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Chairman: Mrs. Ana FIGUEROA (Chile).

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapter IV) (A/1884, A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2) (concluded:

[Item 11]*

DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY GREECE
(A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2) (concluded)

1. The CHAIRMAN asked the Committee to resume consideration of the draft resolution submitted by Greece (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2) on housing and town and country planning, and the amendments submitted thereto.

2. Mrs. ROOSEVELT (United States of America) welcomed the Greek proposal because it stressed the urgency of adequate housing for people in the lowest income groups.

3. She said she would also support the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/Rev.1) to sub-paragraph (d) of the operative paragraph. After further consideration, she was inclined to support the enumeration in sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part in the original text, as it did not entail actual financial commitments but merely suggested specific ways in which low-cost housing might be facilitated. It would act as an added stimulus to governments to follow such examples as that of the United States of America, which had devoted much attention to co-operative arrangements and community developments in all parts of the nation, including Puerto Rico and Hawaii. In the United States, federal or state aid had made possible the reduction of rents through subsidies or tax exemption. Incentives to private investors should be considered to divert investment from industrial building to housing. The exchange of information through the United Nations would be of particular value.

4. M. HARRY (Australia) supported the Greek draft resolution with some reservations. The Australian Government's experience had been made available to other countries, in particular under the Colombo Plan,

and that Government had derived valuable lessons from the experience of other countries, partly through published material and partly from missions of experts sent especially to study tropical and sub-tropical housing in South America. The Australian housing problem, though not catastrophic, was acute, since there had been virtually no private building from 1939 until 1945. Towns in New Guinea and the Northern Territory had been bombed and great numbers of immigrants had come into the country. The Government had provided houses for ex-servicemen and immigrants and had assisted State housing projects financially. In addition, it had encouraged building schemes organized by private insurance companies and co-operative building societies. It had made its experience available through the housing bulletin issued by the United Nations Department of Social Affairs'. Undoubtedly, there was room for much more international action, but the existing structure of the national and international exchange of information must be the starting-point, and every effort must be made to avoid duplication.

5. The Economic and Social Council's direct assistance to governments with regard to financing would naturally be limited; it could give information on methods which had been found practicable and could arrange the supply of technical experts. The Technical Assistance Board might also be ready to entertain requests for experts in all fields relating to low-cost housing, although such requests would have to be considered in relation to economic development, as a whole.

6. The Canadian representative had rightly suggested (356th meeting) that the Second Committee might be interested in that aspect of the matter; but the Third Committee could certainly approve a draft resolution of its own.

7. In that connexion he supported the Saudi Arabian representative's objection (356th meeting) to the enumeration in sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part

* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

¹ See *Housing and Town and Country Planning Organizations*, ST/SOA/SER.H I-3, 1949-51, Miscellany No. 1, p. 20.

of the Greek draft resolution; it was for the Council itself to seek the best methods of financing cheap housing. Furthermore, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development could hardly, by its very nature, assist governments specifically with regard to housing programmes. It must consider such programmes in relation to over-all plans for economic development, the resulting effect on production and the ultimate ability to repay the loans. He would therefore support the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/Rev.1) to rule-paragraph (c). With that exception, he would support the Greek draft resolution, on the understanding that the Economic and Social Council would take fully into account both the facilities which were normally available to governments and the existing activities in the international field, and would recognize the limits of possible United Nations action with regard to financing.

8. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) supported the Greek draft resolution in general but would introduce an amendment (A/C.3/L.178) consisting of two points which, in his opinion, did not alter the substance. A broader phrasing of sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part would meet the objections advanced against the original text, and sub-paragraph (d) of the operative part could be simplified.

9. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) formally submitted the oral amendment he had made at the previous meeting (A/C.3/L.177), proposing the deletion of the words "tax adjustments, subsidies, and the introduction of incentives to private investors", in sub-paragraph (c) (i) of the operative paragraph.

10. Mr. PLEIC (Yugoslavia) supported the Greek draft resolution. It dealt with a matter to which the United Nations had previously devoted some attention and one which did not fall within the purview of any specialized agency.

