is given below:

Projects

- (a) Collection and analysis of information on agricultural development programmes.
- (b) The analysis and formulation of agricultural development projects.
- (c) Analysis of particular problems of agricultural development including:
  - (i) the diversification of agriculture;
  - (ii) factors in the transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture.
- (d) The role of institutional factors in agricultural development including land policies, agricultural credit, co-operatives and extension services.
- (e) To carry out, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Headquarters, studies related to the implementation of land reform in Africa in conformity with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Studies: The following studies have been undertaken:

- (a) Land Policies and Economic Development: This study was done in connection with the Development Centre on Land Policy for East

and Central Africa co-sponsored with the Food and Agriculture Organization and held in 1960.

- (b) "Fiscal and Financial Aspects of Land Reform in the Republic of the Sudan". This study was done as an Economic Commission for Africa contribution to the third report on Progress in Land Reform.
- (c) Economic Aspects of Settlement Schemes in East Africa
- (d) The Cooperative Movement in Africa: This study was done in collaboration with the Community Development Section and was submitted to the 4th Session of the Economic Commission for Africa.
- (e) Agricultural Credit and Economic Development
- (f) Credit Aspects of Land Reform in Africa
- (g) The relations between credit and extension services
- (h) Agricultural credit systems in the Kingdom of Morocco
- (i) Agricultural credit in the Republic of Tunisia

The last five studies were done in connection with the Development Centre on Agricultural Credit for Africa cosponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization and held in Addis Ababa in May 1962.

Conferences: The following conferences were organized in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization:

- (a) Development Centre on Land Policy for East and Central Africa in 1960.
- (b) Development Centre on Agricultural Credit for Africa in 1962.

A Development Centre on Land Policy for West Africa will be held in December 1963. Another one for Agricultural Credit in West Africa is scheduled for 1965.

#### C. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

28. The Food and Agriculture Organization's interest in land reform dates from its foundation. In the Food and Agriculture Organization's view land reform is directed towards the improvement of the institutional framework

within which agriculture is practised, with the two-fold objective of increasing productivity and improving the social status of the cultivator.

Since land tenure conditions in the various countries vary considerably, the Food and Agriculture Organization's programme has come to cover a series of problems such as fragmentation of holdings, the structural aspects of farms of an uneconomic size, farm and settlement layouts, insecurity of tenure, maldistribution of rural property, excessive rents, inequitable incidence of agricultural taxation, excessive indebtedness, lack of clear titles to land and water and the adjustment of indigenous tenures to the requirements of agricultural development and other problems which constitute the core of land reform. It has also been fully recognized in the Food and Agriculture Organization's programme that measures of land reform are unlikely to be fully effective unless accompanied by parallel improvements in supporting fields, such as credit, cooperatives, marketing, agricultural extension, agricultural education, land and water development, rural sociology and community development. Thus a number of branches in the Food and Agriculture Organization deal with programmes in parallel fields, while all this work is co-ordinated within the framework of agricultural planning.

The Food and Agriculture Organization has major responsibility for assistance work in land reform and has taken the initiative in coordinating international efforts in this field. It should be noted, however, that the Food and Agriculture Organization activities on land reform in Africa have not yet been considerable compared with those in other parts of the world, because of their relatively late start.

Activities in the field of land reform in Africa can be discussed under three main heads:

- (a) Work at the regional level through the organization of training centres, study groups, working parties and other regional projects.

- (b) work at the country level through technical assistance, fellowships and expert missions;
- (c) collection and analysis of information and issue of publications and reports covering land reform.

a. Work at the regional level: In cooperation with various United Nations agencies the Food and Agriculture Organization has held several land problems training centres. In Africa the Food and Agriculture Organization in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa organized a Development Centre on Land Policy for East and Central Africa in 1960. Another meeting for West Africa is scheduled for 1963.

Meetings on supporting institutional fields such as agricultural cooperatives and community development have been held in various parts of the world but not yet in Africa. The Food and Agriculture Organization in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa has held a Development Centre on Agricultural Credit for Africa in 1962. Another one for West Africa is scheduled for 1965. There have been study tours on community development and related subjects, e.g. jointly with C.C.T.A. in April - May 1963.

Regional research and training institutes in land reform are projected for South East Asia and Latin America but not yet for Africa. However the recommendations in this paper include exploring further the establishment of such an institute.

The Food and Agriculture Organization has also organized investigating teams to study land tenure conditions in a group of countries such as the Advisory Team on Land Reform for Latin America who surveyed land tenure problems in some countries of the region and evaluated the programmes of those countries. In Africa reports have been prepared on tenure conditions in Tanganyika, Ruanda Urundi, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and the United Arab Republic.



The Food and Agriculture Organization has made two regional surveys, one for the Mediterranean area and one for tropical Africa in both of which problems of agrarian structure and their solution are given prominence.

b. Work at the country level: During the five-year period 1956-1961 a total of twenty-two countries, eleven of which were in Latin America, received technical assistance and advice from the Food and Agriculture Organization in matters directly related to land tenure and its reform. In 1961, the number of the Food and Agriculture Organization experts rose to twenty seven. At present the Food and Agriculture Organization has land reform experts in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanganyika. Experts have been requested by Algeria and Dahomey.

c. Collection and analysis of information and issue of publications: The publication programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization consists of:

- (1) land tenure studies, a series which was started in 1952 and other studies in related fields;<sup>1/</sup>
- (2) reports of meetings dealing with land problems and policies and with problems of related fields;<sup>2/</sup>
- (3) reports of the Food and Agriculture Organization technical assistance experts on their missions to individual countries.

