

Report on the Fifteenth General Assembly of the International Social Security Association

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THE FIFTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) was held in Washington, D. C., from September 26 through October 3, 1964.¹ The Social Security Administration was host for the meeting, which was the eighth since World War II and the first ever held in the United States. Previous postwar meetings were held biennially until 1958 and have become triennial events since then. The last meeting of the General Assembly was held in Istanbul in 1961.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION

The International Social Security Association was founded in 1927 at Brussels. Originally it was concerned only with the programs of 17 mutual benefit societies in nine European countries covering about 20 million members. Immediately before World War II, ISSA had expanded the scope of its interests to include other forms of social security as well. It did not begin fully to implement this expansion, however, until after the war.

The postwar expansion of ISSA was considerably influenced by wartime declarations of need for expanded social security, such as the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of Philadelphia of the International Labor Organization (ILO). It was also stimulated by the expanded programs of social security in the economically developed nations of the postwar world and by the proliferation of newly independent nations and their yearning for a measure of protection against social insecurity. By the time of its Fifteenth General Assembly, ISSA had grown to be an association of 215 members and 44 associate members in 92 countries. Many of ISSA's associate

members are research or safety institutes that do not actually administer social security programs—a requirement for full membership—or they administer programs but are not permitted by the laws of their countries to become full members.

Although ISSA is an association of institutions and agencies administering social security programs, membership is open to both government and nongovernment institutions, and members represent themselves, not their governments. The members from the United States are the Social Security Administration, the Railroad Retirement Board, and the State Insurance Fund of Puerto Rico, which administers a workmen's compensation program.

The General Assembly, which consists of delegates (not more than five from each member organization), governs the work of ISSA. Sharing the responsibility are the Council, which contains one delegate from each country represented in ISSA, and the Bureau, composed of ISSA's President, Treasurer, and Secretary-General, 14 country representatives, nine permanent committee chairmen, and the two ISSA representatives to the ILO Committee of Social Security Experts.

Since its founding, ISSA has maintained a working relationship with the International Labor Office. Its headquarters are now housed in the ILO headquarters at Geneva, and it receives some financial support from the ILO. About two-thirds of its income, however, is derived from the assessed contributions of members.

Much of the substantive work of ISSA is carried on through nine permanent committees. Each committee is concerned with a particular branch or aspect of social security protection. There are also a number of ad hoc working groups dealing with matters that transcend the division of subject matter among the permanent committees. Finally, ISSA sponsors a number of regional committees representing various geographic regions of the world—at present, America, Asia, and Africa—that deal with matters similar to

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¹ For a description of ISSA, see pages 2-4 of the BULLETIN for September 1964—an International Issue honoring the ISSA meeting.

those dealt with by some of the permanent committees but on a regional basis only.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A General Assembly meeting of ISSA is more than a meeting of delegates to a single deliberative body. It is an occasion when most subjects currently under study by the permanent committees, the ad hoc working groups, and the regional committees are reviewed and discussed, where additional impetus is given to continuing efforts, and where proposed new efforts are evaluated both by members' representatives and by interested observers alike.

The meetings connected with the Fifteenth General Assembly extended over a period of 10 days. In the 2 days preceding the formal opening, five regional committees—two Asian and three African—met for the first time. From its formal opening to its formal closing, the General Assembly met in five plenary sessions to consider an 8-point agenda. The Council held two sessions. Eight of the nine permanent committees also met during the course of the Assembly, each considering a specific agenda.

Almost 500 persons were accredited as delegates or official observers to the conference. They represented members, associate members, and non-members of ISSA in 62 countries and 25 government and nongovernment international organizations. Of the countries whose ISSA members sent representatives, 15 are in the Western Hemisphere, 24 in Europe (6 of them in Eastern Europe), 14 in Africa, 3 in the Middle East, and 5 in the Far East, South Asia, and Oceania.

The General Assembly in its plenary sessions and the permanent committees in their meetings dealt with nearly 30 different projects. In addition, two round tables, one on public relations and the other on the social security press, were conducted as a part of the proceedings. The three African Regional Committees each discussed one topic; of the two Asian Regional Committees, one considered one topic and the other discussed four topics.

The official report of the proceedings of the Assembly will eventually be published by the ISSA Secretariat and will be made available to the public. Some of the papers that were deliv-

ered or discussed and some of the background material, such as members' answers to various questionnaires on which these papers were based, may also be published.