11. Too much emphasis had, however, been placed on the introduction of incentives to private investors in sub-paragraph (c) (i) of the operative part. The intention was to specify only those who were building houses for their own use rather than for investment. Some form of words should be used to express that idea. He suggested that the words "private investors" should be replaced by "non-profit private investment".

12. The Afghan amendment (A/C.3/L.178) undoubtedly broadened the scope of the proposed methods of financing, but the reference in the Greek text to co-operative arrangements and community developments should be retained, as experience had shown those methods to be effective.

13. The Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/Rev.1) was acceptable.

14. Mr. JOCHAMOVITZ (Peru) supported the Greek draft resolution. The housing problem, acute since the beginning of the century, had become even more serious as a result of two world wars and of the increase in population and transport. Private enterprise had not been able or willing to cope with the problem, and the governments had been compelled to intervene. His own Government had made great strides in providing

low-cost housing, but in his country, as elsewhere, there was still much to be done. The United Nations ought to pay particular attention to the housing problem, which was at the root of most social evils.

15. Mr. DE ALBA (Mexico) believed that the Third Committee should approve the Greek draft resolution without paying too much heed to what other United Nations bodies might subsequently do about it. The problem was a pressing one. He agreed to cope with the Yugoslav representative that private interests could not be counted upon to cope with it alone, as they were mainly concerned with profits rather than the common weal. It was for governments, local authorities and international bodies to give the stimulus, and he would therefore support point 1 of the Chilean amendment. The various methods of financing low-cost housing in Mexico showed that rural low-cost housing was as important as urban; the Greek draft resolution was particularly welcome because it made no distinction between the two.

16. Mr. MENDE BRUN (Argentina) also supported the Greek draft resolution. The right to adequate housing had been written into the Argentine Constitution and 250,000 houses had been built in towns and in the country during the existing Government's term of office.

17. Mr. BEAUFORT (Netherlands) concurred in the United States representative's remarks about sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part. He informed the Committee that about 50,000 houses a year were built in the Netherlands. The Saudi Arabian representative's fears did not, in his opinion, justify the deletion of that enumeration of methods of financing housing. It should be noted that the price of building materials was high, so that rents would become excessive if there was no governmental assistance to low-cost housing schemes, and the cost of living would rise proportionately, with all the consequent dangers, particularly with regard to the export capacity of the country involved.

18. Mr. ALFONZO-RAVARD (Venezuela) supported the Greek draft resolution. His country had benefited from the relevant information published by the United Nations.

19. He would support the Chilean amendment for the reasons which the Chilean representative had adduced; it was for the Economic and Social Council rather than for the Third Committee to give the governments the choice of possible methods best suited to their social structure.

20. Mr. D'SOUZA (India) agreed with the Greek representative's statements. He could not, on consideration, follow the Saudi Arabian representative in his objection to sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part, as it did not commit governments to adopting any particular methods, but merely enumerated some methods for their guidance.

21. On the understanding that the draft resolution embodied no financial implications, his delegation would vote for it.

22. Mrs. HARMAN (Israel) would support the Greek draft resolution, including sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part. A great variety of methods had been employed in Israel to promote low-cost housing, particularly co-operative arrangements and a stimulus to private investment which might otherwise have been diverted into other channels.

23. She would, however, like to know, in the light of statements made by other delegations concerning the financial implications of the resolution, whether any financial implications were involved, and whether the Economic and Social Council would be able to implement the resolution within the existing budgetary limits.

24. Mr. DEHOUSE (Belgium) thanked the Greek delegation for its initiative in submitting a draft resolution which brought the problem of housing to the international level.

25. He would vote for that resolution and for the Chilean amendment.

26. He proposed that in the first paragraph of the preamble, in the French text, the word *causes* should be replaced by the word *caractéristiques*, in order to make that statement of principle more accurate.

27. He asked for a clarification of the question of the financial implications of the draft resolution. The Third Committee was not competent to make any financial recommendations and he was anxious to avoid any complications in that connexion.

