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SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Note by the Secretariat

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. General considerations	1
II. Activities undertaken	3
1. Theory and practice of economic development ..	3
2. Broadening of knowledge in the socio- economic field	5
3. Social Welfare and technical assistance	8
4. Contribution to the studies carried out by Headquarters	9

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The progress report presented to the Fifth Committee of the Whole and the Eighth Annual Report of the Commission ^{1/} contain detailed descriptions of the origin, composition and aims of the Division of Social Affairs. However, by way of introduction to the present note it is worth whole summing up the relevant information comprised in these two documents.

The Division of Social Affairs was created in pursuance of various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission itself. ^{2/} All these resolutions concur in stressing the need for joint study of the different economic and social aspects of the over-all process of development, so that equal attention can be devoted to all the diverse problems from the standpoint of an integrated programme.

The Division is staffed by specialists in social research and analysis, most of whom were assigned to Santiago, Chile, from Headquarters by the Secretariat.

Foremost among the objectives pursued by the Division are those defined in the resolutions mentioned. Their attainment calls for the integration and co-ordination of the activities approved by the Council and by its Social and Population Commissions with those undertaken by the Economic Commission for Latin America in directly related fields.

^{1/} See documents E/CN.12/AC.34/2 and E/2883/Rev.1 (E/CN.12/AC.34/9/Rev.2), respectively.

^{2/} See, inter alia, resolutions 198(II), 304(IV) and 535(VI) of the General Assembly; 155 G(VII), 179(VIII), 180(VIII), 222 A(IX), Annex I, 1, 434 A(XIV), 461(XV), 560(IX), 585 C and G(XX) and 618 (XXII) of the Economic and Social Council; 82(VI) and 83(VI) of the Economic Commission for Latin America, and 27(CCE) of the ECLA Central American Economic Co-operation Committee. As regards the decisions adopted by the Social Commission of the Council, the reports of its third, fourth, fifth, sixth, ninth and tenth sessions may be consulted.

/In addition,

In addition, as a natural consequence of its situation within the Latin American region, it is the Division's task to contribute, in so far as its resources permit, to a broader knowledge of the special features and nuances displayed in this particular area by the general problems with which the United Nations is concerned. Thus, it must at all times be ready to serve as the natural focal point and co-ordinating centre for whatever steps are taken towards the solution of such problems in Latin America by international organizations as well as by Governments and public or private bodies.

Had the Division's activities been confined to the sociological analysis of the present status of economic development in Latin America, its work programme would have consisted strictly in defining and investigating the social problems to which this situation gives rise, namely:

(a) those deriving from the adaptation of society, in the various Latin American countries, to the new functions imposed on it by economic development;

(b) those arising from the creation in Latin American society of the attitudes and patterns of individual and community life which are essential for the discharge of these new functions, and

(c) those implicit in the process of social reconstruction brought about by the total or partial fulfilment of the foregoing requirements.

The Division would thus have had to study - as a whole or by specific countries, in accordance with a strict order of priority - the topics listed in the annex to the progress report on the Study on Social Conditions of Economic Development ^{3/} adopted at ECIA's sixth session.

It should, however, be noted that, as the Division's staff was so small, it felt justified in restricting its aims to the initiation of such research and in endeavouring rather to promote and co-ordinate such studies as could be carried out in the various individual countries by other public or private institutions.

^{3/} See document E/CN.12/374.

The several objectives mentioned have complicated the Division's already intrinsically heavy programme and perhaps make it appear heterogeneous. Upon reflection, however, all the subjects with which the Division currently deals are seen to have a direct or indirect bearing on economic and social development envisaged as an indivisible whole. A perfectly straightforward classification of these subjects is, in fact, possible under one or other of the following heads: (1) questions directly related to the theory and practice of economic development; (2) questions implying the broadening of knowledge in the socio-economic field or the promotion of social consciousness; (3) questions of social welfare or technical assistance, and (4) questions connected with social progress which are of interest to Headquarters and in the study of which the Division collaborates in one way or another.