PLENARY SESSIONS

The General Assembly was formally opened on Saturday, September 26, in the main auditorium of the International Conference Suite of the U.S. Department of State. At this meeting, the Assembly elected its officers, selecting Robert M. Ball, U.S. Commissioner of Social Security, as its President. A number of dignitaries were introduced, and addresses were delivered by Anthony J. Celebrezze, U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare; by Harlan Cleveland, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs; and by the President of ISSA, Professor Renato Morelli, of Italy.

Secretary Celebrezze welcomed the delegates and extended to them the greetings of the President of the United States. He reminded them that all forms of social security have but one basic and controlling objective—freedom. "By helping to free people from want, social security releases hopes and aspirations that otherwise would be stifled in a daily struggle for sheer survival. . . . Social security must never be allowed to lose its vitality, its adaptability to change, its commitment to the future. . . . Social security is an investment in the promotion and preservation of human dignity and well-being. It is an investment in prosperity—and more. It is an investment in human freedom. It is an investment in justice. It is—above all—an investment in peace."

Assistant Secretary Cleveland extended greetings to the participants on behalf of the Department of State. He predicted that the war on poverty would be won but raised the question, "After we find personal security, what do we seek from life?" He concluded that "freedom from want can free us for soaring adventures in personal and social creativity—and we Americans are beginning to see that we want personal security merely as a launching pad for adventure." Mr. Cleveland quoted the statement of President Johnson that we are faced with having the power to make this either the best generation in the

history of mankind or the last, and he called upon ISSA to participate in the task of making it the best.

The President of ISSA, Professor Morelli, in his address formally opening the General Assembly, declared that it is legitimate to maintain that ISSA is today representative of all the social security systems now in effect. "Its General Assembly can therefore be considered as a worldwide meeting, the objective of which is to deal with problems relevant to social security." He pointed with pride to the solidarity that now exists on a supranational level, as a result of ISSA's efforts, in the struggle to satisfy in part some of the most immediate material and spiritual needs of the world's population. He expressed the belief that ISSA's work will help lead to universal social solidarity.

DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS IN SOCIAL SECURITY

Professor Morelli's address gave some background on—and underscored the importance of—the major topics that the General Assembly discussed in its four subsequent plenary sessions. The first of these, *Developments and Trends in Social Security*, is a subject reported on regularly at each General Assembly. The report usually covers the 3-year period since the beginning of the year in which the last General Assembly met and is subdivided into three parts: developments and trends generally, developments and trends in various regions of the world, and the efforts being made by 11 international organizations.

The report made to the Fifteenth General Assembly indicated a pattern of both extension and intensification of social security efforts in every region of the world, without regard to the level of economic development of the countries concerned. At the international level, the report found especially noteworthy the technical assistance efforts being made by the ILO in the economically developing countries, the United Nations studies of social services, the efforts of the World Health Organization in organizing and financing medical care, regional efforts in Europe to harmonize national social security legislation, and regional efforts in the Americas to develop a corps of well-trained administrators.

Social Services and Social Security

The social services provided by social security agencies was another major subject considered by the General Assembly, which had before it the report of an ad hoc working group; the Director of the Division of Research and Statistics of the U.S. Social Security Administration, acting as reporter for the group, prepared the report. This subject has been of growing interest to the UN and the ILO since 1959, when they joined in a concerted effort to study it. A preliminary report had been submitted by the same reporter to the Fourteenth General Assembly. After that meeting a questionnaire was circulated to ISSA members, to which 98 members replied.

The report to the Fifteenth General Assembly surveyed the kinds of social services provided by the 73 member institutions that indicated they had some degree of responsibility for one or more of 26 specified services, and it recommended that further studies be undertaken of services provided by institutions in each category of protection.

Partly as a result of this report, two of the permanent committees have already begun working in this area. The Committee on Unemployment Insurance considered a report on social services, provided by unemployment insurance institutes, that emphasized the value of vocational training, vocational rehabilitation, and employment services in minimizing the effects of displacement caused by shifts in labor-market demand. It found as a justification for expenditures on such services the effect they may have in reducing expenditures for unemployment benefits. The Committee on Old-Age, Invalidity, and Survivors Insurance discussed a draft questionnaire on social services provided by old-age insurance institutions. In addition, the Medico-Social Committee and the Committee on Family Allowances touched briefly on this subject in relation to other matters they had under discussion. It is expected that other committees dealing directly with specific forms of social insurance protection will consider the relation of social services to such protection.

