

" STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT SARGENT SHRIVER, JR.
DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS "

PEACE CORPS
INFORMATION SERVICES
DIVISION

Concerning inquiries: "To what extent, either in theory or in practice, members of the Peace Corps are working for, controlled by, or guided by agencies or employees of the United Nations? ...etc."

The Peace Corps Act permits the assignment of not more than 125 volunteers -- compared to the 5,000 volunteers we expect to have by August 31, 1962, and an additional 5,000 by August 31, 1963 -- to temporary duty with international organizations and agencies when the Secretary of State determines that such assignments would further the purposes of the Act.

This provision was described by the President last year as one of the ways in which the Peace Corps could effectively serve overseas. It was part of the legislation proposed to Congress last year and approved by four congressional committees and by both Houses. Already this year the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and both the Senate and the House have reaffirmed their support of legislation including this provision.

To date no volunteers have been assigned to any international organization.

However, an agreement has recently been signed with the UN Food and Agricultural Organization under which volunteers could be assigned to work on FAO projects. Volunteers so assigned would be responsible to the FAO only with respect to their work. The volunteers would otherwise be fully responsible to the authority of the Peace Corps.

Furthermore, at the motion of the United States, the UN Economic and Social Council last summer adopted a resolution calling on UN members to consider the use of volunteers in UN-sponsored projects.

To date, no Peace Corps volunteers have been assigned to UN agencies under this resolution because we have insisted that volunteers so assigned not enjoy the privileges and immunities usually enjoyed by regular UN employees.

You may be interested to know that when the United States' proposal was presented to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, only the Soviet bloc voted against the idea.

By making it possible for a very few Peace Corps volunteers to work with UN teams in solving health, education and agriculture problems, the Congress has prompted 20 other governments to indicate an interest in also providing volunteers.

Thus, the American idea of placing volunteers side by side with volunteers from other countries has inspired other nations to cooperate in the exchange of skills and person-to-person international good will and understanding.

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