In addition the annual publication State of Food and Agriculture contains sections on land tenure problems and other institutional matters. The quarterly publication Food and Agriculture Legislation contains also agrarian legislation.

---

<sup>1/</sup> For example see: Plantations and other Centrally Operated Estates by B.O. Binns, 1955; Public Lands by A.W. Ashby, 1956; Improving Agricultural Tenancy by J.F. Timmons, 1957; Owner Cultivation by K.H. Parson, 1957 and Agricultural Credit in Economically underdeveloped countries, Agricultural Study, No.46, 1959.

<sup>2/</sup> See Report of the Development Centre on Land Policy for East and Central Africa by E.H. Jacoby, 1961.

D. The International Labour Organization

29. The International Labour Organization has concerned itself with the problems of land tenure and agrarian reform since these questions are intimately linked with an improvement of conditions of the working population in agriculture. It has conducted various meetings and carried out numerous studies with respect to land reform in many parts of the world.

In the field of Technical Assistance, the International Labour Organization has made available expert services on rural development to the Government of Chad. The International Labour Organization officials took part in the Food and Agriculture Organization survey of agricultural development planning in several African countries in 1961. Vocational training projects are being considered for Senegal, Togo and Mali. Experts in education and training in cooperation have been appointed in Cameroun, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Malagasy Republic, Morocco, Federation of Nigeria and Upper Volta. Experts on cooperatives and marketing of agricultural produce have been provided to Mali, Ivory Coast, Niger, Tanganyika, Togo, Tunisia and Upper Volta. Experts on the handicrafts and small-scale industries have been assigned to Libya, Cameroun, Dahomey, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Republic of Somalia, Tanganyika and Upper Volta.

Many reports have also been prepared with the International Labour Organization which deal with several aspects of agrarian reform. Among these are: Why labour leaves the land; African labour survey and Labour survey of North Africa.

E. The United Nations Special Fund

30. The Special Fund, the newest member of the United Nations family, came into existence in 1959. Its main function is to finance and execute relatively large-scale projects concentrated in three fields - resource surveys and feasibility studies, applied research and manpower training and technical education.

In Africa approximately U.S.\$60 million have been granted by the Special Fund to share in the financing of various agricultural projects. These include soil surveys for planning land settlement in the U.A.R.; multi-purpose river basin development schemes such as the Volta River flood plain in Ghana and the Awash River Valley in Ethiopia; the formulation of agricultural development plans such as the one for the Western Rii area of Morocco; land and water use surveys such as those in Somalia, Togo and Sudan, and research, demonstration and training projects such as those in Liberia and Tunisia.

While these projects are not intimately related to the problems of land reform they contribute to increased agricultural output and productivity together with an improved level of living of the rural population.

F. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

31. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the new International Development Association (IDA) manifest their interest in land reform in two principal ways. First, the missions organized by the Bank conduct economic studies or surveys, in many countries such as Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya and Libya which give attention to the institutional framework of agriculture, and the pattern of land tenure, as significant factors influencing the trend and rate of economic growth. Second, where the existence of faulty institutional arrangements would hamper successful execution of a particular project, appropriate adjustments are often made a prior condition of a loan by the Bank.

The Bank has loaned approximately U.S.\$500 million for agricultural purposes, including irrigation and flood control, land reclamation, land settlement and land consolidation.

Although the Bank is mainly engaged in financing economic development projects its indirect impact on improving the agrarian structure should not be overlooked.

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

32. Land reform measures have been widely recognized as essential for many developing countries in order to change the agrarian structure in such a way as to provide incentives to farmers to adopt improved techniques and raise agricultural productivity with the consequence of achieving a higher standard of living for the population.

33. Land reform is not a panacea for agricultural and economic development but should be undertaken in conjunction with complementary as well as supplementary measures in a comprehensive plan for balanced economic growth.

34. The United Nations concept of land reform is not confined to redistribution of land ownership. Recognizing the great diversity of economic and social conditions of developing countries, the United Nations has adopted a very broad definition of land reform which includes such measures as land settlement, land consolidation, the extension of agricultural credit, the promotion of cooperatives and the improvement of tenants' conditions. Other supporting measures such as extension service, rural education and community development are necessary for the implementation of land reform measures.

35. Particularly since 1950 the United Nations and its specialized agencies have unequivocally advocated and taken an active role in promoting land reform programmes in developing countries.

36. The United Nations resolutions on land reform have called for action to be undertaken by member governments, United Nations and its specialized agencies and other international bodies as has been disclosed above. The initiation and implementation of land reform programmes is thus a combined responsibility of member governments as well as of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

37. African member governments of the United Nations are reminded in accordance with the already mentioned resolutions, to avail themselves more of the facilities available in the United Nations and its specialized bodies with respect to initiating and implementing land reform projects.

38. United Nations resolutions on land reform, as indicated above, call for the establishment of regional land reform institutes in order to carry out research and training in this field. Such institutes have been established in Latin America and the Far East. The Economic Commission for Africa may wish in conjunction with the appropriate agencies to explore the possibility of establishing one or more land reform institutes in Africa, either in connection with or apart from the contemplated African Institute for Economic Development and Planning.

