

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Statement by Senator David Croll in the Second Committee of the United Nations General Assembly New York, on February 21, 1957.

It is a privilege, Mr. Chairman, to follow the distinguished representatives of Norway, the Philippines and Argentina in discussing Resolution L295, Rev. 1. My Delegation has already stated the purposes for which this resolution was introduced in a speech in this Committee on January 8. However, since that date my Delegation has had a number of conversations on the subject with other delegations and I believe it might be useful for me to discuss at this stage some of the points which have arisen during those conversations.

We believe that the time has come to reassess the position with regard to the assistance being provided in promoting the economic development of the less developed countries. We believe that the United Nations is the best qualified organization for carrying out this task. We hope that such an assessment will show what has been and is being accomplished and will indicate whatever future progress may be desirable and practical. We have therefore joined with the delegations of Norway, the Philippines and Argentina in sponsoring the resolution which is before you. We consider that this resolution represents a useful and practical extension of the function of the United Nations to assist member governments in their consideration and development of economic aid programmes.

What results can be expected to follow from the passing of this resolution? I think there are three main ones.

In the first place, the United Nations will have for the first time a relatively complete picture of the published facts relating to international economic assistance. It is our opinion that these facts will be of great value during all the United Nations discussions of economic development. We believe that it would be unreal to discuss economic development in the United Nations without taking account of the bilateral and multilateral programmes now being undertaken outside the United Nations framework.

You will note that the resolution provides for the use by the Secretariat of information readily available from governmental and inter-governmental sources. I repeat the survey proposed in this resolution would rely only on information freely and publicly available from member governments.

We have been asked whether a survey of this kind would have an adverse effect on present or future United Nations programmes of economic aid. Mr. Chairman, I do not see how this would be possible. Would it really be better for United Nations discussions of economic aid to take place in a frame of reference which ignored other bilateral or multilateral economic aid programmes? It is my belief that a knowledge of the facts and a co-ordinated statistical picture

of what is now being accomplished by international and national economic assistance programmes could not fail to be of assistance in future United Nations discussions of the subject.

There is a second major advantage which could follow from this resolution. Members are doubtless aware of the extent to which the United Nations has been of assistance to governments in arranging economic aid programmes in South and South-East Asia. It is possible that a survey of the kind proposed in this resolution would provide information on the basis of which the United Nations could, as requested, perform a useful role in assisting the preparation of economic aid programmes by its members. Members of this committee will know how impossible it is at the present time to obtain useful general statistics upon which economic aid programming can proceed. There have been some general surveys of international economic aid by private bodies for specific purposes. There has never yet been a United Nations survey of economic aid programmes for United Nations purposes. I believe, as stated in the preamble of resolution L295, that "the collection and circulation by the United Nations of information concerning economic aid programmes would further co-ordination between these various programmes".

A third result of the survey proposed in this resolution would be a body of information, not now available to the United Nations, which would indicate gaps in the present programmes of economic assistance and sectors in which there could be a greater or less emphasis. Such information would be most useful to the United Nations in considering what further programmes it could undertake and how best to allocate the resources now being made available by member governments for United Nations economic aid programmes.

Mr. Chairman, this is a modest proposal. The future of the United Nations does not depend on it. On the other hand, the resolution does suggest a course of action based on confidence in the United Nations and on the role which the United Nations can play in promoting international economic development. As others have said, including senior leaders in Asia, it is desirable for the United Nations to play a more active role in promoting economic development. Therefore, the question which the resolution poses in this: "Are the members of the United Nations prepared in the UN to take note of economic aid programmes generally?" I trust that the answer is yes.

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