

At its seventeenth session in April 1954, ECOSOC considered the General Assembly's request and a report made by the Secretary-General on his consultations with ILO and decided without debate to refer the matter to the Population Commission.

Full Employment

In view of the undertaking expressed in Article 55 of the Charter to promote full employment, the Economic and Social Council has devoted a good deal of time to analysis of its economic causes and effects.¹ In accord with the several resolutions adopted by the Council itself and by the General Assembly, questionnaires have been circulated to member governments asking them to forward information regarding their domestic full employment policies and their policies regarding their balances of international payments and related matters. At the sixteenth session of the Council in the summer of 1953 the answers to the questionnaires covering the calendar years 1952 and 1953 were discussed together with three other agenda items touching on problems of full employment, and there was consequently a long and wide-ranging debate on the subject. Two of the items were reports previously requested by the Council: one from the International Monetary Fund regarding the adequacy of monetary reserves to meet temporary lack of equilibrium in the balance of payments, having in mind the desirability of promoting general convertibility of currencies and liberalization of trade and of creating conditions favourable to expanding international trade and high levels of production, consumption, employment and real income; the other from the Secretary-General on maintaining full employment while avoiding the harmful effects of inflation. The third item had been put on the agenda at the request of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and referred to the problem of reconverting industry, after the period of re-armament occasioned by the Korean War, in such a way as to avoid unemployment.

The item on reconversion after disarmament proved to be the most controversial. In its initial statement, the ICFTU outlined the problem and suggested that governments had an obligation to formulate their policies in this field at once, and should transfer resources to production contributing directly to human welfare. High wages, improved social security and reduced income tax for low income groups were suggested as necessary. One group of delegations, coming from the industrialized countries, stressed that the higher output expected by most member states in 1953 should cushion the effects of reconversion and that the problem should not be exaggerated, though governments had an obligation to channel disarmament savings with the maintenance of employment in mind. Another group considered that the expansion of financial aid to the under-developed countries was the only key to the problem and that the primary commodities largely produced by these countries must be assured stable prices in equitable relation to those of manufactured goods. Delegations of the Soviet bloc maintained that discrimination in trade against East Europe and the Peking Government was disrupting international trade and preventing full employment. Recent

¹See *Canada and the United Nations 1952-53*, pp. 33-34.