39. The heavy financial outlays required for the execution and implementation of land reform programmes have been recognized by the United Nations as expressed in General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions on land reform. Also international financial organizations have been repeatedly invited to give high priority to the financing of such schemes and extend long term loans on easy terms. The Economic Commission for Africa may wish to explore with appropriate agencies the possibility of establishing one or more land reform banks in Africa either as an integral part of or apart from the contemplated African Development Bank.

## ANNEX 1

General Assembly Resolutions on Land Reform1. 401(V) of 20 November 1950

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the many resolutions<sup>1/</sup> adopted by the General Assembly and by the Economic and Social Council concerning the economic development of under-developed countries in which industrialization as well as the development of agriculture must play an essential part,

Considering, however, that agrarian conditions which persist in many under-developed countries and territories constitute a barrier to their economic development because such conditions are a major cause of low agricultural productivity and of low standards of living for the populations of those countries and territories,

Convinced that immediate steps should be taken to study the extent to which existing agrarian conditions hamper the economic development of under-developed countries as well as to assist Governments, at their request, in the utilization of the facilities available in the United Nations and the specialized agencies for the improvement of such conditions,

1. Recommends that the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization and in consultation with other appropriate specialized agencies, prepare and submit to the thirteenth session of the Economic and Social Council an analysis of the degree to which unsatisfactory forms of agrarian structure and, in particular, systems of land tenure, in the under-developed countries and territories impede economic development and thus depress the standards of living especially of agricultural workers and tenants and of small and medium-sized farmers;

2. Calls upon the Economic and Social Council to consider the analysis referred to above and to prepare recommendations to the General Assembly with a view to the improvement of the conditions of agricultural populations, paying special attention to such measures as the following:

(a) Institution of appropriate land reform;

<sup>1/</sup> For example, General Assembly resolutions 45 (I) and 52 (I), 198(III), 200(III), 202(III), 209(III), 304(IV), 305(IV), 306(IV), 307(IV) and 331(IV), and Economic and Social Council resolutions adopted at the first and second sessions on the terms of reference of the Economic and

(b) Appropriate action on the part of the governments concerned to render financial aid to agricultural workers and tenants and to small and medium-sized farmers through cheap agricultural credit facilities, comprehensive technical assistance and the promotion of rural co-operatives;

(c) Construction or development, either by direct government action or suitably financed co-operative groups, of

(i) Small factories and workshops for the manufacture, maintenance, repair and servicing of the most essential agricultural machinery and for the storage of spare parts;

(ii) Locally-based enterprises for the processing of agricultural products;

(d) Taxation policies designed to lighten, to the greatest possible extent, the tax burden on tenants and small and medium-sized farmers;

(e) Promotion of family owned and operated farms and of co-operative farms, as well as of other measures to promote the security of tenure and the welfare of agricultural workers and tenants and of small and medium-sized farmers;

3. Recommends to the governments of the under-developed countries concerned that they avail themselves of the facilities available to them through the United Nations expanded programme of technical assistance, in order that they may obtain expert advice in the planning of such measures as those listed in the preceding paragraph, for the purpose of improving agrarian conditions.

---

... Employment Commission and resolutions 1 (III), 6(III), 26(IV), 27(IV), 29(IV), 32(IV), 36(IV), 37(IV), 51(IV), 103(VI), 106(VI), 109(VI), 139(VII), 140(VII), 179(VIII), 180(VIII), 184(VIII), 222(IX), 223(IX), 225(IX), 268(X), 294(XI), 297(XI) and 321(XI).

2. 524(VI) of 12 January 1952

The General Assembly,

Having noted the report of the Secretary-General entitled Land Reform - Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development,<sup>1/</sup> prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 401(V) of 20 November 1950,

Convinced that in many countries the agrarian structure and, in particular, the systems of land tenure prevent improvement in the economic and social status of those who work the land, impede economic development and cause political instability,

Recognizing that, in view of the great diversity of conditions in under-developed territories in various parts of the world, no one standard measure or group of measures can be considered as best suited to the conditions of all such territories,

Recognizing that, when possible, reforms of systems of land tenure should be undertaken within a general programme of land reform in order effectively to improve the living conditions of agricultural populations,

Believing that rapid improvements in existing agrarian structures and land tenure systems in many under-developed countries require large-scale financial outlays,

Convinced that the form which an equitable and useful re-distribution of the ownership of land should take depends to a large extent and in many countries on the relationship between density of population, the supply of land and of other resources,

1. Notes with approval the statement in the afore-mentioned report of the Secretary-General concerning the favourable results in the social sphere obtained by countries which granted land and water rights to farmers lacking them;

2. Approves the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council with regard to this problem, as set forth in Council resolution 370(XIII)

---

<sup>1/</sup> See United Nations Publications, Sales No.: 1951.II.B.3.



of 7 September 1951;

3. Urges all governments, so far as the recommendations of the above-mentioned resolution are appropriate to the particular technical and financial circumstances of their countries, to carry out these recommendations and to undertake practical steps for implementing land reforms which would:

(a) Assist in increasing agricultural production, in eliminating food shortages, in raising the welfare of the populations of the under-developed countries, and which would safeguard the interest of small and medium-sized farmers and landless agricultural workers who constitute the majority of the rural population of the under-developed countries;

(b) Include measures which will enable farmers to secure agricultural equipment, draught animals, seeds, fertilizers and low-interest agricultural credit and assist them in developing various types of co-operatives for the production and disposal of agricultural products;