Protection of the Self-Employed

Social security protection for the self-employed was the subject of another report considered in

the plenary sessions. The need for such protection was first enunciated in the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia of the ILO. But by the time ISSA first set out to investigate this area, in 1951, little development had occurred. The report, which is a survey of developments, concluded that much has occurred since then, and it recommended further investigation.

The report found that generally the self-employed lack the extent and degree of protection normally provided for employees under most systems and that they are covered by fewer forms of social security. Notably lacking is protection against work accidents, occupational diseases, and unemployment. The report also found that the self-employed, not having an employer to share the cost, usually bear the major financial burden of protection, although occasionally the cost is shared by the State. On the other hand, the report optimistically finds trends toward extension of coverage to more kinds of self-employment, toward increasing participation by the State in financing self-employment protection, and toward improving the quality and quantity of protection provided.

Insurance Against Occupational Diseases

The report of the Permanent Committee on Insurance against Employment Accidents and Occupational Diseases considered the administrative and medical aspects of occupational diseases. Professor Morelli, in his opening address, called attention to the special emphasis given to this topic at international meetings held in Warsaw, Mexico, and London under the auspices of or in cooperation with the ILO and a number of national and regional organizations for the prevention of accidents.

The conclusions presented by the report were that protection against the risk of occupational diseases is essential but that preventive measures are also important. The report further concludes that protection against this risk should go hand in hand with protection against employment accidents, since the two are inseparably related; that greater emphasis should be given to the development of an appropriate medical specialization in the occupational disease field; that compensation should be available to workers who are forced into less remunerative jobs because of occupational

diseases; and that cooperative international safeguards should be established to prevent a worker suffering from an occupational disease from transferring to similar employment in another country and thus further endangering his health and well-being.

Appeals Procedures

Finally, the General Assembly heard a preliminary report on a completely new area of investigation for ISSA: *Appeals Procedures in Social Security*. The investigation on which the report was based found a basic relationship between the type of appeals procedures provided by a social security system and the legal system of the country in which it operates. Some similarity in the appeals procedure of different national systems was noted among countries that could be grouped according to similarity in legal systems. Otherwise, however, the various procedures seem peculiarly adapted to the particular social security system. Professor Morelli predicted that this new inquiry will enable ISSA to engage intensively in the administrative legal discussions on all problems of this kind that constantly face the agencies providing social benefits and services.

PERMANENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

By far the major portion of conference time was devoted to the work of the permanent committees. Of 28 half-day work sessions, the work of the committees consumed 21.

The permanent committees of ISSA, which were established by decisions of the General Assembly, conduct much of their work during the period between Assemblies. As a rule, they meet formally at the same time as the General Assembly to review the progress of their work, plan for future activities, and report on both to the General Assembly.

The committees are ordinarily composed of a number of working members of varying nationalities who, at the time of a General Assembly, are joined at their meetings by other delegates representing their own professional interests or the interests of the members of ISSA they represent. As in most technically oriented international organizations, major responsibilities for the work

of the committees on particular projects devolves on the reporters. The reporters supervise the preparation of questionnaires, the collection and assembling of data, and the preparation of the reports. They also lead the committee discussion and present the conclusions of the committee to the General Assembly. These conclusions, however, are products of the joint efforts of the reporter and those in the committee who represent divergent views. After discussion has taken place in the committee, they form a drafting committee with the committee chairman to formulate the final version of the conclusions for presentation.

As has already been noted, eight of ISSA's permanent committees held formal sessions in conjunction with the Fifteenth General Assembly. These were the Committee of Actuaries and Statisticians (Fourth Meeting), the Committee on Organization and Methods (Fourth Meeting), the Committee on Insurance against Employment Accidents and Occupational Diseases (Second Meeting), the Committee on Mutual Benefit Societies (Seventh Meeting), the Committee on Unemployment Insurance (Eighth Meeting), the Medico-Social Committee (Ninth Meeting), the Committee on Family Allowances (Fourth Meeting), and the Committee on Old-Age, Invalidity, and Survivors Insurance (Second Meeting). Only the Committee on Occupational Risks did not meet.

Ordinarily, ISSA gives official recognition to the importance of an area of study by placing it on the agenda of the General Assembly as a topic for discussion. In addition, an analysis of the agendas of the permanent committees is useful for discovering what aspects of social security are currently topics of major concern to the world's social security institutions. The committee agendas at this conference highlight several topics of this kind—improving the administration of social security systems, improving the effectiveness of old-age pension or benefit programs, and improving protection against the risks of sickness and invalidity, particularly the last of these. The area of family allowances appears to be a topic of growing importance.

