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(Development Planning)

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Held at Caracas, Venezuela,
on Monday, 8 May 1967, at 3.35 p.m.

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Planning problems in Latin America (continued)

Chairman: Mr. PARDO (Bolivia)

Rapporteur: Mr. GONZALEZ CAMPO (Guatemala)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the three working languages of the Commission (English, French or Spanish), preferably on a mimeographed copy of the record, to the Conference Officer, Miss Juana Eyzaguirre.

PLANNING PROBLEMS IN LATIN AMERICA (Continued)

Mr. MATUS (Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning) said that the item under discussion was of direct interest to the Institute, since its activities centred mainly on the different aspects of planning in Latin America: manpower training, research and direct collaboration with Governments in developing and perfecting planning systems.

Two questions had emerged as the most significant in the course of the discussion: plan implementation and the co-ordination of national plans at a regional level. Defects in plan implementation could be traced to the planning system taken as a whole and the framework within which it was evolving. In Venezuela, for example, the introduction of planning had coincided with the launching of a development strategy based on import substitution and with a change in the political régime. Planning in Central America was fostered by the integration process. In the southern countries of the region, planning had come into being concurrently with import substitution during a transitional period when a new development formula was being sought, so that the difficulties were harder to overcome.

One of the main requirements for stimulating the planning process was continuity and easy communication in decision-making centres. In that respect, the fundamental factor was perhaps not so much the administrative organization as the type of management, since, like all new processes, planning went through a stage where the human element was the major factor, before it became institutionalized.

Another important factor in planning was the administrative environment. Planning machinery should operate with dispatch and provide short-term advisory assistance, while it elaborated medium and long-term plans. There was no justification for lack of communication with the private sector. The fact that differences might exist and continue unresolved even after negotiation with that sector was no excuse for the isolation of planning offices.

/With regard

With regard to methods of planning, the concept of a planning system had not always been too clear, nor had the combination of development strategy, medium-term plans, operational annual plans and systems of reporting and evaluating plan implementation been clearly understood. A clear distinction had not always been made between one task and another, so that in some instances Governments had tried to go from general plans to local plans which were neither operational nor consistent with overall strategy.

There were few annual plans at the moment in Latin America. Those that did exist usually reflected a pre-existing and rigid economic policy which was incompatible with development aims. However, they could represent a synthesis of the thinking of long-term planners and the approach of those concerned with implementing day-to-day economic policy, since the two viewpoints should be complementary. Where there were no annual plans it was very difficult to co-ordinate short and long-term action. Another useful element introduced by annual plans was the need for systematization because, while medium and long-term plans could be prepared without adhering to a definite system, short-term planning had to be vigorously systematized. From the organizational standpoint, it was desirable that annual plans should be formulated by specialized teams, since they demand a special approach and special data.

The formulation of national plans without a regional perspective or without comparing them with the plans of other countries might create more and more obstacles to Latin American integration. It would therefore be useful to discuss and compare national plans, as a basis for evaluating regional projects, co-ordinating infrastructure works and, above all, going forward towards the elaboration of a development strategy for Latin America. In working out that strategy, the development of the interior of Latin America should be given due consideration, because attention had hitherto been focussed exclusively on the development of the coastal areas.

Planning, adapted to the particular experience of each country, was the best way to channel development efforts; it was, in fact, a method of government. Integration called for more and more planning. The frank and constructive way in which representatives had described existing defects in planning were an indication of vitality and of a determination to eliminate them.

/Miss VIEIRA

Miss VIEIRA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) acknowledged the merits of document E/CN.12/772 and observed that many of the difficulties and obstacles which it described also occurred in educational planning. The educational movement planning had been started by UNESCO in 1956 when it was endorsed as the main objective of UNESCO's major project on the extension and improvement of primary education in Latin America.

Much progress had been made since then, not only in rationalizing and improving school systems in response to the need to increase school attendance and train teaching and other professional personnel, but also in recognizing the importance of the link between education and economic and social development; nevertheless, much still remained to be done.

The relationship between the economic situation and education should not be restricted to what was known as the training of human resources, unless that expression was given a much broader connotation and interpreted to mean more than manpower training, employment policy, etc. Two educational concepts should be taken into account, in view of their significance for the technical training of personnel and general social progress: the concept of general education as a preparation for all occupations and for the assumption of civic and social responsibility, and the concept of continuous education as a means of rehabilitating the illiterate masses.

The questions with which UNESCO was concerned included the quality of education, the training of teachers and, in particular, of staff responsible for school administration and supervision, the promotion of research on problems affecting the development of education and its incorporation in the planning process, as well as extra-mural education on other than the traditional basis. In close co-operation with ECLA and the Institute, UNESCO was interested in consolidating and improving the progress already achieved on such problems as the interrelation of social, economic and cultural phenomena, the relationship between educational and overall planning, the training of personnel and research on a large number of problems which were not fully understood.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the draft resolution on planning and development submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru (Conference Room Paper No. 1).

Mr. PARRY (Argentina) proposed that the meeting should be suspended briefly to enable the sponsors to agree on the final wording of the draft resolution.

It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 6 p.m. and resumed at 6.35 p.m.

Mr. PARRY (Argentina) read out the agreed text of the draft resolution.

Mr. KNOWLES (Canada), supported by Mr. LE GUAY (France), objected to the wording of operative paragraph 4 because of the general terms in which it reaffirmed the need to reduce the interest rates of external loans. He proposed that "To reaffirm the need" should be replaced by "To reaffirm the conviction of the Latin American countries that it is necessary".

The draft resolution was approved as amended.

Mr. COSSIO (Cuba) requested that note should be taken of his country's position on the question of regional integration, which had been expressed at the plenary meetings and described in detail in Committee II. He wished to make a similar request regarding Cuba's position in respect of the Declaration of the Presidents at Punta del Este.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.