(c) Include the adoption of measures to enable agricultural workers, tenants and small and medium-sized farmers to reduce or liquidate indebtedness which may have arisen from unduly high rents, unfavourable conditions of land tenure, and usurious rates of interest and unduly high prices paid in the purchase of seeds, agricultural equipment, draught animals and other facilities;

(d) Include the adoption of appropriate wage and other social legislation for improving the conditions of labour and for raising the living standards of agricultural workers;

(e) Support the already existing agricultural associations and assist, where appropriate, in organizing new associations of landless agricultural workers, tenants and small and medium-sized farmers whose principal interest is in, and who have an active part to play in, the carrying out of all measures provided for under the land reforms;

4. Further urges all governments to co-operate with the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies concerned in the preparation of the reports requested by the Council in paragraph 8 of the above-mentioned resolution;

5. Urges the governments of Member States, in working out their fiscal policies, to give active consideration to making funds available for projects of agrarian reform and invites the institutions providing international loans to give sympathetic consideration to loan applications from under-developed countries for development projects which are designed to implement their programmes of agrarian reform including projects designed to bring new lands under agricultural cultivation, and invites these institutions, consistent with their maintenance as self-supporting entities, to consider making any such loans on terms of interest and amortization designed to place the smallest feasible burden on the borrowing countries;

6. Urges the Secretary-General, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as recommended by the Economic and Social Council, to accord high priority to the recommendations in paragraphs 5 and 6 of Council resolution 370(XIII); and to be prepared, upon the request of governments, to make specific studies and recommendations for the economic and social betterment of the agricultural population of their countries;

7. Decides to place the subject of land reform on the agenda of its seventh regular session and requests the Secretary-General to report to that session with regard to action taken and progress achieved.

3. 625 A(VII) of 21 December 1952

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's progress report<sup>1/</sup> on land reform prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 524(VI) of 12 January 1952,

Noting with satisfaction the activities of the regional economic commissions and of the specialized agencies in promoting land reform and in preparing studies and analyses of the various aspects of land reform,

1/ See document A/2194

Recalling the belief expressed in General Assembly resolution 524(VI) that rapid improvements in existing agrarian structures and land tenure systems in many under-developed countries require large-scale financial outlays,

Recalling also that General Assembly resolution 524(VI) urged the governments of Member States to consider making funds available for projects of agrarian reform and invited the institutions providing international loans to give sympathetic consideration to loan applications from under-developed countries for development projects which are designed to implement their programmes of agrarian reform including projects designed to bring new lands under agricultural cultivation, and invited these institutions, consistent with their maintenance as self-supporting entities, to consider making any such loans on terms of interest and amortization designed to place the smallest feasible burden on the borrowing countries,

Recalling the terms of reference of a committee of experts to be set up under Economic and Social Council resolution 416 A (XIV) of 23 June 1952 to prepare a detailed plan for establishing a special fund for grants-in-aid and for low-interest, long-term loans to under-developed countries for the purpose of helping them, at their request, to accelerate their economic development and to finance non-self-liquidating projects which are basic to their economic development,

1. Recommends that governments include in their replies to the Secretary-General's questionnaire on land reform relevant information on the financial implications of their programmes of agrarian reform and their development projects designed to implement such programmes, on their capacity to finance such programmes internally and on the extent of financial assistance needed from outside, so as to enable the Secretary-General to consolidate, analyse and incorporate the information so received in his report to the Economic and Social Council to be submitted under paragraph 8 of Economic and Social Council resolution 370(XIII) of 7 September 1951;

2. Requests the committee of experts to be set up under Economic and Social Council resolution 416 A (XIV) to consider the feasibility of financing programmes of agrarian reform and development projects designed

to implement programmes of agrarian reform as one of the important fields of activity for the proposed special fund for grants-in-aid and for low-interest, long-term loans.

4. 826(IX) of 11 December 1954

The General Assembly,

Considering the Secretary-General's reports "Progress in Land Reform"<sup>1/</sup> and "Rural Progress through Co-operatives"<sup>2/</sup> and Economic and Social Council resolution 512 C (XVII), section I, on land reform, in which the General Assembly is requested to continue its interest in land reform in all its aspects, giving particular attention to the problem of financing,

Bearing in mind that improvement of agrarian structure which in some under-developed countries constitutes an obstacle to economic development, together with other reforms referred to in General Assembly resolutions 401 (V), 524 (VI) and 625 (VII) and Economic and Social Council resolutions 370 (XIII) and 512 C (XVII), would not only help promote social progress and raise the standard of living, but would also tend to stimulate agricultural production and general economic development by an integrated approach to the task of development,

Considering the important part played by programmes of land reform designed to improve progressively the condition of the rural population and conditions of tenure, and, as appropriate, to facilitate the ownership of land by the largest practicable number of the rural population in under-developed countries and territories,

Bearing in mind that the effective development of land reform programmes in those countries is dependent in large measure upon the enjoy-

---

<sup>1/</sup> See United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1954.II.B.3.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., Sales No.: 1954.II.B.2.

ment of economic, social and political equality, including the right to share equitably the benefits of public facilities,

1. Recommends that Member States, where appropriate, institute land reform measures to encourage, among other things, the ownership of land by the largest practicable number of the rural population and pursue fiscal and investment policies with a view to the expansion of the area under cultivation and the improvement of the methods of agricultural production;