Sickness and Invalidity Protection

Increasing the effectiveness of protection against the risks of sickness and invalidity was

considered directly in various ways by three committees and indirectly by a fourth, and it is first on the list of future activities of a fifth committee.

The Medico-Social Committee, whose working group on rehabilitation and evaluation of invalidity also met during the conference, had a larger number of topics on its agenda than any of the other committees. The working group considered two papers, one on evaluation of invalidity and the other on social and economic reintegration of the handicapped, and a draft questionnaire on measures and services designed to promote rehabilitation. Its report calls for social security policy to promote prevention of invalidity and to assume responsibility for rehabilitation and, through it, economic and social reintegration of the handicapped. The report also calls for further study of means and methods used by social security agencies in the evaluation, prevention, and rehabilitation fields.

The Medico-Social Committee itself considered two draft questionnaires, one on the volume and cost of medicines and the other on relations between social security institutes and the medical profession, and one working paper on social security's role in preventive medicine. Its main consideration, however, was on the volume and cost of sickness benefits in kind and cash. The conclusions it presented to the General Assembly on this topic were unreservedly in favor of continuing and broadening the study, entrusting various aspects to additional working groups and other permanent committees, and collaborating with other international organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the ILO, on a continuing basis.

Two of the four topics discussed by the Committee on Old-Age, Invalidity, and Survivors Insurance were concerned with sickness or invalidity protection. One of these was a study of the relationship between the risks of old-age and invalidity. The other was a questionnaire on social services provided by old-age insurance institutions, which placed heavy emphasis on learning about the kinds of geriatric services that are provided.

The report on the administrative and medical aspects of occupational diseases was a major topic of discussion in the Committee on Insurance against Employment Accidents and Occupational Diseases, as well as being on the agenda of the

General Assembly. The conclusions from the report have already been mentioned in relation to the plenary sessions. The committee also circulated a compilation of legislation on occupational diseases in 49 countries and a statistical compilation of occupational diseases.

The Committee on Mutual Benefit Societies touched on the important role that such societies can and, in some countries, now do play in the administration of sickness insurance. This point was discussed in the committee's report on how existing mutual benefit societies, which are among the oldest forms of social security, complement the modern compulsory forms of social insurance and how they can assist in their effective administration.

The Committee of Actuaries and Statisticians has listed first among its proposed new future activities a study on the actuarial and statistical bases of sickness insurance, to be undertaken in collaboration with the Medico-Social Committee.

In addition to these permanent committee activities in the sickness and invalidity fields, it should be noted that all three regions sustain medico-social committees. The American Regional Medico-Social Committee has been in existence since 1960 and has been intensively studying the volume and cost of sickness, maternity, and employment injury benefits in kind and cash, as well as the quality of medical services in the less developed countries of the Western Hemisphere. Conclusions and resolutions on the work thus far accomplished by this committee were reported to the General Assembly. The Asian and African committees met for the first time at this conference, and their work is discussed later in this article.

Improving Effectiveness of Old-Age Pensions and Benefits

The effectiveness of old-age pension and benefit programs was a subject of major concern to two of the permanent committees during the conference. Among the topics discussed by the Committee on Old-Age, Invalidity, and Survivors Insurance were (1) problems of the retirement age and related conditions to be met for receipt of old-age benefits and (2) the investment of reserve funds.

The discussion on the first topic was led by the Director of the Division of Program Evaluation and Planning of the U.S. Social Security Administration, who reported the findings of a survey of 57 social security systems. This survey indicated that more than three-fifths of the programs reporting required some degree of retirement as a condition for the receipt of benefits and gave cost as the major reason for having this requirement. About half the programs with retirement conditions reported that there was public sentiment for changes in these conditions. The report concluded that, although payment of benefits to persons who work beyond retirement age is a controversial issue everywhere, the question is essentially one of cost versus the desirability of encouraging older persons to continue in the labor market.

On the second topic, investment of reserve funds, the report concluded that the question is one of national economic and social policy in the light of existing legal and practical possibilities.

The Committee of Actuaries and Statisticians considered a report by the Chief Actuary of the U.S. Social Security Administration, acting as reporter for the committee, concerning the financial repercussion of changes in mortality and wage rates. The report concluded that a thorough analysis of these factors as they relate to cost estimates is necessary to keep a program financially sound and to keep the benefit structure up to date and in harmony with social and economic developments.

