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SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

Special International Sessions of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science.

This is an extract of the resolutions of the International Seminar held by the SLAAS

Preamble

An International Seminar on Scientific and Technological Co-operation among the Non-aligned Countries organized by the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) was held at the Hotel Lanka Oberoi in Colombo from June 30th to July 5th, 1976.

This International Seminar was inaugurated on June 30th by Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power & Highways was also present together with a representative gathering of delegates and other distinguished visitors.

34 foreign delegates from 18 different countries together with about 150 local scientists participated in the Seminar. The following countries were represented: Algeria, Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Qatar, Sudan, Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

The general objectives of this seminar were:

1. To pose the common problems in the fields of science and technology that we in the Non-aligned countries face.
2. To discuss the strategies that we are developing for tackling these problems.
3. To set up mutually beneficial channels of communication for:
 - * the sharing of scientific and technological research and experience;
 - * the exchange of information and materials;
 - * the interchange of technical personnel between the Non-aligned countries,
 - * the establishment of institutions and formulation of strategies for co-ordination.

Working committees examined the common problem of the Non-aligned countries in various areas under the broad topics—Food, Agriculture, Industries, Physical Planning, Health and Education. A number of papers were presented and discussed in each committee and reports were drawn up embodying conclusions from these discussions. These reports were examined by representative committees which prepared a draft summary embodying their recommendations for the final plenary session on July 5th. After discussion and amendment at this session the final summary and recommendations embodying resolutions to be tabled at the forthcoming summit conference in August was adopted. (See below for detailed recommendations).

This resolution included a mandate for the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science to prepare a Programme of Action based on the findings of this seminar in collaboration with the participating countries before the 33rd Annual Sessions of the Association to be held in December 1976.

Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs and Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister for Housing and Construction were present at the concluding session. At the concluding session delegates from Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Qatar, Sudan, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and Zambia presented short addresses on the seminar.

Extracts from the summary and recommendations

1 The International Seminar took cognisance of and endorsed the recommendations of the earlier meeting of the specialists from Non-aligned countries in New York and Algiers, especially the establishment of a Centre for Co-operation in Science and Technology.

2 The Seminar also reiterated that Scientific and technological co-operation between the Non-aligned countries should be designed to promote independence and self-reliance in each nation and should be based on friendship, equality and mutual benefit.

3 The scientists and technologists of the Non-aligned countries, taking into account the progress of science and technology, leading to man's mastery over nature, and the possibility of its utilisation for development, reaffirm their national and human aspirations for an authentic, scientific and technological revival, inspired by their heritage, guided by their creative capabilities, and for the welfare instead of exploitation as heretofore, of their nations and peoples.

4 They also wish to declare that they are against the misuse of science and the exploitation of the difficulties of the Non-aligned countries by the imperialists for quick profits; for the domination of one nation over another and for purposes of war.

Science policy

5 For the effective utilisation of science and technology it would be necessary for the Non-aligned countries to work out their policies and to think out their strategies in consonance with their principles and to suit their social, political and economic goals. In view of their limited resources and the immensity of the task facing them, they should strive to build up their own indigenous self-reliant scientific and technological capabilities, making

policies and strategies for an effective utilisation of resources, personnel and expertise of member countries, and organising joint programmes of research and development. To this end, policies should be developed for the rational utilisation of natural resources and technology, to suit conditions in Non-Aligned countries.

To make these policies effective and to implement the programme, which may emerge, it would be desirable to:

- (i) establish central institutions of the Non-Aligned countries to develop common strategies and to co-ordinate activities;
- (ii) effectively utilise where appropriate, the existing centres of research, established in Non-Aligned countries, to study the problems of science, technology and development and to co-ordinate their activities for common objectives;
- (iii) establish an information centre in each member country using existing facilities if appropriate, to serve as a storehouse of information on all aspects of science and technology, in order to make information available to member countries and thereby create a network and channels for the collection processing and dissemination of information; the channels should include a journal for science and technology in the Non-Aligned and other developing countries;
- (iv) establish training centres among Non-Aligned countries to meet specific needs and requirements in different areas of science and technology;
- (v) plan joint programmes of research and development on problems of common interest and utilise U.N. Agencies where appropriate for this purpose and promote bilateral and multilateral agreements;
- (vi) establish special agreements on standardisation and specifications of raw materials, components and manufactured goods and also patents, licensing fees, royalty payments, and utilisation of results of research;
- (vii) develop machinery for effectively evaluating and controlling by collective action or otherwise, the operations of transnational corporations, with regard to processing and export of raw materials, import of know-how and exploitation of natural resources;
- (viii) utilise where appropriate, the expertise and the trained, scientific, technical and other personnel available in the Non-Aligned countries to effectively contribute to the development of member states;
- (ix) establish special panels on science and technology and organise conferences to study in detail specific problems of vital interest to the Non-Aligned countries and to suggest possible plans of action for rational utilisation of land, water, marine and other environmental resources;

- (x) make every endeavour to stop the exploitation of the scientific and technological man-power of the non-Aligned countries by the developed world and to stem the brain drain;

The participants at the Seminar felt that the beginning of co-operation and its further promotion among the Non-Aligned countries is to further the struggle against imperialist domination and fight for economic independence and self reliance.

