

No. 60/2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Statement by Dr. R.P. Vivian,
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...Many speakers in the general debate on economic development of under-developed countries have undertaken to analyze the major economic problems facing the world at this time. A great deal of stress has been laid on the unequal rates of growth in the under-developed countries as compared with that of the more developed countries. The situation has been described in somewhat pessimistic terms by many speakers. All speakers have agreed on one point: the United Nations must continue assuming its responsibilities for finding answers to the complex economic and social problems that the world faces today.

In considering the problem of development, my Delegation was struck by a remark made by Mr. Philippe de Seynes, Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, in his admirable statement at the beginning of our debate on this item. He said: "Equilibrium cannot be achieved by any simple, universally applicable prescription". A little later, he spoke of the "mutual interaction of the various economic sectors". My Delegation wishes to take a little time to comment upon these ideas and perhaps enlarge upon them.

The world is witnessing a unique phenomenon. By a process that began about 10 or 15 years ago, we have come to see all parts of the globe embark upon determined efforts to develop their resources; to industrialize; to break the age-old pattern of subsistence living with its accompanying ills of malnutrition, disease and short life expectancy. Certain successes have been achieved already, but, paradoxically, these have compounded the problem in its other aspects.

Great advances have been made in the application of elementary rules of hygiene. As a result of this, there has been a rapid increase in the live birthrate and a significant reduction in the rate of infant and child mortality. The population figures predicted for the end of the century are truly alarming; increasingly more people will have to be fed. At the same time the rate of agricultural production in under-developed areas is not increasing as rapidly as necessary to keep pace with their population increase, and at the same time improve the general level of nutrition.

In a country's effort to develop its human and physical potential, especially in the early stages, economic and technical aid is essential. It is, however, even more important for a country to reach a stage, as soon as possible, when it can generate its own capital for development by the products of its own industries and by the processes of international trade. My colleague from Ceylon has made an excellent summation when he said:

"The real answer to the problem lies in international action which will enable under-developed countries to generate increased incomes through their own sources and sustain them at reasonable levels".