

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

Department of Public Information

Havana, Cuba

Press Release ITO/204
22 March 1948

Advance Text
Hold for Release
Check against delivery

Speech by the Head of the Delegation of Venezuela
before the final Plenary Session

Mr. President, Gentlemen:

In making, on behalf of the delegation of Venezuela, a final statement on the work of the Conference, it is my first duty to express the satisfaction felt by Venezuela that our arduous and prolonged labours have led us at last to agreement. Venezuela's ardent faith in the justice and expediency of seeking peaceful international solutions to the grave problems confronting humanity meant that, not even during the most difficult periods of the Conference, did my country doubt the possibility of reaching agreement through mutual sacrifices and concessions made by each country to the point of view of the remainder.

It can be said with justice that although we have not achieved all that we desired, without the spirit of understanding towards the interests of others and towards conflicting views shown by all the delegations, we would never have been able to raise the well-balanced structure which we have completed and which will have the privilege of being known as the Charter of Havana.

In spite of the invaluable guiding lines laboriously laid down by our predecessors in London and Geneva, whose valuable contribution I am pleased to acknowledge, the Conference has had to prolong its work far beyond the time originally laid down. The fundamental cause of this prolongation has been the difficulty of finding a point of balance between, on the one hand, the imperative need of the young or under-developed countries to safeguard their right to give protection, at once reasonable and adequate, to their nascent economic development, and on the other hand, the desirability, given pre-eminence in the Geneva Draft, of freeing international trade from the barriers hampering its expansion which have been steadily growing throughout the last thirty years.

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In many ways the text we are about to sign gives fuller recognition than the Geneva Charter to the fact that freedom of international trade, although entirely justified in principle, must not be rated so highly as to obstruct the growth of undeveloped economies and prevent the inhabitants of these countries from attaining a more satisfactory standard of living.

From every point of view it would be too much to say, and I do not intend to take the responsibility of doing so, that in the Charter as it stands the countries with young economies have seen the fulfillment of all their hopes for revisions in the Geneva text. Let it suffice to say that the Charter does not wholly and directly answer our hope that, here in Havana, specific and well-ordered rules might be laid down, making it possible for the Organization to co-operate in a positive way in the realization of the plans for development of the young or economically undeveloped countries. I wanted to refer in a clear and unequivocal way to this fundamental deficiency in the text we have established, for two reasons, both of them constructive. First, I wanted to underline the capital importance of the Resolution which is designed partly to fill this gap. Secondly, I wanted to emphasize the immediate and urgent necessity for the provisional Executive Committee and the Interim Commission, working within the terms of reference of this Resolution, to dedicate their greatest efforts to drawing up additional regulations which will make it possible for us to complete the Charter in such a way that its text includes regulations relating to the principles of full employment and economic development, which are as extensive and meticulous as those devoted to international trade.

As regards the reservation made by my delegation, I wish on behalf of Venezuela formally to withdraw them. We are taking this step not because we have changed our minds regarding the provisions in question, but because, on the one hand, we are animated by that spirit of international conciliation which Venezuela has always maintained, and because, on the other, we are determined to remove any misapprehension to the effect that in making reservations only on certain points, we find the rest of the Charter wholly satisfactory. It is sufficient to note the fact that in order to contribute to the success of the conciliatory efforts of the Co-ordinating Committee, we are making concessions on fully justifiable points of view which we had resolutely supported in fraternal collaboration with the other Republics of Latin America.

Mr. President:

I do not want to conclude without expressing my gratitude to the Government and people of Cuba for their magnificent hospitality during these four months; our heavy labours, and the difficulties which we had to overcome are already old memories, and in our minds only remains the pleasure afforded by our stay in Cuba and the daily contact with the eminent representatives
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of friendly countries, who, together with us, have shared the honour of drawing up the Havana Charter. Without the friendly co-operation of all the delegations, without the judicious direction of the President of the Conference and the Chairmen of the Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties, we would not have achieved this well-balanced result.

I do not forget the staff of the Secretariat and the translation services whose hard work has greatly facilitated our task, and I wish to extend my gratitude to them also.