The committee also had before it a study on actuarial problems arising from the automatic adaptation of social security benefits to the level of wages. Although the conclusions based on this report are somewhat technical, as a whole they reflect what is considered to be the importance of some sort of pension adjustment to the general wage level and the concurrent need to accomplish such an adjustment on the basis of sound actuarial advice. A continuation of the study of this topic was recommended.

The existing regional organizations have not as yet dealt extensively with the problems of pensions. The reason may be that, in light of the need to extend immediate and effective social protection to entire populations in less developed countries, the problems of old age become secondary.

Improving Administration

The Committee on Organization and Methods at its meeting discussed two reports, one an interim report on the cost of administration and the other a provisional report—the result of a survey of ISSA members—on mechanization and automation in administration. At the recommendation of the committee, the General Assembly established a working group to (1) continue, by drawing up a list of operations, a study of costs that should be taken into consideration, and (2) make clear what is meant by administrative costs and establish the items of which such costs are made up.

The General Assembly also decided at the committee's urging to have the mechanization study pursued further through (1) an examination of the guiding principles for inviting tenders from manufacturers of data-processing equipment, (2) a study of how the equipment chosen should be introduced and cyclically operated, and (3) a study of how technical staffs should be trained and how management and administrative staffs should be initiated. Similar directions are being followed by organization and methods committees in the African, Asian, and American regions.

Two rather specialized aspects of administration were treated by the Committee on Unemployment Insurance. The committee presented its conclusions directly to the General Assembly from a report that it had adopted in 1963 on administrative problems arising from the relationship between unemployment insurance benefits and benefits granted by other branches of social security. These conclusions emphasize the problems of controlling concurrent benefit payments when a worker qualifies simultaneously for unemployment benefits and for invalidity, sickness, or old-age benefits, and they review various measures being taken to protect a worker's rights under one of the three long-term benefit programs while his current connection with the labor force is questionable. In addition, the committee discussed as part of its agenda the administrative problems of partial unemployment. It concluded that, although programs protecting against this risk are desirable, the combined efforts and good faith of worker, employer, and government are necessary to overcome the variety of administrative problems that arise.

Family Allowances

The program of family allowances is a relatively new form of social security, whose major development has come about since 1940. The Committee on Family Allowances heard a report on the relationship between family allowances programs and social services indicating that the development of such relations is in no way a general tendency. The report concluded that such relationships develop only in response to local needs, historical backgrounds, and the national policies of the countries involved and that desired social objectives can be approached in varied ways.

From the other reports considered by the committee, it is evident that family allowances is an area of growing importance even though in some countries where social security is highly developed, such as the United States, it has not taken hold. A study of the application of international bilateral and multilateral agreements relating to family allowances legislation, which has been launched by the committee, evidences the growing interest that countries with operating programs have in simplifying administration in relation to payments abroad to the families of migrant laborers. This is a matter of growing importance between European Common Market countries and some of the other European countries with labor surpluses.

Press and Public Relations

Public relations and public information in social security and the social security press were the subjects of two round tables that generated considerable interest at the conference. This was the first time that these topics had been discussed at an ISSA General Assembly.

The first of the round tables, in considering a report prepared for ISSA by the Information Officer of the U.S. Social Security Administration, emphasized the public's right to know their rights and responsibilities under social security programs and the means and resources that social security agencies can use to inform the public. Four interrelated elements received major attention: what the people need to know or want to know; groups and organizations interested in

social security; the major mass media and person-to-person contacts; and the administrative resources needed by a public information activity.

The second round table discussion dealt with the rapid increase in the number of technical periodicals on social security that has followed the rapid development of social security programs the world over. The report that was considered recommended the initiation of a systematic study of the social security press with respect to policy, production, and editorial levels, to promote more effective publications in developed and developing countries alike.

In connection with the discussion on the social security press, during the conference the U.S. Social Security Administration entered into an agreement to give financial and advisory support to ISSA in launching a Social Security Abstracting Service. The service would be designed to abstract books and articles on social security in whatever language they appear and to publish these abstracts in major languages—particularly English. The aim is to make digests of important literature on social security readily available to readers who need them for technical and research purposes but do not have the necessary language facilities to read such literature in the original. This service—which it is expected will eventually become self-supporting—promises to be an important addition to the program of international technical cooperation in the social security field that is the aim of ISSA.

REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

One of the more significant aspects of the Fifteenth General Assembly was the formal initiation of regional committees for Asia and Africa—a move that had been under consideration for some time. The African Regional Committees on Family Allowances, on Organization and Methods, and on Medico-Social Problems and the Asian Regional Committees on Organization and Methods and on Medico-Social Problems—each met for the first time during the 2 days preceding the formal opening of the conference. The African nations represented on the committees were all former French Overseas Territories, most of whom had attained their independence fairly recently. The Asian group consisted of some older

nations and some that have become independent since World War II. Many of the latter nations have been strongly influenced in their approaches to government and social policy by Great Britain or the United States. This difference in background is not only reflected in the orientation of the national social security programs of the countries participating in these regional committees, but it may influence the direction that each of the regional groups will take.

The African committees' topics of discussion were: (1) a comparative study of family allowances legislation, taking into account the sociological and demographic context of Africa; (2) a study concerning the introduction of sickness insurance schemes within the framework of social security in the continent; and (3) the scientific organization of work in the administration of social security. The Asian committees discussed (1) the minimum size of a program to justify the introduction of specialized machinery and equipment; (2) basic problems of identification of employers and workers; (3) the training of administrative personnel; (4) an introduction to actuarial problems involved in the transition from provident funds to pensions insurance; and (5) prerequisites for the introduction of medical care programs or the expansion of existing ones, with special reference to the use of existing public, private, or voluntary medical facilities and to training medical personnel and increasing their number.

All five committees made plans during their sessions for future work. They will undoubtedly follow the pattern of the American Regional Committees by meeting regularly in the future, independently of the General Assembly and the permanent committees.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In addition to the official business of the General Assembly and the permanent committees, a number of special events were held before, during, and after the proceedings.

For 7 weeks before the conference, the U.S. Social Security Administration in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development conducted an intensive seminar on the organization and administration of social security

programs in the United States for 15 participants from nine countries who were eventually delegates or official observers at the conference. Through discussions with prominent government, labor, and private personalities and visits to the operations of various United States programs, the participants were given some insight into the history, policies, and day-to-day operations of the social security system in the United States. A detailed report of the seminar proceedings will be published shortly.

During the conference, tours were arranged by the Social Security Administration for visits to points of professional interest to the delegates and observers. There were, for example, scheduled visits to the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, just outside Washington; to the Social Security Administration headquarters in Baltimore; to Carroll Manor, a model home for the aged; to the National Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital in Arlington, Virginia; and to local offices of the social security, public welfare, and unemployment insurance programs and the U.S. Employment Service. Many other visits were specially arranged to satisfy professional interests of individual visitors.

During the 2 weeks following the conference, another seminar was conducted for delegates who attended the General Assembly. The U.S. Social Security Administration sponsored this seminar in cooperation with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State, whose visitor program is designed primarily for those leaders and specialists in various fields who are opinion makers in their home countries.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Council of ISSA, which ordinarily meets each time there is a General Assembly, held two sessions, one at the beginning and one at the close of the Fifteenth General Assembly. The Council, as mentioned earlier, is one of ISSA's three gov-

erning bodies. The main business of these meetings consisted of reviewing the finances of ISSA, considering the report of the Secretary-General on future activities, electing ISSA officers for the coming 3 years, and fixing the place of the next General Assembly. The Council reelected Professor Morelli as President, and it decided that the Sixteenth General Assembly would take place in Leningrad in 1967.

The final session of the Council, which took place after the last plenary session at the close of the conference, heard an address by Wilbur J. Cohen, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Mr. Cohen, in calling attention to the growth of social security that has accompanied the economic development of developing nations, stated that "social security is the essence of a worldwide commitment to individuals and their families. . . ." He told the Council delegates that the activities of the Fifteenth General Assembly promise to "bear the fruits of improved social security and greater individual security throughout the world as the coming years unfold. And they will be great and exciting years."

CONCLUSIONS

The Fifteenth General Assembly of ISSA provided an excellent opportunity for delegates and observers from other countries to learn at first hand about the social security system and various other social institutions in the United States. It also gave many specialists in various fields of social security in the United States, who might not otherwise have had the chance, an opportunity to meet with their counterparts from all over the world and to discuss common problems and share the fruit of their experience. In years to come, this General Assembly most assuredly will be looked upon as having played a key role in international cooperation for the technical advancement of social security and in advancing international understanding generally.