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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

Committee of the Whole
Twelfth session

Santiago, Chile, 23 to 25 April 1968

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at ECLA Headquarters, Santiago, Chile,
on Thursday, 25 April 1968, at 4.10 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Carlos Valenzuela (Chile)

CONTENTS: Technical assistance activities in Latin America
Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Commission
(continued)
Report of the Credentials Committee
Consideration and adoption of the report of the Commission to
the Economic and Social Council
Closure of the session

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA.

Mr. ARDITI (Secretariat) reported on ECLA's main work in the field of technical assistance under United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 106 (VI) during the twenty years since the Commission's establishment. Its activities in that field had included the provision of advisory services to governments through the medium of individual experts and advisory groups; the organization of seminars and meetings of experts; the training of government officials through a variety of specialized courses; the preparation of studies on specific subjects; and the organization of autonomous regional bodies. Advisory services had been made available to governments in the spheres of trade policy, economic integration, economic development and planning, water resources, energy, industrial development, statistics, national accounts, community development, public administration, road development, transport, ports and navigation, fiscal policy, and housing programming and financing.

From 1968 onwards, assistance would be given to various development programmes requested for the Caribbean and other sub-regions. Groups of experts were also to be set up in regional planning, industrial development, natural resources, agricultural development, market studies, transport and other fields. They would work under the jurisdiction of ECLA and would provide technical assistance, undertake studies and prepare projects for the economically relatively less developed countries. Arrangements had been made also to hold a seminar on the taking of population and housing censuses in Latin America, and to give a course on regional development and the fourth regional course on trade policy.

Mr. URE (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom ranked third on the list of contributors to the United Nations Development Programme, and it also financed its own programme of technical and financial assistance to promote the development of other countries, at an annual cost that had risen from 4,000 to 700,000 pounds sterling between 1962 and 1967. In 1968, the economic crisis in the United Kingdom had compelled it to retrench in its defence programmes, welfare services and development plans, but its aid to Latin America had not been reduced, and it would be maintained in future.

/Assistance had

Assistance had already been given, in that order, to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, the Central American Common Market and Ecuador, mainly in technical training, animal husbandry and tropical agriculture.

The United Kingdom also collaborated with the Organization of American States in Latin American training programmes in the United Kingdom, and had contributed to the Inter-American Development Bank.

Mr. SUMMERS (Canada) conveyed his Government's congratulations to the Commission on the fruitful results it had achieved during its twenty years of activity. Although Canada lay a little outside the Commission's main sphere of action, its many ties with Latin America linked it in interests and aspirations to the region, and hence to the Commission's efforts to promote the region's economic and social development. The meetings organized by the ECLA secretariat had given Canada an opportunity to familiarize itself with the aims and concerns of the Latin American countries. His Government viewed with particular sympathy their interests as expressed in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and, in associating itself with their general aims, it hoped to further the collective effort to overcome obstacles and achieve a common meeting-ground.

Canada gave direct financial and technical assistance to the region through a fund administered by the Inter-American Development Bank and under certain bilateral agreements, and it hoped to do even more in the next few years. In 1967, its imports from the region had risen substantially, and were estimated to amount to 187 million dollars in value.

He concluded by expressing his Government's good wishes for the success of the Commission during its next phase of activity, to which Canada pledged its full support.

Mr. RAMIREZ-BOETTNER (United Nations Development Programme) said that his organization had established a system of pre-investment studies on specific projects that might have an immediate impact on a country's economy, and that it was financing the cost of experts serving with the regional economic commissions. In Latin America, it co-operated with ECLA in those activities.

In 1967-68, 20.2 per cent of the technical assistance funds available under the United Nations Development Programme had been earmarked for national or regional programmes in Latin America. The Special Fund component of UNDP had allocated 25 per cent of its resources to the region, which was distributed as follows: 38 per cent to agriculture, 27 per cent to industry, 11 per cent to infrastructure, 7 per cent to various sectors, and the remainder to housing, public health and social development.

United Nations specialized agencies and the Inter-American Development Bank (which had played such a useful role in the region) acted as the executing agencies for the projects approved by UNDP. In co-operation with ECLA, UNDP would continue to contribute to the integration and development of Latin America.

Mr. BOTAFOGO (Brazil) suggested that the resources earmarked for technical assistance programmes should be used primarily for promoting the countries' internal development, since there were institutions specially concerned with speeding up economic integration.

Mr. MORALES (Inter-American Development Bank) welcomed the admission of the West Indies Associated States and the territories of Monserrat and St. Vincent as an associate member of ECLA. He then spoke of the Bank's co-operation with the United Nations, as evidenced, for example, in the establishment of the African, Asian, and Caribbean regional development banks, and, in Latin America, in its collaboration with ECLA and the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning. The Bank had granted loans totalling 2,500 million dollars to countries of the region, it had allocated 200 million dollars to integration projects, and it was prepared to support sub-regional integration through the Andean Development Corporation. It was currently participating in a project to create a diversification fund in order to balance supply and demand in respect of coffee.

