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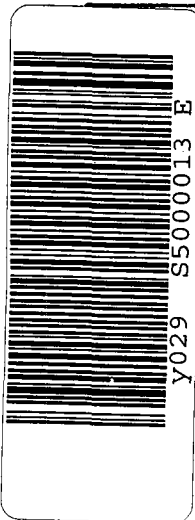
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Third Session - 5 June 1950
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ADDRESS DELIVERED BY SR. HERNAN SANTA CRUZ, PRESIDENT OF
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AT THE OPENING MEETING OF
THE THIRD SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY, 5 JUNE 1950

It is for me both an honour and a pleasure to take part, as President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in this opening ceremony of the Third Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America. This, because the Council has assigned to the Economic Regional Commissions work which has converted them into its most important subsidiary organizations, and also because the particular tasks of this Commission are amongst those to which my country has contributed with most enthusiasm in the United Nations.

When the Council decided that the different Sessions of the Commission should be held in the different member countries in turn, it was doubtless with the idea of arousing the interest of each one in the Commission's work, and ensure, in this way, the indispensable support of the countries and their governments. But it also did so in order that the Commission should be



acquainted with the different conditions and problems of the region and so benefit by the experience of each individual country. In this last connection, the Commission is indeed fortunate that its Third Session affords it the opportunity of studying at first hand the pure forms of Uruguayan democracy; it will be able to appraise the social and economic progress that can be made by a country of this continent possessed of an exemplary institutional and juridical order, an enviable spiritual and cultural atmosphere and social conceptions founded upon human dignity and the fundamental rights of the individual.

International collaboration has made giant strides during the last few years regarding the solution of problems of economic stability in all countries, and those of economic development in under-developed areas. It has become imperative as the result of many factors, which will impose new forms of economic cooperation during the coming years. It is generally agreed that the prosperity and social tranquility of all countries, the preservation of world peace and the very existence of civilization depend upon the success of this undertaking. The consciousness of collective responsibility in the face of these economic and social problems, and of the just and whole-hearted aspirations of millions of human beings to a decent and worthy life, have determined the general decision to assume that responsibility by promoting measures of international cooperation.

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We have seen in the course of the last five years some examples of economic collaboration which could never have been thought possible and which are a testimony of the evolution of the thinking of the leaders of a majority of the countries. This evolution will doubtless continue in the future.

The United Nations, which are called upon by the Charter of San Francisco to guide, foster and develop international collaboration in the economic and social fields, have played an important part in this progress, in spite of political factors which have seriously hampered its action. It behooves us to remember it on this and other appropriate occasions because the knowledge and dissemination of this truth will surely increase the faith of the peoples in the organization and thus strengthen their support.

As a proof of what I have just said, it is sufficient to mention one of the aspects of the economic development of under-developed areas, which has yielded fruitful results for the countries of our continent.

The United Nations understood from the beginning that the measures to foster this economic development formed the basis of any constructive action taken within the field of its activities. In fact, more than two-thirds of humanity lives in these regions and the low and even at times miserable standard of living of their inhabitants is determined by this state of insufficient economic development. They understood besides that in an interdependent world like ours, there could be no

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solution to the problems of the industrialized countries if the levels of economic activity in insufficiently developed countries were not raised.

That is why the United Nations have considered as a great international problem that of under-developed countries and, in so doing, they have certainly awakened the interest of the statesmen of the world. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have constituted a perfect forum in which to unify the criterion of a great majority of countries on the need for coordinated action to find a solution to such a pressing problem.

The United Nations are therefore responsible for the fact that there is general consensus of opinion today as to the need to approach this problem at the international level. They have played a leading part in inspiring this way of thinking in certain great countries. I sincerely believe that the presentation and the examination of this problem in the United Nations has had a great influence on the formulation of President Truman's well-known Point Four.

The United Nations have also served as a forum for the theoretical debates on the problem of economic development and its different aspects. They have been useful both to the under-developed countries and to those which are more highly developed economically speaking. The discussions have brought many impatient and illusionary minds face to face with facts,

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and at the same time have served to eliminate an infinite number of prejudices and false economic theories.

These debates have stressed the common interests which require the cooperation of all in the development of a region; they have stressed that the economic development of the various countries and regions must be synchronized and harmonious in order to prevent isolated efforts from following a course detrimental to the general good of the international community.