28. Mr. GEORGES-PICOT (Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Social Affairs) stated, in reply to the point raised by the representatives of Israel and Belgium, that the adoption of the Greek draft resolution would have no immediate financial implications. The draft resolution merely requested the Economic and Social Council to give urgent attention to housing. When the Economic and Social Council considered the matter in accordance with the terms of the resolution if it were adopted by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General would be called upon to make an estimate of expenditures in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Council. While it was the opinion of the Secretary-General that intensification of effort in that field would eventually have budgetary implications both at headquarters and for the regional economic commissions, varying according to the specific action taken by the Council, he wished to state, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that the draft resolution before the Committee had financial implications.

29. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) especially welcomed the Greek draft resolution because his country was undergoing a housing crisis. Syria was one of the countries which imported most of its building materials; furthermore, it lacked building technicians and was facing difficulties in connexion with financing.

30. The problem of housing facilities for people in the lowest income groups was especially acute in the Middle East. For example, the average percentage of earned

wages spent on rent in Syria was 40 per cent, as against 10 per cent and 18 per cent in Switzerland and the United States of America respectively.

31. The housing question in his country had been affected indirectly by the Second World War owing to the influx of the rural population into towns, the shortage of man-power and materials, and the fact that buildings had been requisitioned by occupying forces. The problem had since been aggravated by the increase in disease due to the influx of refugees from Palestine, who had been sheltered temporarily in highly insanitary conditions. In addition to that, the speculation in real estate, due to the fact that most of the building materials were imported, had resulted in a steady rise in rents.

32. The only way to deal with the crisis was to draw up projects to meet the needs of the lowest income groups. That was why the Syrian delegation had submitted its amendment (A/C.3/L.176)* specifying technical means whereby those requirements might be dealt with on the international level.

33. Mr. REYES (Philippines) stated that his delegation would vote for the Greek draft resolution, because it would supplement the work of the Social Commission in that field and would stimulate international action facilitating assistance to governments.

34. He agreed with the Belgian oral amendment, and would support the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/Rev.1) because it took the correct relations between the United Nations organs concerned into account.

35. In view of its position as an under-developed country which had been devastated during the war, his country especially welcomed the constructive recommendations of the Greek draft resolution. Nearly two-thirds of his country's capital city had been destroyed and plans for improving and rebuilding dwellings had been greatly impeded by the high cost of imported building materials.

36. He stressed the interdependence of the problem of housing and that of general standards of living, which had been pointed up by the Mission of Experts on Tropical Housing which visited Asia in 1950 and early 1951. The problem was so vast that it would warrant the services of a specialized agency.

37. Mr. ROY (Haiti) would support the Greek draft resolution. His country had spared no effort to set up a system of low-cost housing and fully realized the necessity of international action in that sphere.

38. He would support the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/Rev.1), but had not had time to study the other amendments with sufficient care, and therefore reserved the right to give his views on them later.

39. Mr. EPINAT (France) stated that his delegation realized the importance of the Greek draft resolution and would vote for it, together with the Chilean amendment.

* A revised version of this amendment, containing certain drafting changes, was issued later, under the symbol A/C.3/L.176/Rev.1.

40. Mr PAVLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), commenting on the Greek draft resolution and the amendments that had been submitted, said that although the general tenor of the preamble was correct, there were deficiencies in the text which could not be rectified by the Belgian verbal amendment. The preamble in fact stated a half-truth ~~since~~, although the situation described in it prevailed in under-developed countries and in certain Non-Self-Governing Territories, housing crises in many countries were due to war devastation and, on the other hand, large sections of the populations of rich capitalist countries lived in conditions which were unfit for human beings, owing to unjust housing allocations and excessive rents. It would therefore be advisable to draw attention in the preamble to the reasons for lack of adequate housing.

41. Although his delegation wished to make that criticism, it approved of the general content of the preamble and would support it. It did not however, approve of sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part of the draft resolution. The USSR delegation could not approve such measures as tax adjustments, subsidies and the introduction of incentives to private investors. The Saudi Arabian amendment (A/C.3/L.177) showed that the experience of many different countries led to the assumption that private capital could not be trusted to promote the development of low-cost housing.

