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SPEECH BY MR. D. CHRISTIE TAIT, REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

21 NOVEMBER 1947

Mr. President and Delegates:

It is my privilege to bring to the Conference greetings and good will from the Director-General of the International Labour Organization and to express his sincere hope that the Conference will be successful in achieving the purposes for which it has met.

I should like to say in the first place how pleased I am that this Conference is meeting in Havana, the city in which the ILO held its Second American Regional Conference in 1939. All those who were present on that occasion have the pleasantest memories of their sojourn in Cuban soil.

The fundamental purpose of the ILO is to raise living standards through agreements among Governments and representatives of employers and of workers on industrial and labour problems, and the ILO is therefore vitally interested in the work of any other body which seeks to achieve the same purpose by other means. We welcome the statement in the preamble of the draft Charter which is submitted for your approval that the work which you are undertaking is based on Article 55 (a) of the Charter of the United Nations which proclaims the importance of attaining higher standards of living, full employment and social progress and development.

I think it is significant that in the draft Charter the statement of purpose and objectives is immediately followed by a chapter in which it is proposed to include certain mutual undertakings in relation to employment, production and effective demand. The amended Constitution of the ILO places the achievement and maintenance of full employment among the aims and purposes for which the ILO should strive, and we are already co-operating with the Economic and Social Council in this field.

In this connection I may perhaps be allowed to refer especially to the Article on Fair Labour Standards in which specific reference is made to the ILO and to say that on this question as on all other questions in Chapter II of the draft Charter the ILO will co-operate fully with the International Trade Organization.

On economic development the ILO also has a role to play, notably in connection with the provision of technical skill by such means as vocational training, the exchange of instructors and trainees, etc. I think the

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American Members of the Organization will undoubtedly recall the detailed discussion of vocational training in relation to industrialization which took place at the American Regional Conference in Mexico City in 1946. Since then, a small tripartite committee to consider American regional co-operation in this field has been established and has started to work. Similar discussions have taken place within the last few weeks at the ILO Asian Regional Conference, and the question is also on the Agenda of the Near and Middle East Conference now meeting at Istanbul.

I have no desire, however, to go into any further details. The purpose of my message is general rather than specific. It is to express our pleasure at the progress so far made in drafting a Trade Charter and in actually lowering the barriers of international trade, thereby promoting the raising of living standards throughout the world. We want to help you in your work, and on occasion we may wish to ask the ITO to help us. If the ITO is effectively established as a result of this Conference, the Governing Body of the ILO representing employers and workers as well as Governments will, I am sure, be among the first to offer its congratulations to a new specialized agency and to offer its assistance in the immense task to which you have set your hands.

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