2. Recommends that Member States, in implementing land reform programmes in the process of their economic development, observe the principle of equitable treatment in the economic, political and social fields with a view to improving the condition of the rural population; respect the free establishment of agricultural associations; promote the general welfare, including measures designed to provide agricultural workers with the possibility of earning adequate remuneration; and respect such institutions of the indigenous population as may be compatible with economic and social progress and modern techniques;

3. Endorses the recommendations of Economic and Social Council resolution 512 C (XVII), section II, concerning the formation and development of co-operatives;

4. Endorses also the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 512 C (XVII), section I, that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development give sympathetic consideration to loan applications from under-developed countries for development projects which are designed to implement their programmes of agrarian reform, including projects designed to bring new lands under agricultural cultivation, and invites the Bank, consistent with its maintenance as a self-supporting entity to consider making any such loans on terms of interest and amortization designed to place the smallest feasible burden on the borrowing countries;

5. Expresses its support for Member States which are carrying out land reforms in conformity with General Assembly resolutions and expresses the hope that, in accordance with the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council, high priority will be given to requests for United

Nations technical assistance for the purpose of studying or carrying out land reform programmes;

6. Requests the Secretary-General, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the other specialized agencies concerned, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to consider the best methods for the further implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 512 C (XVII).

4. 1426(XIV) of 5 December 1959

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 401 (V) of 20 November 1950, 524 (VI) of 12 January 1952, 625 A(VII) of 21 December 1952 and 826 (IX) of 11 December 1954, and Economic and Social Council resolutions 370 (XIII) of 7 September 1951, 512 C (XVII) of 30 April 1954, 649 B (XXIII) of 2 May 1957 and 712 (XXVII) of 17 April 1959 on agrarian reform,

Recognizing the importance to certain under-developed countries of the transformation of their agrarian structure, in order:

(a) To improve land distribution, the combination of the factors of production, the mobility of labour and the technical skills of the rural population, thus raising the level of agricultural productivity,

(b) To secure a more satisfactory distribution of agricultural income and to raise levels of consumption and saving among rural inhabitants,

(c) To create and extend the domestic market for various industrial and agricultural products,

(d) To achieve the conditions necessary for industrial development, the diversification of agriculture and the balanced integration of industry with agriculture,

Noting that certain countries are at present carrying out different programmes of agrarian reform tending towards the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives,

Recalling also paragraph 3 of Economic and Social Council resolution 712 (XXVII), which requests the Secretary-General to prepare the report on the progress of land reform for the Council in 1962 along the lines of the prospectus contained in paragraph 57 of the report submitted at the twenty-seventh session,<sup>1/</sup> taking into consideration the sources of information listed in paragraphs 59 and 60 of the report and the views which Members may express in the Council and the General Assembly,

1. Declares that it will continue to support the programmes of agrarian reform which Member States are carrying out in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the regional economic commissions, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the other organs and agencies of the United Nations, as well as with the Governments of Member States:

(a) To consider the best ways in which the United Nations can continue to give increasingly effective support to the land reform programmes put into operation by its Members;

(b) To report to the Economic and Social Council in 1962 on possible improvements in such support, including relevant comments and analyses, and requests the Council in turn to report to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session;

3. Recommends that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development give renewed attention to these programmes, in conformity with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 826 (IX);

4. Draws the attention of Member States to the possibility of requesting technical assistance in carrying out their agrarian reform programmes, and reiterates the hope that, in accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 826 (IX), high priority will be given to requests for United Nations technical assistance for the purpose of studying or carrying out land reform programmes;

---

<sup>1/</sup> Ibid., Twenty-seventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 5, document E/3208.

5. Expresses the hope that the Special Fund, together with any new organs which may be set up by the United Nations or any of its agencies, will, in the spirit of the present resolution and of earlier resolutions on the same subject, give as much assistance as possible, on the most favourable terms compatible with their resources, to projects connected with the execution of agrarian reform programmes by countries members of such organizations;

6. Further requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Governments of Member States and the above-mentioned organizations, to examine the results of the land reform programmes in the under-developed countries in the light of the reports submitted by Member States, and the effects which the programmes have had on the economic development of those countries, and to report to the Economic and Social Council in 1962 and to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session, along the lines of the prospectus referred to in Council resolution 712 (XXVII), formulating appropriate recommendations and observations.

6. 1526(XV) of 15 December 1960

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that land reform is frequently one of the main pre-requisites for the general improvement of agricultural productivity, that the needs foreseen and the difficulties encountered still constitute a serious obstacle to the economic development of many underdeveloped countries<sup>1/</sup> and that the necessary remedies to this end have not been set forth,

Convinced that the reports submitted by the Secretary-General for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council and the General

---

<sup>1/</sup> See Land Reform: Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development (United Nations publication, Sales No.:51.II.B.3.)



