

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIAL WELFARE QUESTIONS

During 1954, social welfare activities were directed towards assisting the Economic and Social Council in formulating social policy, assisting governments in organizing national programmes of social development, promoting the training of professional and auxiliary welfare personnel, improving the co-ordination of economic and social development programmes, and field activities. (For international definition and measurement of standards of living, see under CHAPTER VII, STATISTICAL QUESTIONS; for social aspects of migration, see under CHAPTER XVI, POPULATION AND MIGRATION QUESTIONS.)

During the year the Secretariat prepared, for publication early in 1955, an "International Survey of Programmes of Social Development". This work was done, as were previous reports on social conditions, in collaboration with the specialized agencies concerned. The survey, which it is intended to issue every four years, alternating with the World Social Report, will review and analyse recent trends and outstanding examples of social action taken by governments for the cure or prevention of social ills.

The examples will be chosen not so much from the point of view of activities and achievements, but rather in order to call attention to programmes that might serve as useful models for other countries, particularly those that are less developed.

CO-ORDINATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES

In reviewing the progress made in inter-secretariat co-ordination, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) observed that the results achieved were mainly related to the planning and execution of projects previously approved by the governing organs of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The Council adopted a resolution noting the Committee's report and urging continued efforts for more effective co-ordination (see under CHAPTER XVIII, PROGRAMME PLANNING

AND QUESTIONS OF CO-ORDINATION AND RELATIONS WITH SPECIALIZED AGENCIES).

Shortly after the adoption of this resolution, an ad hoc inter-agency meeting on international social programmes was held in Geneva in July 1954 which, in addition to reviewing the progress reports of the ad hoc working groups and meetings, was specifically called to discuss "practical action and long-range plans in the social field, including acquainting each other with their forward thinking on their long-term plans . . . and to facilitate adjustments in plans before those plans become crystallized".

The ACC endorsed those views and, encouraged by the progress made in achieving concerted action in such fields as community development, land reform and fundamental education, examined the possibilities of collaboration in other fields in which the United Nations and the specialized agencies were seeking common objectives and where individual action might be strengthened by a greater degree of common planning and joint action.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO GOVERNMENTS

During 1954 the Division of Social Welfare (now the Bureau of Social Affairs) and the Technical Assistance Administration (TAA) worked together in a number of field activities. In relation to seminars and technical conferences, study groups and special technical assignments to governments, the Bureau made available its personnel in greater measure than in previous years.

Consultants were provided to advise governments on the planning of integrated programmes of social welfare (Burma), on the development of national housing policies and programmes (Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Gold Coast) and on nation-wide programmes of community organization and development (Haiti, Iraq, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Yugoslavia).

Importance was also attached to surveying and promoting the training of social welfare personnel both in the professional and auxiliary

categories. Assistance was given in establishing and developing regional training centres; experts, scholarships and fellowships were provided; seminars and technical groups were organized, and training materials and studies on training problems were supplied, although on a limited scale.

In addition, efforts were made to strengthen the work of the non-governmental organizations which were assisting governments in the training of administrators, technicians and auxiliaries for different phases of the planning and execution of social programmes.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 496(XVI), community development received increased emphasis during 1954.

The Council's resolution had authorized the Secretary-General to convene one or more small groups of senior policy-making representatives of governments having similar social and economic problems to plan concrete programmes for expansion of community development projects.

On the invitation of the Government of the Philippines, and in close co-operation with the specialized agencies concerned, the first of those meetings was held in Manila in November-December 1954. The meeting was attended by 25 delegates representing the Governments of India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Korea. In addition to representatives from the United Nations, officials from UNICEF, UNKRA, ILO, FAO, UNESCO and WHO were present. The report of this meeting was to be submitted for information to the 10th session of the Social Commission in 1955.

The ACC's inter-agency meeting on International Social Programmes, which met in 1954, considered that the problems covered by the working groups on Community Organization and Development, Training of Auxiliary and Community Workers, and Fundamental Education were so closely related that the time had come to combine those three groups. The first meeting of the new amalgamated working group on Community Development was scheduled for the summer of 1955.

HOUSING AND TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

Under the directives received from the Economic and Social Council (resolution 496 (XVI)) and the Social Commission, the programme of housing and town and country planning was designed to assist governments to set up their own national policies and programmes; to help them to find practical methods for financing such programmes; to develop the building and building materials industries; to promote regional planning in schemes for rural and urban improvement; and to facilitate technical research and the training of technicians and administrators.

Throughout the year, the number of requests received from governments for direct assistance increased. Nineteen experts were working in 13 countries (Burma, Ceylon, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Lebanon, Mexico, Pakistan, Paraguay and Turkey) and 39 fellowships and scholarships were awarded.

Perhaps the most important technical assistance project in connexion with housing was the United Nations Regional Seminar on Housing and Community Improvement, held in January-February 1954, in New Delhi (see also ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST under CHAPTER IX). Government officials and housing and planning experts attended from Burma, Ceylon, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Laos, Pakistan, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The United Nations provided 14 experts from 10 countries who acted as discussion leaders and lecturers. The three main topics covered at the Seminar were building techniques, housing and community improvement programmes, and physical planning and education of planners. The Seminar adopted a series of recommendations concerning policies and programmes and their implementation.

