

STATEMENT BY THE ICSW ON THE REAPPRAISAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMME*

AS members of the Commission know, the International Conference of Social Work is an independent, non-governmental, non-sectarian organization whose major purpose is to provide an international forum for the discussion of problems and issues related to social welfare and social policy. Since our concerns cover the entire social field, all the items on the Commission's agenda are of interest to us. In view of this, we trust you will have no objection if we refer to other subjects while discussing primarily the reappraisal of the UN social service programme, since this seems preferable to making several brief statements.

First of all, we would like to comment on two references to questions of semantics that are presented in the documents before the Commission. These matters are sometimes brushed aside as mere "quibbling over words", but I think it is obvious from the discussion in this and past sessions of the Commission that some of our most serious difficulties arise when we use the same words but are quite obviously talking about different concepts. We are certainly aware of this as a major obstacle to real understanding and communication in the worldwide meetings of our organization.

The problem is raised with regard to the term "social planning" in the preface to the report on "Methods of Determining Social Allocations", where it is pointed out that the term "social" is sometimes used with reference to *objectives* and at other times with reference to *methods*. It is also discussed in the introduction to the document on "Administrative Aspects of Social Planning", where a distinction is made between social planning in relation to *social action* and social planning in relation to *economic planning*.

The international Working Party which met prior to our Conference in Athens last September endeavoured to clarify the concept of social planning and came up with the following statement, which greatly facilitated the discussions during the Conference sessions:

"Social planning conveys two aspects of development which are not necessarily antithetic to each other. One aspect deals with *social policy* with regard to development planning as a whole, laying down social norms and values for the distribution and consumption of the wealth created by economic development. The other aspect deals with *sectoral (functional) plan-*

ning of what are called social services, such as health, education, housing, social welfare, social security, etc. Both these are legitimate spheres of social planning since the consequences of economic and technological development can work for the good of man or can prove deleterious to his physical, mental and moral health."

"Even though social planning is closely interrelated with economic planning, in a national development plan, it has considerable autonomy in its sectoral aspects, after the fundamental objectives have been fixed."

Secondly, as an organization deeply involved in problems of communication across national boundaries, we welcome the statement in the report by the Secretary-General on the Reappraisal of the UN Social Service Programme that the UN intends in the future to use the terms "social welfare" and "social welfare programme" where previously "social service" has been employed. We are in complete agreement that the term "social welfare" is more widely understood and more commonly used in different parts of the world to describe the substantive area and activities, and we are confident that this change will facilitate international communication and understanding.

Turning now to the Secretary-General's proposals for action with regard to the reappraisal, we would like to comment on five of them in the order in which they are presented in the document:

1. We agree that many of the human needs and social problems with which social welfare is concerned relate directly to broad developmental processes. Believing that one of these which is most in need of study and analysis is urbanization, we have selected for our next biennial worldwide meeting, to be held in Washington in September, 1966, the theme "URBAN DEVELOPMENT — IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WELFARE". It is our hope that from the study process which will take place in advance in our member countries and the international interchange that will occur at the Conference itself, there will emerge findings and, hopefully, guidelines concerning the challenge and opportunities urbanization presents for social welfare and the new and changing responsibilities it entails.

*This statement was presented to the United Nations Social Commission during the course of the 16th session held in May, 1965 at UN Headquarters in New York.

2. If we learned anything from our 1964 Conference it was the truth of the statement that further attention needs to be given to the study and refinement of methodology and procedures for effective social welfare planning. Not only is knowledge lacking about social planning, broadly defined, but the social welfare sector must develop methods for determining the costs of social welfare programmes, for forecasting needs, for setting priorities and making allocations, and for assessing the effectiveness of programmes as a basis for future planning. This is a clear responsibility of the social welfare field and is a subject to which the International Conference plans to devote greater attention and on which it hopes to be able to make a contribution.
3. We have become increasingly aware of the closely related need for more intensive work in the area of social welfare research, including methodology and procedures. We are, therefore, attempting to secure information about research in this field that is being conducted in various parts of the world, and it is our plan to give considerable time at our 1966 Conference to reports on both the findings and the methodology of those research projects that appear to be of most significance from an international point of view.
4. The need for citizen participation in national development is something of which we have long been aware and with which we have been concerned at each of our biennial Conferences. The report of the pre-Conference Working Party which met last year in Greece contains this interesting and very specific statement on the subject with reference to social planning.