Assembly, in accordance with Assembly resolutions 401 (V) of 20 November 1950, 524 (VI) of 12 January 1952, 625 A (VII) of 21 December 1952 and 826 (IX) of 11 December 1954, and Council resolutions 370 (XIII) of 7 September 1951, 512 C (XVII) of 30 April 1954 and 649 B (XXIII) of 2 May 1957, have provided valuable information on land reform but by no means indicate that the subject of land reform has been exhausted either from the standpoint of economic development and social well-being or that of the maximum utilization of resources,

Recognizing the usefulness of studies concerning obstacles which impede or render difficult the implementation of land reform,

1. Recommends that the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the executive heads of the other specialized agencies concerned, should continue to study the progress achieved by countries which have carried out or are carrying out programmes for the transformation of their agrarian structure, at their request, and should submit for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council a comprehensive analytical survey every three years - the first of which would be presented in 1962 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1426 (XIV) of 5 December 1959 and Economic and Social Council resolution 712 (XXVII) of 17 April 1959 - devoting particular attention to a detailed and critical examination of the basic problems of land reform in under-developed countries, as mentioned in paragraph 55 of the 1959 report of the Secretary-General<sup>1/</sup>;

2. Further recommends that the Secretary-General, prior to submitting his 1962 report, should inform the General Assembly at its sixteenth session of the progress achieved in implementation of Assembly resolution 1426 (XIV) and Economic and Social Council resolution 712 (XXVII);

---

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-seventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 5, document E/3208.

3. Invites the Secretary-General, in complying with the terms of the present resolution and after appropriate consultations with, and at the request of, the Governments concerned in the carrying out of land reform programmes, as well as with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the executive heads of the other interested specialized agencies, to consider the possibility of:

(a) Undertaking studies with a view to ascertaining the demographic, legal, social, economic or other principal factors which may impede or expedite structural changes in the system of land tenure and consequently influence the application of the recommendations made in Economic and Social Council resolution 370 (XIII);

(b) Carrying out country studies in order to determine how tax, financial and budgetary factors, as well as the present utilization of land, can impede or expedite the execution of national land reform programmes in the under-developed countries;

(c) Evaluating the role of co-operatives and credit agencies in facilitating programmes for the transformation of the agrarian structure;

4. Deems it convenient that the question of land reform, in view of its importance for the economic development of the under-developed countries, should continue to be considered by the Economic and Social Council in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the other specialized agencies concerned;

5. Renews the hope, expressed in its resolution 1426 (XIV), that existing United Nations organs for technical and financial assistance and any new organs which may be set up by the United Nations give as much assistance as possible and the necessary high priority to projects connected with the execution of agrarian reform programmes.

Economic and Social Council Resolutions1. 370(XIII) of 7 September 1951\*

The Economic and Social Council,

Having examined the report prepared, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 401 (V), by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, on defects in agrarian structure as obstacles to economic development,<sup>1/</sup> the report of the Economic, Employment and Development Commission (sixth session)<sup>2/</sup> which points out the need for land reform as an aid to economic development, and the report of the Council or the Food and Agriculture Organization,<sup>3/</sup>

Noting the work done by the International Labour Organisation in the field of agricultural labour, and that a study on rural economic development in Trust Territories has been undertaken by the Trusteeship Council,

Bearing in mind the importance of improving the conditions of agricultural workers, tenants, small and medium farmers to economic development and rising standards of living, human dignity and freedom and social and political stability,

Further bearing in mind the main conclusions of the Secretary-General's report, namely:

(a) That, in view of the great diversity of conditions in under-developed territories in various parts of the world, no one special measure or group of measures can be expected to meet all situations, and

(b) That any measures taken to improve agrarian conditions should be related to general plans for promoting economic development,

Recognizing that appropriate measures of land reform designed to achieve improvement of the conditions of agricultural populations and an increase in agricultural production must in many countries be regarded as a necessary part of any effective implementation of comprehensive programmes for economic development,

<sup>1/</sup> See document E/2003.

<sup>2/</sup> See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirteenth Session, Supplement No.2

<sup>3/</sup> See Report of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Twelfth Session, 11-23 June 1951, Rome, Italy.

\* See 541st meeting of the Council.

Recognizing further that, especially in cases where the fundamental problem is that of a surplus rural population as compared with the cultivable area, the problem calls for diversification of activities and the establishment of industries, in conjunction with the measures recommended hereafter,

1. Urges all governments confronted with the problem of agrarian structure to study the Secretary-General's report in order to take full account of the experiences of others in carrying out their own plans for economic development;

2. Recommends that governments institute appropriate land reforms in the interest of landless, small and medium farmers;

3. Recommends further that governments take such of the following measures as may be appropriate to the circumstances in their countries:

(a) Assure security of tenure to the cultivator of land so that he may have the incentive to improve the productivity of the land and to conserve its resources, and the opportunity to retain an equitable share of his production;

(b) Provide opportunity for the cultivator to acquire ownership of land;

(c) Promote the organization of land holdings into farms of an efficient size, either by dividing unduly large holdings or by combining fragmented units, as may be required, wherever this may be economically and socially advantageous to the population;

(d) Establish on undeveloped and newly reclaimed lands secure and equitable tenure conditions, including opportunity for ownership in family-sized holdings;

(e) Establish or expand national and local institutions for providing agricultural credit at reasonable rates of interest and take legislative or administrative measures to assist in the reduction of agricultural indebtedness;

(f) Enact and enforce legislation which will prevent the charge of exorbitant rentals on agricultural land;

(g) Review their tax structure and administration with a view to eliminating inequitable tax loads and related charges on the cultivator of land;

(h) Promote co-operative organizations for the cultivation, marketing and processing of agricultural products and for the purchase of farm supplies and equipment;

(i) Encourage diversification of agricultural production wherever this can help raise the living standards of the farm and non-farm populations;

(j) Take steps directed towards rational diversification of their economies so that agricultural developments may proceed as part of an integrated programme of economic development;

(k) Encourage the establishment of industries in rural areas, including co-operatives, small-scale and cottage industries, and especially industries using indigenous agricultural products as their raw materials, and thus assure such industries a place in the economic life of the country;

