

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE & EMPLOYMENT  
Department of Public Information  
Havana, Cuba

HOLD FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

Press Release ITO/25  
25 November 1947

ADDRESS OF FRANCESCO COPPOLA D'ANNA OF THE  
ITALIAN DELEGATION BEFORE PLENARY MEETING OF  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND  
EMPLOYMENT (Time of Delivery to be announced later.)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Italian Government has gladly accepted the invitation received from the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to take part in this Conference, not only because it fully approves the purposes pursued, but also because no country has perhaps a greater interest than Italy in the recovery and development of international trade.

Imports and exports are undoubtedly of value to all countries in so far as they contribute to secure the best and most economical use of productive forces and consequently help to raise real income and improve the standard of life of the peoples. But they represent an absolute necessity for a country like Italy which because of her dense population and the many difficulties she encounters in placing her people abroad, cannot do without steady development of her industrial activities while at the same time she lacks the essential raw materials and must therefore import them from abroad, along with a certain quantity of the foodstuffs she needs, and in order to pay for these imports she must be able to rely on an ample flow of exports.

The Italian Government has already given proof with its well known initiatives, of its willingness to foster the development of international trade and to establish more close relations among the various countries.

It is just because she is so vitally interested in the attainment of the aims this Conference has in view that Italy deeply regrets that she has not been able to make her contribution to the drafting of the Charter of Trade and Employment which the Conference is called to examine and approve.

( MORE )

While the aims set forth in the first article of the Charter can be accepted without discussion, it would not seem impossible that ways and means better suited for securing them might be suggested in the general interest.

The Italian Delegation therefore welcomes the opportunity for submitting some suggestions in a spirit of constructive collaboration feeling sure that these suggestions will be taken into consideration in drafting the final proposal for the Charter.

In the opinion of the Italian Delegation, the first task of the Conference would be to establish and enforce some general principle to be observed in the delicate and most important field of commercial and economic relations between countries; the principle, for instance, that no Government, in order to protect its own interests, can inflict unfair injury on another. Actually the significance of this principle is very extensive, because we should consider as an unfair injury to a country not only the harm caused to it by such positive action as, for instance, limiting its opportunities of access to one or other markets, but also the negative harm caused it by the attitude of another Government which, without just cause, should refuse to collaborate in promoting world production, trade and consumption.

In the opinion of the Italian Delegation the attainment of the aims set forth in Article 1 of the draft Charter of Trade and Employment would be best assured by drawing up a code of these principles, and deferring to a qualified judicial organ all controversies relating to their alleged violation.

It would be possible in so doing to avoid excessive interference in the practical line of conduct followed by the various governments, to which should be left a large measure of freedom in selecting the best means for settling the problems they are constantly called upon to face.

(MORE)

The attention of the Italian Delegation has moreover been attracted by certain problems of primary importance on which the Preparatory Committee either did not succeed or did not see fit to take up a firm stand, and therefore has merely proposed alternative solutions. This is the case first of all of the question of fixing the votes to which each Government would be entitled at the Conference, and of that of the allocation of the seats on the Executive Council. The Italian Delegation is of the opinion that the sound principle of equality shall be equitably adjusted to the need of taking into consideration the differences in the economic importance of the various countries. It expects, moreover, that in the case of Italy consideration will be given to her very special economic and demographic conditions.

The question of the treatment to be meted out to those countries which either do not enter the ITO or which, for some reason or other, may see fit to withdraw from it, is one deserving of special attention. Here again the Preparatory Committee has limited itself to proposing alternative solutions. Two of these are however of such a nature as to cause serious embarrassment to more than one country desirous of acquiring membership in the ITO, as by so doing they would find themselves bound to take discriminatory measures in their trade with non-member countries. But in any case, the mere fact of having to renounce active trade relations with countries which should fail to avail themselves of their right to enter the ITO and with those, which, after entering, might see fit to withdraw, would give rise to grave loss and would therefore be a serious hindrance to a country desirous of membership in the said organization.

(MORE)

The composition of the Committee on Customs Tariffs also gives rise to serious apprehensions, and so does the character of its decisions, against which the Charter as now drafted provides no possibility of appeal.

Both at its first and at its second session the Preparatory Committee of this Conference has introduced marked improvements in the original project, for which it is entitled to receive due credit. The debates which took place in that Committee proved very valuable for assuring a fuller understanding of the existing realities with which we have to deal, and of the problems deriving therefrom. The Italian Delegation is animated by an earnest desire to make its modest contribution to this clarification, so that the Charter of Trade and Employment this conference is called upon to adopt may be devised along the best possible lines and may have the possibility of securing the aims it is pursuing.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~