The International Exhibition on Low-Cost Housing, which was held at the same time, was organized by the Government of India with the participation of other governments of the region as well as of the building industry.

A Seminar on Housing Through Non-Profit Associations, which was organized by the United Nations and the Danish Government,

in collaboration with the Organization of American States, was considered as an example of the contribution which one geographical region can make to another. The Seminar was held in September-October 1954 with the participation of 13 Latin-American countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico and Uruguay).

FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE

During the year close co-operation with UNICEF and the specialized agencies was instrumental in bringing about concerted action towards meeting the needs of families and children in rural and urban communities in less advanced countries. Special mention must also be made of the collaboration with UNICEF and WHO in the organization of maternal and child health centres in a number of countries.

The inter-agency Working Group on Long-Range Activities for Children held its third meeting in June 1954 and considered two major items; inter-agency collaboration to promote free and compulsory education, and the reports of the three assessments of children's services undertaken by the United Nations, in co-operation with UNICEF and the specialized agencies concerned, in Burma, El Salvador and Syria.

The main purpose of the surveys was to assist the Governments in reviewing their existing services for the benefit of children, and to advise on the initiation and development of comprehensive national programmes, applicable to both rural and urban areas.

A Seminar on Foster-Home Placement took place in Paris in May-June 1954 and a regional seminar in Denmark was devoted to day care.

A Study on Adoption of Children, published in 1954, dealt with the practice and procedures for the adoption of children in 15 countries (eight in Europe, two in North Africa, and five in Latin America) selected in view of their different legal systems and differing social and cultural patterns.

REHABILITATION OF THE HANDICAPPED

The programme in this field emphasized the prevention of handicaps and the organization

and staffing of modern rehabilitation services. It was aimed at preventing permanent impairment and eliminating or reducing handicaps which would otherwise result in large numbers of persons becoming economically dependent on society.

During 1954 the main activities carried out under this programme consisted in giving direct assistance to governments, with a view to strengthening national rehabilitation programmes in countries in the process of developing more comprehensive services for the handicapped, and assisting less developed countries to initiate basic services for the handicapped as part of a general programme of health education and welfare.

Among the techniques used most frequently to give such assistance were advisory missions, workshops for the training of technical personnel and the setting up or improvement of demonstration centres (in Egypt, Yugoslavia and Israel) to serve as model projects for a country or region. Seminars and study groups served as a means of exchanging information and experience among personnel engaged in work for the handicapped.

Within the framework of this general programme, a working paper concerning an international programme for the rehabilitation of the deaf and hard-of-hearing was prepared and discussed at a meeting of the inter-agency Technical Working Group on the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped, held in September 1954.

An illustrated brochure entitled Services for the Physically Handicapped was published in 1954. It was designed to provide a brief summary of the subject for the general public and for those working in governmental and voluntary agencies.

PREVENTION OF CRIME AND TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

The social defence programme was increasingly directed towards assisting the under-developed countries through making available to them the experience of countries more advanced in the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders. The regional consultative groups which met during the year recommended the establishment of regional institutes to provide a medium for the exchange of

information and especially for the training of personnel.

The European Consultative Group held its second session in Geneva in August-September 1954. Delegates from 14 countries, as well as representatives of WHO and ILO and several non-governmental organizations, took part in the meetings. The session dealt with the question of parole and after-care and the practical results and financial aspects of probation and indeterminate sentence and prison labour. It also stressed the importance of establishing and expanding the system of probation. After examining certain organizational aspects of international action related to the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders, the group adopted a resolution which expressed the hope that "the United Nations will spare no effort to continue its work in this field in accordance with the plan drawn up on the dissolution of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission — with a view to continuing the work of that body on a world-wide scale".

The seminar on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders in Asia and the Far East was held in Rangoon in November 1954, the Government of Burma acting as host. Delegations from 14 countries and territories, as well as representatives of 12 organizations, took part. The main topics discussed were standard

minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners; selection and training of personnel; open institutions; and juvenile delinquency. Certain aspects of the traffic in persons and drug addiction were also discussed. Among the principal recommendations was one for the creation of a regional institute for the training of personnel, which would at the same time provide guidance to governments with regard to their activities in the field of crime prevention and treatment of offenders.

Two reports were published during 1954. The first, on Practical Results and Financial Aspects of Adult Probation in Selected Countries, is a companion volume to an earlier study entitled Probation and Related Measures. The second report, dealing with Parole and After-Care, provides analytical information and conclusions on the organization, conduct and practical operation of parole and after-care system in 14 selected countries.

A study on The Indeterminate Sentence, called for by the Social Commission, was also published during the year. The report gives a comparative analysis of the legislation in force relating to the indeterminate sentence and its application in countries in Asia and the Far East, Australia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

DOCUMENTARY NOTES

For events prior to 1954, see Y.U.N., 1953, pp. 440-61.

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CO-ORDINATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE

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