"The participation of citizens, groups and various organizations in the elaboration and carrying out of a plan, directly or indirectly through elected deliberative or consultative bodies, is not only a question of preserving freedom and democracy, or preventing usurpation of power by the planners.

"It is also a question of efficiency, especially in the social field, where collecting accurate data, pertinent forecasting, making rational choices, and operational programming are more difficult to perform than in technical or economic activities. The participation of individuals and groups brings an amount of relevant information, which very often would be difficult and expensive to collect through other means and especially through sys-

tematic investigations. Furthermore, their reactions to a plan may well be a most useful corrective."

5. We concur entirely with the emphasis in the Secretary-General's report on the importance of training, including the need for expansion of training facilities for social welfare personnel at varying levels. Because we are aware that this is essential for the development of needed social welfare programmes and services, we have decided that all questions dealt with at our next Conference on "Urban Development" will be studied from the point of view, among others, of the specific implications for training and education of personnel in social welfare.

When the governing body of the International Conference met last September, we were aware that the UN social welfare programme would be a major item on the agenda of this session of the Commission. We therefore devoted considerable time to a review of the present situation and future prospects and adopted a policy statement, which was officially transmitted in November 1964 to the Secretary-General, the heads of all missions to the United Nations and the members of the Social Commission. At this time we would merely like to call your attention to that part of the statement which is relevant to the discussion of administrative and organizational plans at the end of the Secretary-General's report, as follows:

"A strong focal point for social welfare at the intergovernmental level is essential. We hope that the organizational unit would be very clearly defined in the UN to give it international visibility. A well-staffed unit is essential to give competent leadership on policy and programme development in a field so vital to political stability and economic growth."

In our opinion, a strong social welfare organ can serve many purposes, and we believe the list of functions contained in our statement could provide a basis for evaluating various organizational proposals. What is needed is a structure which will do the following:

1. Serve as the focus for cooperation with the many governmental and nongovernmental agencies in this field.
2. Establish a clear-cut point of contact for cooperation with other sectors of the social field — health, labor, education, etc.
3. Bring together the growing research in social welfare for application on a world-wide basis.

4. Develop policy recommendations on social welfare for consideration of governments.
5. Consider intercountry social problems and promote arrangements for intercountry social welfare services.
6. Provide guidance on administration of Advisory Social Welfare Services and recommend criteria related to current needs."

Our organization welcomes the proposal of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Social Welfare to hold a congress of Ministers of Social Welfare and their senior advisors on social welfare. We believe this would provide a valuable and needed channel of communication for individuals dealing with common problems and would at the same time serve to focus worldwide attention — both in the United Nations and in the member countries — on the role of social welfare in national development. We are pleased to offer our cooperation and the facilities of the International Con-

ference of Social Work in preparing for such a congress if we can be of assistance.

In conclusion, we welcome the view of the Secretary-General that the major directions of the UN social welfare programme during the last five years "afford a promise of significantly increasing the contribution of this field to the over-all programme of the Development Decade and, likewise, to national development programmes in developing countries." We, too, believe that with the emergence today of a broader understanding and consensus concerning the role of social welfare as a component, as well as a consequence, of national development, attention should now be directed toward formulating a more positive United Nations policy in this field. Recognizing, as stated by the Secretary-General, that "such a policy must be, perhaps above all, completely flexible and nondoctrinaire," we wish to take this opportunity to offer our organizational resources to assist in this effort in any appropriate and to assure the Commission of our desire to support the United Nations in its endeavours to develop a frame of reference for future action in the social welfare field.

