

IV SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Introduction

There are ten Specialized Agencies or inter-governmental organizations, affiliated with the United Nations, through which the actual day-to-day work of international co-operation in the economic, social and technical fields is principally carried out, and the pooling and fruitful exchange of experience and modern techniques in such matters is made possible.

Of the ten Specialized Agencies now functioning some, like the Universal Postal Union and the International Labour Organization, continue in a tradition already well established, while others, such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization are largely new departures, and still others, the World Health Organization and the International Telecommunication Union for example, which are the modern successors of old-established organizations, represent a considerable expansion of international concern in their special fields. All the Specialized Agencies, however, have signed individual agreements with the United Nations, which provide for reciprocity and co-ordination of effort and by which each Agency agrees to consider any recommendation made to it by the United Nations and to report on the action taken. Each Agency also reports annually to the Economic and Social Council on its year's work, thus affording an opportunity for comment and recommendation. There is an Administrative Committee on Co-ordination established by ECOSOC, which brings together the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the Specialized Agencies in order to ensure as far as possible that the individual activities of the Agencies complement one another and do not overlap. The greater part of the actual implementation of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance falls upon the Agencies, to which programme funds are of course allocated for this purpose. This is in addition to the technical assistance to under-developed countries which is carried out by the Agencies with funds from their own regular budgets.

During the year, the countries of the Soviet bloc have applied for or renewed membership in certain Agencies. This represents a reversal of communist policy, which in recent recent years has been extremely critical of the Specialized Agencies, but it is as yet too early to say what the purpose or effect of the change may be.

The work of the Specialized Agencies is complex and extensive, covering a vast field of technical and semi-technical activities, for the details of which it is necessary to consult the numerous reports, special studies and monographs prepared by the Agencies themselves. The following pages attempt only to give an outline of the constitution and purposes of each Agency and a summary of its most important work during the past 12 months.