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CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

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Santiago, Chile, 5 to 19 March 1962

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Universidad Técnica del Estado, Santiago, Chile,  
on Thursday, 8 March 1962, at 3.45 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MACKAY (Argentina)

Rapporteur: Mr. NIETO CABALLERO (Colombia)

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO EDUCATION

Mr. RUDENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union welcomed the interest shown by the countries of Latin America in problems of education and economic and social development. A solution to those problems was particularly important for countries which had not yet fully developed their potential in that field and the people of Latin America could certainly rely on international assistance and co-operation. The Soviet Union was at present co-operating with a number of countries in the field of education and was prepared to extend its collaboration to the Latin American countries as well as to enter into cultural agreements with them.

Education in the Soviet Union was based on the general principles of the State, and the development of culture and education was an integral part of the national economic development plan. However, it would be wrong to consider the chief aim of education in the USSR to be its impact on the economy, for one of its most important objectives was the over-all and harmonious development of the spiritual and physical capacity of the individual.

One of the Soviet Union's ~~targets~~ under its twenty-year social development plan was to increase the number of students to 8 million, three times the present figure. To reach the target it would have to fulfil its objective of compulsory general secondary education and to provide higher and special secondary education to all those who wished to continue their studies. It expected to achieve that objective in the near future.

The solution of the Soviet Union's educational problems was closely linked to its economic and social development programme which, within the next twenty years, would give the USSR the highest standard of living in the world.

Planned development was the policy applied in the matter of education by the Communist Party and the Government and it had enabled the Soviet Union to carry out a cultural revolution and achieve major successes. Before the Soviet revolution Russia, in spite of its vast  
/natural resources

natural resources, had been an economically and socially backward country with an illiteracy rate of 75 per cent. Eighty per cent of the children and young people had not attended school. The eradication of illiteracy had been a major task successfully carried out by means of adult education and the institution of compulsory education covering seven, and later eight, grades. The number of children enrolled in primary and secondary schools in 1960-61 had increased to 36 million from slightly over 9 million in 1914. For higher and technical education the 1960-61 figure was 4 million as compared with 182,000 in 1913.

One of the Soviet Union's major achievements was the creation of a indigenous alphabet for over forty different ethnic groups. Children in each group were taught their own language in school and had full access to education and culture.

Mr. VIDAL (Spain) said that his country, like all the rest, was keenly interested in the educational problems currently deriving from the necessity of linking up education with the technical revolution that was in progress. Hence it was necessary to consider what attitude man should assume towards the question of relating culture to progress. He wished to make a contribution by recounting Spain's own experience in the educational field during the past quarter of a century, and would therefore touch upon several aspects of the cultural life of Spain from a strictly technical standpoint, irrespective, in other words, of any particular political or social philosophy.

He then went on to describe the current educational situation in his country, with special reference to technical and vocational education, in order to give a general picture of cultural conditions in Spain. The educational services were given a certain priority in the State budget, as could be seen from the fact that, whereas in 1933 allocations for education had represented 6.5 per cent of the total budget, by 1961 the proportion had risen to 10.32 per cent. It had thus been possible to reduce the illiteracy index from 28.8 per cent in 1935 to 9.21 per cent in 1959, and it seemed likely that by the end of the current decade illiteracy would have been virtually eradicated in Spain.

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After outlining the progress made in the building of school premises and the characteristics of the relevant national plan formulated in 1956, he turned to the subject of secondary education. Since 1936 the number of pupils enrolled in State and private secondary schools in the aggregate had more than doubled. Private schools accounted for over 60 per cent of the student body. Among the most interesting aspects of that topic were the effort made to meet the needs of people living in working-class districts in the large towns, and the establishment of night schools or centres for students who were at work in the daytime. With respect to university teaching the student body attending the twelve national universities and the international university of Santander had also nearly doubled during the past twenty-five years. The Spanish universities were dependencies of the Ministry of Education, but were run on an autonomous basis. There were also university campuses, of which the most important was the one in Madrid, where a hospital attached to the Faculty of Medicine and destined to be one of the best in Europe was being set up.

Because of Spain's expanding industrialization process priority had been given both to technical and commercial and to vocational education; the most important achievements in that field included the establishment of institutes and five universities for workers and industrial training schools. There were also many workshops for teaching artisan industries, advanced schools of arts and crafts, academies of dramatic art, conservatories of music and elocution, trade schools and schools of ceramics. Legislation was being prepared which would bring the system of training in arts and crafts into line with the needs of the day. Worthy of special mention were the major university colleges, which dated back as far as 1405, and of which there were at present 25 founded directly by the universities, 42 privately founded and 19 dependent upon the Sindicato Español Universitario. There were also minor colleges for which private enterprise was mainly responsible. With respect to scholarships, the number available to students every year might be estimated at over 50,000, and the corresponding annual investment at about 500 million pesetas. Even so, owing to the exceptional  
/increase in

increase in school enrolment during recent years the number of scholarships granted by the State was insufficient.

Cultural extension facilities were in the hands of a dependency of the Ministry of Education, and over 1,500 centres benefited by the services concerned. The same department possessed a collection of more than 600 educational films, a library of about 200,000 books and a record centre where educational programmes for schools and institutes were recorded. It also published basic education textbooks for the adult population and maps and posters for schools, besides organizing basic education missions in the most backward parts of the country.

In addition to all that was done for education by the State, there were other forms of assistance of private origin, like the Fundación Juan March which granted important research scholarships both in Spain and abroad, as well as other types of subsidies, amounting to substantial sums, to students of science, the humanities and the arts. In a similar position, although under the administration of a board of trustees, was the recently established Fundación Alfonso Martí Escudero specializing in scientific research. The Higher Council for Scientific Research - whose activities and organization he described in detail - the Institute of Hispanic Culture, trusts, and academic institutions, and private bodies such as the Fundación Pastor, the Banco de España, the Fundación Güell and others co-operated in the work of promoting education and assisting research by means of scholarships and travel grants.

He alluded to Spain's archives, some of which - those of Indias, Simancas, La Corona de Aragón and Murcia - were world famous, and to its libraries and museums, many of which, including the Museo del Prado, had been completely restored or greatly enlarged and enriched. He then went on to deal with the dissemination of Hispanic culture abroad, which was in the hands of the Cultural Relations Board and the Institute of Hispanic Culture with its 45 branches scattered over the various Hispano-American countries.

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There was also the so-called "Equality of opportunities plan", established in 1960, the essential purpose of which was to encourage the practical application of the principle of equality of opportunities among the entire population of Spain in respect of education, vocational training and research. That aim was being pursued by means of study fellowships, intensive training, intensive specialized or vocational training courses, grants for books, loans on signature, etc. The corresponding administrative agencies had earmarked a total of 1,200 million pesetas (the equivalent of about 20 million dollars) for investment in 1962, which would be distributed among all levels of education.

Although there was, technically speaking, no unemployment in Spain, except for the seasonal stand-offs in agriculture, the industrialization process developed in recent years had led to the adoption of intensive vocational training plans alongside the regular provision for such training. To that end, several special vocational training centres had been established since 1957 and were turning unskilled agricultural labourers into foremen and skilled workers. For that purpose, methods of psycho-technical analysis were applied, after medical examination, in conjunction with the most advanced teaching techniques.

In conclusion, he referred to the Civil Service Training Centre (Centro de Formación y Perfeccionamiento de Funcionarios) established at Alcalá de Henares in 1958, where 132 courses on a variety of subjects had already been given and had been attended by 1,881 professional administrative officials. That was one of the key elements in the administrative reform that was being carried out to increase the efficiency of the complex services of modern public administration.

Mr. BETANCUR (Organization of American States) reported on the targets established in connexion with the Ten-Year Education Program of the Alliance for Progress by the special task force on education of the OAS, set up under his chairmanship to advance educational, scientific and cultural programming and development. The task force had been created in compliance with resolution A-4 of the Conference of Punta del Este, and had held its first meeting at Washington from 5 to 16 February 1962. At that meeting detailed consideration had been given to the form of organization best suited to the task force's activities, as well as to the relevant programme of work.

At the same meeting, the task force had carried out one of its specific assignments by drawing up a programme of immediate action comprising recommendations that could be put into effect by Governments, international agencies and private bodies, constantly bearing in mind that the utmost speed in fulfilling the objectives of the Ten-Year Education Program was of the essence if the economic and social aims of the Alliance for Progress were to be achieved. Those recommendations, upon which he commented in detail, bore on the integrated planning of education - including the establishment of an ad hoc section in the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning - educational planning offices, development of human resources, public administration of education, institutes of educational research, training of teachers and inspectors, single-teacher schools, school building programmes and scientific, secondary and adult education. They also included the establishment of a special inter-American fund for Latin American universities, a national and multi-national universities project, and financial assistance for university student welfare services, as well as for the teaching of the natural and applied sciences. Other recommendations were concerned with public and school libraries, exchange of persons, the establishment of a specialized information centre, the publication of popular editions, the expansion of existing cultural programmes in the fields of art, music and literature and with the necessary co-ordination among Governments, international organizations and private agencies taking part in the educational, scientific and cultural programmes of the Alliance for Progress.

In conclusion, he reaffirmed his belief that the Ten-Year Education Program, adopted at Punta del Este, provided the greatest historical opportunity of the century to set the crowning touch upon the emancipation accomplished by the liberators and to enable the Latin American peoples to enjoy the social and economic well-being which they merited, hoped for and claimed.

Mr. DURAN (World Health Organization) said that, as international agreements to expedite the economic and social development of Latin America called

for a closer association between the different sectors of the economy, the integrated planning of such development should be effectively directed towards the realization of man's potentialities which was, in the last issue, its aim and purpose. Health and education were two inter-connected basic elements of social progress, since people could not keep healthy unless they were aware of their problems and requirements and were provided with the necessary knowledge. Moreover, the acute shortage of manpower for carrying out health programmes could be remedied only when, through far-reaching educational reforms, a large enough body of well-trained professional, technical and auxiliary personnel was available to satisfy those requirements. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau - the WHO regional office for the Americas - had the responsible task of ensuring that at international meetings held in recent years the health factor was taken into account in economic and social planning. Thus, the Charter of Punta del Este, signed in August 1961, declared that one of the objectives that should be attained during the next ten years was "To increase life expectancy at birth by a minimum of five years, and to increase the ability to learn and produce, by improving individual and public health."

In order to attain such objectives it would be necessary to "provide adequate potable water supply and sewage disposal to not less than 70 per cent of the urban and 50 per cent of the rural population; to reduce the present mortality rate of children less than five years of age by at least one-half; to control the more serious communicable diseases, according to their importance as a cause of sickness, disability and death; to eradicate those illnesses, especially malaria, for which effective techniques are known; to improve nutrition; to train medical and health personnel to meet at least minimum requirements; to improve basic health services at national and local levels; and to intensify scientific research and apply its results more fully and effectively to the prevention and cure of illness".



Resolution A-2 of the Charter laid down the general lines of the Ten-Year Public Health Program and invited each country to adopt those major objectives and embody them in their national plan for economic and social development. The same resolution specified that the countries could request the advice of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau in the preparation and execution of their national health plans. In order to solve the problems that would derive from health planning as a part of national economic and social development planning in Latin America, the Bureau had decided to convene expert advisory groups to review the present situation, priorities, resources, procedures, probable solutions and the general problems that would be liable to arise once the Governments began to set the wheels in motion to achieve the targets they had set in accordance with international agreements. The Bureau would submit those recommendations to the Governments themselves at a high-level meeting with a view to their consideration in connexion with national health plans in the light of the problems and requirements of each country.

A committee of experts had revised the methodological bases for health planning and had formulated recommendations to assist Governments in setting up planning units and training planners, a task which would be undertaken in collaboration with ECLA by means of special courses. Close liaison and co-ordination with international and technical credit organizations such as the Pan American Union and the Inter-American Development Bank had enabled WHO to participate more extensively in fields of economic and social development where health was extremely important.