COMMEMORATION OF THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMISSION (concluded)

Mr. BUSTAMANTE (International Labour Organisation),
Mr. COCHIN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations),
Mr. DURAN (World Health Organization), Mr. AUTELLI (International
Telecommunication Union), Mr. BRAVO (World Meteorological Organization),
Mr. ESGUERRA-BARRY (United Nations Children's Fund), Mr. PFLÜCKER
(United Nations Industrial Development Organization) and

Mr. SALAZAR

Mr. SALAZAR (Inter-American Committee on the Alliance for Progress) associated themselves with the congratulations extended to ECLA on its twentieth anniversary, and drew attention to the fruitful co-operation that existed between the Commission and their own institutions in various fields.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Mr. VALDES (Secretary of the Commission) informed the Committee of the Whole that, pursuant to rule 15 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Credentials Committee had examined the credentials of the delegations to the twelfth session and had found them in order.

The meeting was suspended at 5.30 p.m. and resumed at 5.50 p.m.

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (E/CN.12/61/14 and Corr.1)

Mr. MARTINEZ (Argentina), Rapporteur, presenting the draft annual report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council, outlined its structure and described those parts of the report which summarized the proceedings of the twelfth session of the Committee of the Whole, to which would be added a summary of the statements made at the present meeting.

Mr. VALDES (Secretary of the Commission) read out two messages from Mr. Raul Prebisch, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, thanking the Committee for the many warm tributes that had been paid to him as former Executive Secretary of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that both the message sent by the Committee to Mr. Prebisch at the beginning of the session and the messages just received from him should be included in the draft report, after paragraph 317.

It was so agreed.

Mr. URE (United Kingdom) proposed that the report should state that the draft resolution on the admission of the West Indies Associated States as an associate member of the Commission was presented by his delegation and supported by the others mentioned in paragraph 364 of the draft report.

It was so decided.

Mr. COZIER (Barbados) proposed that paragraph 366 should be redrafted. It had been the representatives of the Caribbean countries which were already members of the Commission who had thanked the Committee for the admission of the West Indies Associated States as an associate member of the Commission.

It was so decided.

/Mr. COZIER

Mr. COZIER (Barbados), supported by Mr. WELLS (Jamaica) proposed that, in order to express more precisely the requests made by the Caribbean countries to the secretariat, paragraph 345 of the draft report should be amended to read as follows: "The delegations of Jamaica and of Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed the pressing need for ECLA's assistance in activities designed to further economic co-operation in that area. Cases in point included the studies on a common external tariff; complementarity agreements in respect of agricultural and industrial products; the establishment of certain industries at a regional level; and the standardization of tax incentives. Those were matters of vital importance for all countries members of CARIFTA."

It was so decided.

Mr. DUNN (United States of America) proposed that the wording of paragraph 325 should be amended to make it clear that the reservations expressed by certain representatives regarding the appraisals submitted to the Committee of the Whole in the extract from the Economic Survey of Latin America (E/CN.12/806 - E/CN.12/AC.61/2) were based on the need to have the full survey before being able to judge the relevance of those appraisals. Commenting on paragraph 347, he pointed out that the meeting of the group of planners proposed by the President of the United States referred to in that paragraph should be held under the direction of a distinguished Latin American expert, and he proposed that it should be so stated in the paragraph.

It was so decided.

The annual report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council, (E/CN.12/AC.61/14 and Corr.1), as amended, was adopted unanimously.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

Mr. BAEHR (Dominican Republic) proposed a vote of thanks to the officers of the Committee, and to the Chairman in particular for the wisdom and efficiency with which he had conducted the debates.

That proposal was adopted by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking on his own behalf and on behalf of the other officers of the Committee, praised the sense of responsibility shown by all those who had attended the twelfth session and thanked them for the confidence that they had placed in him.

/Mr. QUINTANA

Mr. QUINTANA (Executive Secretary) said that the Committee's discussions had been extremely useful, particularly in so far as they had been concerned with a retrospective appraisal or recapitulation of the achievements of ECLA, which had been created in 1948 to further the development of each and every country in Latin America. That recapitulation had made it possible not only to appreciate ECLA's work as a whole, but also to put forward a number of excellent ideas on how to fill the gaps that remained. Lastly, it should be emphasized that, now that the stage of diagnosis in ECLA's great study of the Latin American economy had been completed, it was time to formulate the strategies and tactics to be employed by the countries of the region in preparing their own development plans.

The secretariat was aware of the demands that would be made on it in that respect and would use the elements at its disposal to secure the greatest benefits for all. Two immediate objectives would guide its activities: Latin American integration and co-operation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. In line with the first of those objectives, the secretariat would provide the Caribbean countries with the assistance which they had requested and would employ all its resources in support of the regional or sub-regional integration structures already in existence. With a view to analysing the results of the second session of UNCTAD and formulating a new plan of action accordingly, the secretariat would convene a meeting of the ECLA Trade Committee as soon as possible.

In conclusion, he thanked the Governments of Chile, Brazil, Colombia, the United States, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay for the hospitality they had shown to the various offices of ECLA and the facilities they had provided to assist those offices in carrying out their functions; he also thanked all the participants in the twelfth session of the Committee of the Whole for the congratulations they had offered and for the commendatory declaration adopted by the Committee on the occasion of ECLA's twentieth anniversary.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.