II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

I. Theory and practice of economic development

Of the questions with a direct bearing on economic development, the Division has been concerned with the following:

(a) The social situation in Bolivia. In connexion with the secretariat study on the Economic development of Bolivia, ^{4/} an attempt was made to present an outline of the main social questions at present affecting that country and directly related to the problems of its economic growth. One essential aspect of this work has been to develop further the theoretical background and methodology already covered in other ECLA documents, and to suggest guiding principles for their further application in future studies. ^{5/}

^{4/} See document E/CN.12/430.

^{5/} See document E/CN.12/374, op. cit., and the article on "Three sociological aspects of economic development" in the Economic Review of Latin America, special issue, Bogota, Colombia, August 1955, pp. 56 et seq.

/(b) Urbanization.

(b) Urbanization. In recent years the United Nations has displayed marked interest in the problems created by the process of urbanization in different parts of the world. This attitude was formally expressed in resolution 585 H III(XX) of the Economic and Social Council, which requested the Secretary-General "to give special attention to the problems of peoples undergoing rapid transition especially through urbanization". In view of this recommendation, and of ECLA's own interest in ascertaining the relationship between urbanization and the process of industrialization in Latin America, the secretariat, in close collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is organizing a seminar on this topic, to be convened towards the end of 1958. A provisional agenda has been drawn up, in which emphasis is placed on all those aspects relating to possibilities for immediate or longer-term action on the basis of the experience of the Seminar held in Bangkok for the South-East Asia region. In agreement with the UNESCO secretariat, five urban centres were selected for a corresponding number of case studies, which will provide first-hand material for the background documents to be presented at this new Seminar.

(c) Enterprise. A programme has been prepared with a view to the analysis of the past and present status of enterprise in Latin America. The term is understood as referring to any capacity for rational economic organization, both public and private; but there can be no doubt that from the historical standpoint particular interest attaches to the study of the origins, formation and present situation of the so-called entrepreneur class in this region. The initial outline of the study has been submitted to the University of Harvard, in the United States of America, where a group of well-known research workers is devoting special attention to the subject. If the proposal is approved, it will be put into effect in close liaison with the secretariat.

(d) Manpower. One of the resolutions of the Economic Commission for Latin America ^{6/} expressly suggests that secretariat studies on

^{6/} See resolution 83(VI), adopted at Bogota in September 1955.

manpower should be "carried out in close connexion with work relating to the problems of economic development in specific areas or countries and, in particular, with analyses and projections made for purposes of programming". It would have been desirable to undertake complete studies on the manpower situation in the various Latin American countries. But in face of the impossibility of covering the whole range of manpower problems from the point of view of industrial sociology, the Division has actively collaborated in statistical and demographic studies already under way, which can be regarded as preliminary and basic and which relate to the present size and scope of the labour force, its expansion as a result of population growth and of other social and economic changes, the employment structure of the active population, the productivity of the manpower employed, and other similar topics.

2. Broadening of knowledge in the socio-economic field

Activities connected with the questions which imply a broadening of knowledge in the socio-economic field or the promotion of a social consciousness have been mainly concentrated on the following points.

(a) Training Centre on Rural Sociology for Latin America. From 14 to 19 November 1955, the Chief of the Division gave a short course of lectures in the University of Concepción, Chile, on principles and problems of an evaluation programme. The first lecture dealt with the question of appraisal and comparability of standards of living from the international point of view; in the second the principles and methods of a systematic evaluation programme were expounded; the third took the form of a comparative study of three surveys, conducted on different lines, of groups of urban population which also differed one from another; the object of the fourth was to examine the various component elements of the technical assistance programme of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and, at the same time, to analyse the evaluation methods followed in this connexion - or projected for the future - by four of the international organizations; while, lastly, in the fifth and final lecture, attention was called to some of the procedures and /guiding principles

guiding principles adopted in an evaluation programme for a project of the so-called community development type.

(b) Demographic Training and Research Centre for Latin America.

The Population Commission, at its eighth session (March 1955), suggested that regional centres for demographic research and vocational training should be set up in the under-developed regions, as a practical form of international co-operation in this field. ^{7/} On the Commission's recommendation, the Economic and Social Council, at its nineteenth session (May 1955), adopted resolution 571(XIX), whereby the Secretary-General was requested, inter alia:

"To explore the possibility of establishing standing co-operative relations with qualified scientific institutions in each of the major under-developed regions of the world, which could serve as centres for studies on population problems of importance in the region and for the training of personnel in this field of study on a regional basis".