Specific recommendations in different areas of science & technology

The working committees of the Seminar discussed the various dimensions of the problems facing the Non-Aligned countries in Scientific and Technological development and co-operation and put forward the following recommendations:

Industry

- (a) transfer of technology among the member states be developed on a barter basis;
- (b) non-renewable resources to be conserved through control of exports and through promoting local and regional processing facilities;
- (c) small decentralised production units to be established;
- (d) transnational and other foreign controlled industries be effectively evaluated and controlled for the benefit of the host countries;
- (e) special steps to be taken to develop appropriate technology in the member countries.

Education

- (a) an educated people is the greatest and most valuable resource for scientific development and education must be totally integrated in the community in which it is based;
- (b) the establishment of a book exchange pool on a barter basis;
- (c) the exchange of curricular materials, laboratory and research equipment;
- (d) research into traditional structures;
- (e) the education of women, a human potential hitherto under-utilised for scientific and technological development;
- (f) the establishment of a man-power pool with surplus skills from Non-Aligned countries to serve the needs of member states;
- (g) the establishment and joint sponsorship of institutions for training and higher education to serve the common needs of Non-Aligned countries.

Physical Planning

- (a) to distinguish between renewable and non-renewable resources and to fully develop and utilise human and natural resources including bio, solar, wind, micro-hydro and other forms of energy for improving the standards of living and quality of life of the people;

- (b) emphasis be given to the rural sector in planning human settlements taking advantage of the empirical knowledge available in the village, and the potentialities of rural environment to be inculcated in the youth;
- (c) the process of planning should include economic, physical and environmental considerations and the implementation of plans should be fully assessed in all aspects;
- (d) a code of cultural ethics, concerning ancient city centres in town and country planning, should be adopted, and the recommendations of UNESCO Resolution 30, Yogyakarta Conference December 1973 be implemented;
- (e) standards be established for land space and expenditure for individual households and other buildings;
- (f) mass transport be developed in preference to individual transport using sources of energy other than fossil fuels;
- (g) the conservation, management and utilisation of water resources should be encouraged;
- (h) the natural eco-systems should be protected;
- (i) in the measurement of performance and viability, in place of only internalised profitability concepts, due regard be given to social costs and future benefits, both short term and long-term;
- (j) tourism in Non-Aligned countries should not be developed to produce enclaves for the rich nations.

Other Recommendations

The Seminar resolved that:

- (i) consideration be given by the host country of the next Non-Aligned Summit Conference to convening a few weeks before the Summit Conference, a meeting of scientists and technologists of the Non-Aligned countries;
- (ii) Non-Aligned countries play an active role in the organisation and work of the UN conference on the application of science and technology to development which is scheduled for 1979 and recommends that they act together for the convening of this conference at an earlier date;
- (iii) all member states of the United Nations withhold scientific and technological co-operation and assistance to racist and expansionist states such as Azania (South Africa) Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Israel;
- (iv) The Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that these recommendations are presented by the Government of Sri Lanka and form a subject of discussion at the Summit Conference in Colombo, in August 1976;
- (v) The Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) be given a mandate to draw up a PROGRAMME OF ACTION in collaboration with scientists and technologists of the Non-Aligned Countries, in accordance with the deliberations of this International Seminar, according to methods to be discovered and worked out in detail in the period before the Annual Sessions of the SLAAS to be held in Colombo during December, 1976.

One of Lyndon Johnson's old favourites was the story about how the Pennsylvania Railroad used to test each applicant for a District Engineer. The first question the supervisor asked was, "What would you do if you saw two trains coming at each other on a single track at 60 miles an hour?"

One applicant thought about it for a while, then said, "I'd go home and get my brother".

"Why would you do that?" the boss asked.

He replied, "My brother ain't never seen a train wreck".

Reader's Digest—April 1976

A gang of county-road repairmen were way out in the country to fix a road when they discovered they had left their shovels back in town. They phoned the county engineer to report their plight.

"I'll send the shovels out right away", said the engineer. "Meanwhile, lean on each other".

Reader's Digest—May 1976