42. The USSR, which had dealt with an unprecedented housing crisis after the Second World War, when 25 million people had been rendered homeless, had had no need to resort either to private capital or to external sources. Under the five-year plan of 1946-1950, the necessary rural and urban dwellings had been rebuilt or restored, without the help of any private investments and without any credits from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Government and local budgets had sufficed for the successful implementation of that vast work of reconstruction.

43. In view of the current armaments race and preparations for war that were being carried on by certain rich capitalist countries, it was perfectly understandable why they were unable to carry out their housing programmes.

44. In conclusion, he stated that he could not support the operative part of the Greek draft resolution, but that he would support the Saudi Arabian amendment.

45. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) wished to reply to representatives who had spoken against his amendment. In defence of his thesis, he relied on the premise that the three basic birthrights of man were shelter, food and clothing. If food and clothing were substituted for housing in the Greek draft resolution, it would be difficult to maintain that private investment should be called upon to play an active part in decreasing the cost of living in that connexion. An enumeration of the domestic measures to be taken by governments with regard to housing was therefore tantamount to condonation of the creation of a privileged class of investors.

46. In reply to the United States representative, he pointed out that most housing projects for people in

low-income groups were non-profit-making and merely involved the amortization of interests.

47. He stressed the fact that the precedent of such an enumeration might be dangerous to all countries, irrespective of their political trends, and called upon representatives to vote on the matter in accordance with the dictates of their conscience.

48. He also asked for a vote by roll-call on his amendment.

49. Mr. HARRY (Australia) introduced an amendment (A/C.3/L.179), which he thought might improve the Chilean amendment: he proposed that sub-paragraph (c) of the operative part should read as follows:

"Assistance to governments in developing practical methods of financing housing programmes by domestic measures or from external sources."

50. In proposing the elimination of reference to specific measures, however, his delegation did not accept the USSR thesis with regard to private enterprise. Moreover, he considered that the Saudi Arabian representative had exaggerated the possible ill effects of the enumeration. Tax adjustments, subsidies and incentives to private investors did not always benefit capitalists alone, but had proved to be beneficial to low-cost housing projects. Free competition often led to the improvement of techniques, which was one of the purposes of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

51. Mr. MENEMENCIOLU (Turkey), commenting on the amendments which had been submitted since his speech at the previous meeting, said his delegation would support the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/Rev.1) to the Greek draft resolution as revised (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

52. He agreed with the Soviet Union delegation regarding the deletion of sub-paragraph (c) (i) of the operative part of the Greek draft resolution. If some Members of the United Nations did not believe in private investment and if a direct reference to such investment served no useful purpose in a resolution, he saw no reason for retaining it. In doing so, however, he based himself solely on some of the arguments put forward by the Chilean and Soviet delegations.

53. He could not agree with the statement of the Saudi Arabian delegation to the effect that any recommendations made collectively to Members of the United Nations by technical bodies or experts working within the scope of the Organization could be interpreted as interference in the domestic affairs of Member States in the spirit of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter.

54. The Turkish representative would not, on the other hand, support the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176), which he thought specified too closely points better left more general: the word "techniques", in sub-paragraph (a) of the operative part of the Greek draft resolution, left more latitude if unqualified by the words "of production and building". The same applied to the proposed addition of the words "by lowering the cost of materials, equipment and man-

power through standardization and prefabrication", after the words "reduce the cost of housing". It applied also to the proposed reference to "countries where the building industry is still at the purely artisan stage": there were very few such countries.

55. Turkey would likewise reject the Saudi Arabian amendment (A/C.3/L.177) as duplicating that of Chile.

56. Mrs. ACRITAS (Greece), explaining his delegation's attitude to the amendments proposed to the Greek draft resolution, said he had no objection to the original Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174). The "appropriate subsidiary bodies" which it was proposed to mention at the beginning of the operative part covered such bodies as the Social Commission, the Technical Assistance Board, the specialized agencies and appropriate non-governmental organizations.

57. The Greek delegation also accepted the Belgian oral amendment.

58. As regards the Saudi Arabian amendment (A/C.3/L.177), the representative of Greece could not agree that the words "tax adjustments, subsidies, and the introduction of incentives to private investors" in subparagraph (c) (i) of the operative part constituted interference in the domestic affairs of other nations. It was important to remember that the Economic and Social Council was merely making recommendations and offering constructive criticism, which no country was compelled to accept. He himself was no capitalist; he was general secretary of the progressive party in Greece; but, since his country had private capital, he believed that it must be mobilized for the benefit of the people. Greece was using private capital in that way, allowing it to be invested at a low rate of interest under government control. The Saudi Arabian amendment, in his opinion, was not consistent with many resolutions of the United Nations, including resolution 368 (XIII) of the Economic and Social Council, which expressly mentioned that "the accelerated development of under-developed countries requires a... more stable flow of forcing capital investment" to supplement private capital.

59. Greece would reject the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176) for the same reasons as those adduced by Turkey.

60. Mr. ROY (Haiti) suggested that the amendments proposed to the revised Greek draft resolution should be reviewed and certain of them eliminated.

61. THE CHAIRMAN announced the elimination of the revised Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.174/REV.1), points 1 and 3 of which had already been accepted by Greece; of the Afghan amendment (A/C.3/L.178) in favour of the Australian amendment (A/C.3/L.179), the Australian representative having agreed to alter the last point of his amendment to read "from domestic or external sources"; and of point 3 of the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176), likewise in favour of the Australian amendment.

62. The Chairman stated that a vote would be taken first on the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176) to the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

63. Mrs. ROOSEVELT (United States of America) and Mr. CORLEY SMITH (United Kingdom) requested that the vote should be taken in parts.

64. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote point 1 (a) of the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176) to sub-paragraph (a) of the operative part of the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

That point of the amendment was adopted by 18 votes to 17, with 15 abstentions.

65. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote point 1 (b) of the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176) to sub-paragraph (a) of the operative part of the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

That point of the amendment was adopted by 23 votes to 9, with 15 abstentions.

66. At the request of Mr. PAVLOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. ROY (Haiti) and Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq), Mr. MUFTI (Syria) consented to the deletion of the words "and labour" which, he agreed, might give the impression that salaries were to be cut, whereas he meant that lower-qualified and therefore cheaper labour could be employed if standardization and prefabrication were introduced.

67. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the amended Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176, point 1 (c)), to sub-paragraph (a) of the operative part of the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

That amendment was adopted by 24 votes to 8, with 16 abstentions.

68. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the first part of the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176, point 2) proposing a new sub-paragraph (c) to be inserted after sub-paragraph (b) of the operative part of the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2), as far as the words "and training".

That part of the amendment was adopted by 42 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

69. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the second part of that amendment, from the words "to experts" to the word "shortage".

That part of the amendment was adopted by 30 votes to 4, with 16 abstentions.

70. THE CHAIRMAN put to the vote, as a whole, the new sub-paragraph (c) proposed in the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176, point 2).

That sub-paragraph, as a whole, was adopted by 27 votes to 1, with 17 abstentions.

71. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the new sub-paragraph (d) proposed in the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176, point 2).

That sub-paragraph was adopted by 41 votes to 7, with 3 abstentions.

72. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the text agreed on by the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia and Syria, as a substitute for the text proposed in the Syrian amendment (A/C.3/L.176, point 3) to replace sub-

paragraph (c) of the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2).

That text was adopted by 19 votes to 9, with 16 abstentions.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the decisions taken, the remaining amendments need not be put to the vote.

74. She put to the vote the revised text of the Greek draft resolution (A/C.3/L.161/Rev.2) as a whole, as amended.

The draft resolution was approved by 37 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.

75. Mr. ROY (Haiti) thought that the Committee, in addition to approving a number of draft resolutions, should formally approve each section of the report of the Economic and Social Council after completing its examination.

76. The CHAIRMAN said that that matter had already been discussed. The Committee would take its decisions on the report at a later stage, after completing its study of all the chapters of the report included in its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.