The Council also recommended exploration of the possibility of securing the co-operation in such a programme of scientific institutions in other regions, of non-governmental organizations and of private foundations. ^{8/}

At the United Nations Seminar on Population Problems in Latin America, held in Rio de Janeiro from 5 to 16 December 1955, the possibility of making that city the site of the proposed centre for demographic research and training was discussed. Shortly afterwards, the University of Chile offered assistance in the event of its being set up in Santiago. This proposal having been accepted, and the appropriate international formalities negotiated, the Centre in question will open in the course of 1957. Besides affording students a laboratory for practical experiment, its research programme will provide the various Governments and the United Nations with the information services needed

^{7/} See document E/2707, paragraphs 17-19.

^{8/} See document E/2730/Add.1.

for the preparation of development programmes and policies. In the conviction that a centre of this type is of great importance for Latin America, the secretariat has collaborated actively in its establishment from the very outset, meeting all requests for assistance within the limits prescribed by its own terms of reference.

(c) Study tour on community development in Latin America. The success which has attended the community development programmes launched during the last two decades in certain Asian and African countries is in marked contrast with the situation in Latin America where many similar undertakings are relatively less firmly rooted and are lacking in vitality. Obviously, therefore, all the factors which have come into play in each case should be methodically scrutinized in the light of the real social and historical situation of the Latin American countries, to enable future programmes to be drawn up with safer prospects of success.

Referring to community development programmes, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General ^{9/} "In co-operation with the specialized agencies and, as appropriate, with the regional economic commissions, to continue to assist Governments, especially of the under-developed countries, in developing and carrying out projects in this field through technical assistance and study activities". In compliance with this recommendation, the secretariat has organized a study tour in Brazil, Colombia and Peru, the results of which, it is hoped, will include not only a reply to the questions listed above but also

(i) the formulation of community development programmes fully adapted to existing conditions, possibilities, ways of life and labour patterns in the various Latin American countries, and

(ii) the preparation of programmes for training personnel qualified to put such programmes into effect.

^{9/} See resolution 585 C(XX), adopted on 23 July 1955.

3. Social welfare and technical assistance

On questions of social welfare and technical assistance the Division has supplied information to Headquarters and to the office for Latin America of the Technical Assistance Administration in a large number of instances, ranging from advice on social services policy, organization and administration to specialized aspects of the practical application of such recommendations.

The Division has also collaborated in the development of the Experimental Programme for Exchange of Social Welfare Workers and in the preparation of an outline for the Assessment of Childrens' Services in a Latin American Country. A further undertaking was the organization of the Latin American Seminar on Social Work Training to be held in Montevideo in July 1957. The reason for convening this Seminar is that social workers in Latin America tend to concentrate their efforts and activities in urban centres, failing to devote sufficient attention to the rural areas at the very time when the improvement of the living conditions of the rural population is being generally advocated as a primary aim of social welfare programmes for this region.

A group of experts has therefore been invited to discuss in the necessary detail social service training programmes in Latin America and the general lines on which they should be drawn up. Their aim will be to determine:

- (i) how far the training provided by the schools of social service qualifies their students for work in rural areas;
- (ii) how this training can be adapted to the exigencies of such work: modification of programmes, specialized and post-graduate courses, etc.;
- (iii) the types of professional and semi-professional or auxiliary personnel required for rural community development, and
- (iv) the means that should be adopted to train such personnel, at both the national and the international level: in-service training, regional training centres, etc.

The discussions held during the Seminar will be of help in completing, as far as Latin America is concerned, the report requested by the Economic and Social Council at its sessions of May 1955 and August 1955 respectively, on the essential elements of training for social service at its different educational levels, including in-service training.

4. Contribution to the studies carried out by Headquarters

Lastly, the Division has collaborated in some of the research undertaken by Headquarters, providing data on Latin America, contributing to the analysis of the problems raised and putting forward critical suggestions. Thus it co-operated in the preparation of the Second Report on the World Social Situation, of other studies on the Organization and Administration of Children's Services and the Training of Personnel for Community Development Programmes, and of the Report on a Co-ordinated Policy Regarding Family Levels of Living, presented at Geneva by a group of experts under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation.