

No. 53/74 Prevention of Discrimination and the
Protection of Minorities

Text of statement made by Mrs. A. L. Caldwell, representative of Canada in the Third Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, on September 29, 1953, on agenda item 63 - Technical assistance in the fields of prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities.

Note - The text of the resolution adopted on this subject by the General Assembly and the results of the voting are included at the end of the statement.

The question before this Committee is one with which we are in full accord. As I said previously, the Canadian Government has continuously supported the various United Nations technical assistance programmes, and will continue to do so. We fully appreciate the importance of the draft resolution before us, and any practical and sound steps towards prevention of discrimination, and protection of minorities, will have our active support. We are particularly anxious that in our discussions we should aim at concrete achievements.

With this in mind, I would like to say something about the draft amendments of Mexico, Syria and Guatemala and offer some suggestions about the draft resolution itself.

It seems to the Canadian Delegation that the draft amendment proposed by the Mexican representative is open to several objections. First of all, it still brings in the question of education, which we think comes within the field of activities allocated to the Specialized Agencies, and the explanation given yesterday by the representative of UNESCO confirms our understanding that technical assistance in the field of education should be UNESCO's responsibility. The UNESCO representative also assures us that UNESCO has already initiated projects which meet the object of the Mexican amendment. We strongly feel that duplication in the efforts and programmes of the United Nations should be avoided, not only because of financial implications, but for the maximum effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole. We also understand that the Council's Social Committee eliminated reference to "educational programmes designed to combat prejudice and discrimination", which was contained in the draft resolution then submitted by the Commission on Human Rights, because such educational programmes were already included in the existing arrangements for the provision of technical assistance. For these reasons, I regret to say that the Canadian Delegation will have to vote against the Mexican draft amendment.

With respect to the draft amendment proposed by the representative of Syria, while we sympathize with his desire to avoid, under the cover of technical assistance, interference in the domestic affairs of certain states, it seems to us that its actual wording would not help to meet the intended purpose. As it stands now, the amendment is open to other possible interpretations which might well defeat the very thing which the Syrian representative has in mind. At any rate, we are rather doubtful as to the necessity and the effectiveness of the Syrian amendment and we will have to vote against it.

In the draft amendment of Guatemala, the introduction of development of economic potentialities makes its acceptance impossible, as this would clearly come under other existing projects.

The Canadian Delegation has, of course, given careful consideration to the body of the draft resolution proposed by the representatives of Ecuador, Haiti, India, Lebanon, Liberia, and the Philippines. We are, of course, in agreement with the principles. However, we share the opinion expressed by other delegations as to whether the Secretary-General will receive many requests from member states for technical assistance in this field, and so we agree that the door should be kept open to meet any such requests from interested governments. We feel somewhat unhappy, though, as to the wording of the draft resolution where it refers to eradication of prejudice. Prejudice against what? These words could easily be given all sorts of interpretations, some in line with what the resolution has in mind, and some very different. Moreover, this seems to bring a somewhat new object of concern to the United Nations. Over the years we have discussed prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities; but the eradication of prejudice opens up a new issue, and we are not at all sure where this would lead. You will remember that the resolution of the General Assembly, 532 B (VI) of 4th of February 1952, invited the Economic and Social Council to:

"authorize the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination, and Protection of Minorities, to continue its work so that it may fulfil its mission, and especially to convene a session in 1952; and

"to take any practical steps that may be necessary for the continuance, within the framework of the United Nations, of the work on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities."

There was no mention made of prejudice in the General Assembly resolution, and we think that the reference to prejudice in the draft resolution now before us would be better removed.

The Canadian Delegation would like to keep to the well defined expressions, which have a precise meaning in which the United Nations traditionally has been interested rather than to introduce a new concept. At this stage I do not intend to propose an amendment, but if it could make the draft resolution acceptable to more delegations I would be prepared to make such an amendment.

Following is the text of the resolution adopted on this subject by the General Assembly on October 23, 1953, by a vote of 41 in favour (including Canada) none against, with 16 abstentions:

"The General Assembly,

Having considered the recommendation contained in paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 502 G (XVI) of 3 August 1953 on technical assistance in the fields of prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities,

1. Authorizes the Secretary-General to render, at the request of any State Member of the United Nations, technical advice and other services which do not fall within the scope of existing technical assistance programmes, in order to assist the government of that State within its territory in the eradication of discrimination or in the protection of minorities or both;

2. Decides that the services so authorized may include, but need not be restricted to, technical advice regarding the drafting of legislation and the establishment of administrative and judicial machinery and appropriate services in such matters of fundamental importance as education, subject to arrangements within existing agreements with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other competent specialized agencies."

LIBRARY E A / BIBLIOTHÈQUE A E



3 5036 01046073 4