(l) Establish or expand, either through co-operative organizations or by other means appropriate to the economy of the country, factories or workshops for the manufacture, maintenance, repair and servicing of the most essential agricultural machinery and the storage of spare parts;

(m) Expand and develop programmes of literacy and general education in rural areas;

(n) Ensure that adequate agricultural research, through governmental services or otherwise, is undertaken;

(o) Establish or expand services for the education of the farmer in the technological and economic aspects of agricultural and rural life through such measures as agricultural extension services and model farms;

(p) Improve the economic, social and legal status of agricultural wage labourers on plantations and other large estates;

4. Recommends that all governments responsible for populations which are not economically advanced, including those governments responsible for the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories, in addition to taking such of the measures described above as may be required, should ensure that the interests of such populations are fully protected in policies and laws relating to the transfer of land;

5. Recommends that the specialized agencies, each in its respective field, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, should, in co-operation with the United Nations, keep the subject of land reform under review and give high priority to this problem in their technical assistance programmes, bearing in mind the resolution of the Technical Assistance Committee<sup>1/</sup> adopted at its nineteenth meeting, dealing with the provision of supplies and equipment, and specifically:

(a) Focus attention on the urgent need for land reforms in many areas;

(b) Consider affording a high degree of priority to the recruitment of professional staff competent to advise governments on problems of land reform and draw the attention of governments of Member States to methods of solving such problems which have proved successful in other countries;

(c) Place particular emphasis on furnishing assistance to governments wishing to adopt domestic measures which would contribute to land reforms, particularly:

(i) The development of legislation relating to land tenure, settlement of titles, conditions of tenancy, problems of the size and organization of land holdings, settlement of publicly owned land, and financing of the redistribution of land;

---

<sup>1/</sup> See document E/2102, Annex 1.

- (ii) The development and extension of agricultural credit;
- (iii) The development and extension of co-operative organizations for essential agricultural services such as financing, marketing, processing of agricultural products and purchase of farm implements and supplies;
- (iv) The promotion of agricultural extension services;
- (v) The establishment of rural industries;
- (vi) The development of programmes for improvement of agricultural labour standards and security of employment;
- (vii) The expansion of programmes for training of teachers and educational leaders in techniques of mass education, especially in rural areas;

6. Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the appropriate specialized agencies, to give assistance to governments, on their request, including assistance with respect to activities that fall outside the field of any specialized agency and, in particular, with respect to measures to improve their fiscal systems with special reference to measures designed to prevent the imposition of inequitable taxes and other assessments and fees on the cultivator of land;

7. Requests the specialized agencies concerned, in their respective fields of responsibility, to include in their annual reports to the Council information on their activities pursuant to recommendations in paragraph 5 above;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to arrange periodically, but at least once every three years, in co-operation with the specialized agencies concerned, to obtain, by means of a single questionnaire addressed to governments, information on progress in land reforms, including legislation and other measures adopted and on any obstacles to the adoption of such measures and any suggestions that governments may have concerning international action to promote land reforms; and to analyse the information received and to present conclusions and recommendations to the Council;

9. Draws the attention of the governments concerned to the possibilities offered by the system of free and voluntary co-operation on the part of farmers with a view to meeting the requirements of technical and economic progress in agriculture, while preserving the rights and freedoms of the individual;

10. Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization and the other competent specialized agencies, to prepare a report for a future session of the Council briefly analysing the results obtained in various countries through agricultural co-operation and bringing out the possibilities offered from every standpoint by the co-operative system in this field; and

11. Recommends that the General Assembly consider this subject from time to time in order that all governments of Member States may have an opportunity to take part in the discussion of developments in this field.

2. 512 C (XVII) of 30 April 1954

The Economic and Social Council,

Taking note of the report<sup>1/</sup> of the Secretary-General entitled Progress in Land Reform, prepared in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization, and of the information contained therein, and

Taking note of the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization and the other specialized agencies in the field of land reform,

Further taking note of the fact that, though considerable progress has already been made in a number of countries, there still exist an urgent need and further opportunities for action in respect of institutional reforms and measures of agricultural development in terms of the recommendations contained in Council resolution 370 (XIII) and General Assembly

1/ See United Nations Publication, Sales No.: 1954.II.B.3.



resolution 625 (VII), as is evident from the reports submitted by the governments,

Bearing in mind that the implementation of the recommendations of Council resolution 370 (XIII) and General Assembly resolution 625 (VII) are important for the promotion of social progress and better standards of life,

Bearing in mind also that in many countries plans and programmes of economic development have been launched which require an integrated approach, detailed quantitative and qualitative assessment of the results of economic measures taken and large financial outlays,

Recognizing that information concerning experiences of individual countries with national measures of land reform may be helpful to a number of other countries in charting their future course of action in this field,

Further recognizing that in many cases development projects designed to implement programmes of agrarian reform may require a substantial amount of financing,

1. Urges governments to continue their efforts to implement Council resolution 370 (XIII) and General Assembly resolution 625 (VII) as expeditiously as possible;

2. Recommends that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 524 (VI) and 625 (VII), give sympathetic consideration to loan applications from under-developed countries for development projects which are designed to implement their programmes of agrarian reform, including projects designed to bring new lands under agricultural cultivation, and invites the Bank, consistent with its maintenance as a self-supporting entity, to consider making any such loans on terms of interest and amortization designed to place the smallest feasible burden on the borrowing countries;