The United Nations have not been content with merely analyzing problems of economic development or formulating recommendations. They have taken part in the implementation of several concrete measures in order to provide a solution.

In 1948, the General Assembly approved an important Resolution, No. 200, which created the services of Technical Assistance for Economic Development. After an existence of little more than a year, this already has a budget of a million dollars. The Latin American countries have benefited considerably under this programme. In 1948 a mission was sent to Haiti composed of experts from the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies who made a complete economic survey of the country, another mission has now been sent to study land utilization and fisheries.

Missions have been sent to Ecuador to study plans to modernize administration, public finance, Customs, census, etc.; and to Chile, where economists of high international repute have studied the problems of financing the development plans

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in relation to the financial and commercial policy necessary to facilitate, and at the same time ensure, the economic stability of the country. In Bolivia thirteen experts, from eleven countries and headed by the Under-Secretary of Resources and Development in Canada, studied problems of fiscal administration, public finance, taxation, transport and communications, the utilization of electric power, soil analysis, irrigation, tropical crops, education, labour legislation, etc. It is one of the most complete and competent international missions which have ever assisted a Government.

Other Latin American countries have received smaller missions and during 1949 and 1950 the United Nations have financed about a hundred scholarships for Latin Americans to study or train abroad in activities connected with economic development.

Following on the initiative of Point Four, the United Nations have drawn up the Expanded Technical Assistance Plan, which will be carried out by the Secretary General and certain Specialized Agencies, including FAO, UNESCO, IRO, ILO, WHO and ICAO. This plan will cover general economy, health, education, science, cultural relations, labour, etc. It will consider the necessity for common and central action in connection with the different problems which affect economic development; its scope will be determined in a few days when the seventy-three countries summoned to the Technical Assistance Conference decide on the amount of their contributions. I am confident that for the first year the budget will be over twenty million dollars.

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participate in the implementation of measures of common interest to Latin America and other continents.

ECLA has devoted nearly two years to the greater part of an economic survey of Latin America, which has never been attempted before. It has carried out a task to some extent outside the specific functions which I have just mentioned. It was essential to do so, however, since it was impossible to take any concrete measures without some knowledge of existing conditions, considered under the same criterion and with a view to the development of the whole region. I am confident that the members of the commission will be able to enter this field. They have an excellent foundation in the studies prepared by the Secretariat, which I consider to be amongst those of highest quality which I have seen in the United Nations or other international bodies. Furthermore, I have no doubt that they can count with the support of the higher organizations of the United Nations for any reasonable measure. This support has already been given unreservedly by the Council and General Assembly, where the Commission's resolutions were approved, the necessary funds voted to carry them out and the excellent performance of its mission was commended.

In ECLA the Latin American countries have a magnificent instrument of economic progress which is and remains an expression of the conviction of solidarity of all the countries of the United Nations. I am convinced that the economic development of

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For nearly a year now the Economic and Social Council has been considering the recommendations which could be made concerning measures of both a national and international character to finance the economic development of the undeveloped areas. These recommendations will no doubt be made by the Council at its next Session in July, at Geneva.

This vast action developed by the United Nations, especially the Economic and Social Council, must be completed in Latin America by ECLA, as an integral part of the efficient technical machinery of the organization. This is a great responsibility, since the deficiency of a component of this structure will affect the whole.

ECLA was not created to compete with any other organization of the inter-American regional system, or to fulfill functions which these or others might carry out. It was established in order to contribute to the great work of world economic cooperation which the United Nations must carry out under the terms of the Charter; to study and propose solutions for our countries in coordination with other regions and with their cooperation; to contribute to the economic development of Latin America harmoniously coordinated with that of other regions, always bearing in mind world economic stability; in order that, through its information and suggestions, the Economic and Social Council can take into account the interests of the region when formulating recommendations of a general nature; and to

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Latin America and its social and economic progress can only become effective if its problems are considered at a regional level and bearing in mind the interests of world economy. The final success of this organization, as always in international cooperation, depends in the last resort on the countries which form it. The use of this instrument in the way which will yield the greatest benefit is an obligation of the governments towards their own countries and the rest of the world.

The Commission can only achieve worthwhile results for the future of the countries and the continent with the help of constructive cooperation on the part of the governments in the planning of the measures it proposes to carry out. Only with their unreserved support in the execution of the recommendations can this body of international cooperation fulfill the function entrusted to it by these countries.