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Statement by Mrs. H.H. Steen, Canadian Representative  
on the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)  
Committee on Friday, October 21, 1960.

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman:

In my statement on Monday, I reserved my right to comment on the draft resolution on low-cost housing. I have not exercised that right until now since it was my expectation that some substantial amendments might be made to it. I should now like to give my Delegation's position on this important resolution.

It is my Delegation's belief that in United Nations activities, housing and community facilities should have great emphasis, and that United Nations action should complement the activities of Member States concerned in reviewing their housing requirements and utilizing their own material and financial resources.

We shall, therefore, support this draft resolution as amended on the suggestion of the distinguished Delegate of the United States. That amendment reflects the need for ECOSOC in its investigation of the question of financing to take into account the financial resources available in the countries concerned, and not only the possibilities of international financing. As regards this latter, it is our understanding that the co-sponsors do not contemplate the establishment of any new international financing programme but that they wish to have ECOSOC investigate possibilities for deriving appropriate financial support from existing



international financial organizations, particularly as international financing of housing outside the United Nations is being undertaken on a growing scale while United Nations sources are limited for this purpose. This point, which the distinguished Delegate of Yugoslavia made clear yesterday, will, no doubt, be borne in mind by the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Chairman, I am no expert on housing or financial questions. However, it seems to me that a country which expects to receive any capital from international financial organizations must first be in a position to apply that capital to optimum effect. The skill in doing so may be lacking in some countries and some form of technical assistance through the United Nations programmes may be required. Operative paragraph two as now amended on the suggestion of the distinguished Delegate of the United Kingdom takes this point into account.

Canada would like to help less-developed countries in their efforts to improve the physical living conditions of people in congested urban areas. We are particularly sympathetic to this requirement since we ourselves are in the process of building for an urban industrial population over a very large geographical area. We also share the experience of many less-developed nations in view of the fact that we do not have a very large population. Our forms of organization to deal with these problems are on a modest scale and therefore comparable to the kind of governmental arrangements that have to be made in other smaller nations.

Visitors interested in housing come to Canada from a good many countries, and we have the impression that their stay is helpful because they are able, without great difficulty, to obtain a comprehensive view of a national organ and local



organs for dealing with housing and the other requirements for building new communities. We would be very pleased to welcome visitors from other countries - both senior officials and younger people in training - for periods of technical instruction in our housing agency.

Countries of comparatively small population, such as Canada, which do not have a great supply of technical personnel to offer for service in other countries can give only limited help through outgoing missions. In such circumstances, we believe that technical resources should be concentrated in a few selected places so that personnel could become familiar with the needs, the economic and social problems and the resources of the country.

A continuing relationship of this kind, between governments and professional people on both sides might be an important step towards a phase of collaboration in the actual production of housing material, components and equipment. As far as possible, of course, housing must be constructed out of the local materials of each country. But the way of putting these to most effective use will usually depend on the introduction of tools, manufacturing processes and assembly apparatus. It is at this stage that an industrialized country such as Canada is most likely to be helpful to a country which has all the raw material at hand but cannot put it into use without the right tools and equipment.

Finally, such collaboration would provide opportunities to share experiences in the "staging" of large construction projects. In this regard, there are skills available in my country which should be useful at this stage because so much of our national growth has involved planting a civilization in the wilderness.



Mr. Chairman, as I have said before, my Delegation is deeply interested in the question of the status of women and we wish to encourage any measures which will assist their advancement in developing countries.

I should like to say that my Delegation welcomes the constructive suggestions made by the distinguished Delegates of Cambodia and Liberia concerning the Polish amendment to the draft resolution on United Nations Assistance for the Advancement of Women in Developing Countries.

We shall support the suggested amendment which would incorporate the hope expressed in the two texts of operative paragraph one, namely, that Member States will take full advantage of existing United Nations programmes and that the United Nations and its specialized agencies will direct their existing programmes to a greater extent to improving the status of women.

As for the second Polish amendment to delete "in connection with this study", it is our understanding that the co-sponsor had in mind that any action to be taken under operative paragraph two would be determined by the outcome of the study undertaken by the Secretary-General on the need for and the possibilities of further United Nations assistance in this field. We therefore are not in a position to support this Polish amendment.

Thank you.

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