3. Requests the Secretary-General:

(a) To prepare a report, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization, for submission to the Council at its twenty-second session, indicating the

impact of the measures of land reform already undertaken on agricultural employment and output, on the pattern of production in the rural economy, on standards of living of the rural population and on economic development in general;

(b) To include in the periodic reports provided for in paragraph 8 of Council resolution 370 (XIII) information on work in this field by the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned;

(c) To collaborate as appropriate with the Food and Agriculture Organization in maintaining and strengthening the central repository of information relating to land reforms and land policy established pursuant to resolution No. 8 <sup>1/</sup> of the sixth session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization;

4. Recommends that the Food and Agriculture Organization and other specialized agencies concerned, in consultation with the Secretary-General, take further steps to:

(a) Set up working parties for making on-the-spot studies of special problems;

(b) Arrange conferences for the pooling and exchange of information;

5. Requests the General Assembly to continue its interest in land reform in all its aspects, giving particular attention to the problem of financing.

3. 649(XXIII)B of 2 May 1957

The Economic and Social Council,

Having examined the second report on progress in land reform<sup>2/</sup>, prepared by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the International Labour

<sup>1/</sup> See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Report of the 6th Session of the Conference, 19 November-6 December 1951, p.27.

<sup>2/</sup> Progress in Land Reform (E/2930). United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1956.II.B.3.

Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Taking into account the views expressed on various aspects of land reform during the discussion on this subject at the twenty-third session of the Council,

Noting from the analysis, contained in the above-mentioned report, of the replies to the questionnaire distributed by the Secretary-General that progress in various aspects of land reform has been made in many countries;

Recognizing that, for many countries, further progress towards satisfactory solutions of problems of land utilization, ownership and tenure is important both for the social advancement of low-income rural populations and over-all economic development,

1. Urges Governments to continue their efforts to implement the appropriate recommendations in Council resolutions 370(XIII) of 7 September 1951, 512 C I (XVII) of 30 April 1954 and General Assembly resolutions 625A(VII) of 21 December 1952 and 826 (IX) of 14 December 1954, suggests that Governments undertake specific studies of the implementation of land reform measures and their impact on production, living standards and economic and social development, and calls the attention of Governments to the availability of technical advice and assistance from the United Nations and specialized agencies;

2. Invites the Secretary-General, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and other specialized agencies, in their respective fields of work for advancement of land reform, to give particular attention to such activities as:

- (a) The dissemination of information regarding the experience of individual countries with respect to national measures of land reform;
- (b) The organization of seminars and training courses on institutional problems to assist in the promotion of sound national land policies;

(c) The promotion, with the aid of technical assistance from the United Nations and the specialized agencies, of appropriate pilot projects and studies in individual countries;

(d) The promotion, both nationally and internationally, of collaboration by institutions on research related to land reform;

3. Renews its recommendation that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development give sympathetic consideration to loan applications for development projects designed to implement programmes of agrarian reform;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to keep under review developments in the field of land reform and to prepare, in collaboration with the appropriate specialized agencies, a further report on land reform for submission to the Council in 1962;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the specialized agencies and recognizing the major responsibilities in this field of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to present to the Council at its twenty-seventh session a report on progress in the work referred to in paragraph 2 above, together with a prospectus of the report referred to in paragraph 4 above which would describe the specific land reform problems to which it was planned to devote attention and indicate the information which would be available for such a report as well as the kinds and sources of additional information which would be required;

6. Decides that paragraphs 4 and 5 above supersede paragraph 8 of Council resolution 370 (XIII);

7. Invites Governments to provide the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies with information which may be needed for the implementation of the present resolution.

712(XXVII) of 17 April 1959

Economic development of under-developed countries: land reform

The Economic and Social Council,

Having examined the progress report on work undertaken for the advancement of land reform<sup>1/</sup> and the prospectus of a report for submission to the Council in 1962 as contained therein, prepared by the Secretary-General pursuant to Council resolution 649 B (XXIII) of 2 May 1957,

Recalling its resolutions 370 (XIII) of 7 September 1951, 512 C I (XVII) of 30 April 1954 and 649 B (XXIII) of 2 May 1957, and General Assembly resolutions 401 (V) of 20 November 1950, 524 (VI) of 12 January 1952, 625 A (VII) of 21 December 1952 and 826 (IX) of 11 December 1954 on land reform;

Noting with satisfaction the progress that has been made in the implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions in a number of countries,

Recognizing the importance of continuous study of land tenure and use,

1. Urges States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies to continue to implement, as appropriate, Council and General Assembly resolutions on land reform;

2. Commends the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies concerned for activities undertaken for the advancement of land reform as summarized in the above-mentioned report;

3. Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the specialized agencies concerned, especially the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to prepare the report on the progress of land reform for the council in 1962 along the lines of the prospectus contained in paragraph 57 of the report submitted at the present session,<sup>1/</sup> taking into consideration the sources of information listed in paragraphs 59 and

---

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-seventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 5, document E/3208.

60 of the report and the views which Members may express in the Council and the General Assembly;

4. Invites States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies to supply the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies concerned, at their request, with material which may be needed in the preparation of the report;

5. Recommends States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies to consider the establishment, where appropriate, of regional research and training centres to assist with the continuous study of land tenure and use;

6. Invites the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other competent international agencies to co-operate with such members in the work of those centres.

- - - - -