

The question of freedom of association, another item on the agenda, arose from the discussions in the Economic and Social Council at its fourth session (February–March, 1947), when the World Federation of Trade Unions and the American Federation of Labour submitted memoranda seeking guarantees for the exercise of trade-union rights. The matter was referred by the Council to its Human Rights Commission and to the International Labour Organization. The 1947 conference discussed the comprehensive report, produced as a matter of urgency by the Office, and was unanimous in adopting resolutions which set out the principles involved in the right of association and in deciding that action should be taken for the adoption of appropriate conventions at the 1948 conference. The conference also requested the governing body to arrange for a close examination of the question of establishing international machinery for safeguarding trade-union rights. The decisions of the ILO were approved by the Economic and Social Council at its fifth session (July–August, 1947) and subsequently by the General Assembly.

Apart from collaboration on these matters, the Departments of External Affairs and Labour joined in considering the proposed Convention on Privileges and Immunities, and the relationship of the ILO with the United Nations, other specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The Preparatory Asian Regional Conference of the ILO was held in New Delhi from 27 October to 9 November, 1947. Representatives attending included those countries as far afield as Afghanistan and Pakistan, China and Australia and New Zealand. The conference, the first of its kind to be held by the ILO in this region, was of special interest in view of recent developments in Asia. Mr. Nehru, Prime Minister of India, at the opening session stressed the importance of securing social justice in the present phase of political and social evolution in Asian countries, and also stressed the role of the ILO in assisting those countries in the pursuit of this aim. The conference adopted a number of resolutions dealing with promotion of the aims of the ILO in Asia, covering such matters as social security, employment services, wage policies and conditions of work, rural labour, co-operation, and general economic policies. The first full Asian Regional Conference is scheduled to be held in China in 1949.

Representatives of twenty-six countries, including New Zealand, and of several international organizations attended the Sixth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Montreal, August, 1947), which adopted comprehensive resolutions on international standards for statistics of employment, unemployment and the labour force, the cost of living, and industrial injuries.