In the joint planning of education and health the first factor that should be considered concerned the basic health conditions of the population, which were far from good enough to equip the people physically, mentally and socially for the educational process. In the Americas, endemic goitre and malaria and tuberculosis continued to be among the principal causes of sickness, disablement and death; although actual

/mortality had

mortality had decreased notably, the reduction in the number of sick people had been much less. The second aspect of such joint planning was the training of professional, technical and auxiliary personnel, the acute shortage of which was the most serious impediment to the development of health programmes in Latin America. Steps should also be taken to educate the community in matters of health and hygiene and to encourage it to take an active part in maintaining and improving health.

He then drew the attention of the participants to the training of teachers in questions of hygiene. The study presented by WHO recommended that training programmes of that kind should cover at least the following points: health problems bearing on school and community life; the proper use of available health services; methods and techniques of health education; recognition of the more obvious symptoms of illness in school-children and assistance in remedying them; and integration of health education with the different subjects in school curricula.

Mr. MAHEU (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) expressed satisfaction at the general debate which had been most valuable as regards both quantity and quality. The value of the information in the statements and in the documents submitted to the Conference was such that UNESCO intended to publish a synthesis which would be available not only to the Latin American countries but to the whole world in order to provide comprehensive information on the present educational situation in Latin America and also the hopes, intentions and aims of those countries.

He had been struck by the realism of the statements made and by the concern for practical action. He fully supported the view, expressed by several delegations, that the Conference should not be allowed to end with a mere general declaration but should be the starting-point of a plan of action. One essential element of such a plan would be a quantitative assessment of the objectives of educational development in Latin America and of the resources required to achieve them. It would be most disappointing if the present Conference failed to follow the example of similar conferences, held at Karachi, for the Asian countries, and at Addis Ababa, for the African countries and omitted to make even a rough

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estimate of objectives and resources. In fact, it was required to do so under the resolution adopted at the first Punta del Este Conference on the Ten-Year Education Program of the Alliance for Progress. One of the recommendations in that resolution was that the Conference should devote special attention to determining in specific detail the broad goals set forth in the resolution; setting priorities for the initial efforts; and recommending the most appropriate practical means of attaining the proposed goals.

The UNESCO Secretariat was prepared to lend every assistance in the work of quantitative assessment and had already begun a study of the data submitted by Governments. While it was not in a position to provide final figures, it could help to prepare figures which could be gradually adjusted at a later stage.

He then proceeded to comment on some important suggestions that had emerged from the general debate. One was the desirability of establishing an educational planning section in the new Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning. UNESCO supported that suggestion and considered it essential that the planning of education should be undertaken within the framework of the new Institute. For that purpose, consultations on the subject were currently being held between UNESCO and the ECLA Secretariat and he hoped that the suggestion would be adopted. The second suggestion referred to the establishment of a Latin American educational development fund. Although the idea had been brought up at a General Conference of UNESCO, it had not been considered opportune at the time. However, in view of the pressure of events and the growing awareness of the importance of education, consideration of the matter could not be delayed any longer. It involved a long-term project which required study and negotiation and, for that very reason, a ~~start~~ **start should** be made as soon as possible. He was confident that the fund, if established, would be financed not only by the American continent but that contributions would also be forthcoming from countries all over the world. In brief, the fund should be regional in its objectives and universal in its financing.

In connexion with the need for visualizing planning as part of economic and social development and for undertaking studies bearing on the establishment of the fund, sufficient resources were available to cover the costs of administration and of co-ordinating the international assistance to Latin America. Proper machinery should be established once and for all for the programming and use of existing funds, and the UNESCO Secretariat was prepared to study all formulae which would ensure the requisite co-ordination. That subject belonged, properly speaking, to the agenda of Committee III to which UNESCO would afford whatever assistance that might be requested.

Mr. QUEZADA (Bolivia), referring to the statement by Mr. Maheu, said that the aim of the present Conference was not mere statements and recommendations but specific and practical results to offer the peoples of America. He therefore requested him as representative of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, to provide a quantitative assessment of the resources available for the educational development of the Latin American countries, before the committees began their technical discussions.

The CHAIRMAN, after stating that Mr. Maheu would in due course provide the information requested by Mr. Quezada, declared the general discussion on the topic closed, but informed the representatives of the non-governmental organizations that they would have an opportunity of making whatever statements they might wish to present at the final plenary meetings.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.