

tims of a natural disaster be an agenda item for the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in 1972 and that nations set up an international program to develop self-help projects, such as home-building kits.

Many of the meeting's recommendations merely reiterate those of previous conferences and committees. But the significant aspects of this meeting were that it was international and that its recommendations are directed at an existing international organization.

Dr. Charles Richter, professor emeritus of seismology of the California Institute of Technology and a leading earthquake expert, pointed out at the conference that "major earthquake disasters in any one region usually occur at intervals of many years; experience gained may be neglected and forgotten before the next emergency arises." After the San Fernando quake, he noted, there were numerous publicly appointed committees, but "it is doubtful whether there will be sufficient good results to justify the time expended." International cooperation, he believes, may eliminate this problem. "Operation

on the global scale favors more lasting preparedness, preserving what has been learned and applying it at each new occasion."

The San Francisco meeting also brought together for the first time, and on an official basis, governmental and private experts from around the world. Darrell M. Trent, conference co-chairman and deputy director of the White House Office of Emergency Preparedness, told conferees that the North Atlantic Council (the parent body of the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society) had just approved recommendations on mitigation of flood hazards, and is now considering procedures for coordinating disaster assistance activities in general. Both these areas, he pointed out, were subjects of discussions similar to the current one on earthquakes.

The exchange of information that took place at the San Francisco meeting may in itself be valuable. Whether the recommendations produced will be any more effective on an international basis than they have nationally remains to be seen. □

SOCIOLOGY

Updating the Moynihan report

"The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" was the title of a 1965 U.S. Department of Labor report that called for a bold and important change in Federal civil-rights policy. Dr. Daniel P. Moynihan, co-author of the report, attacked Federal legislation (the school desegregation decision of the Supreme Court and the Civil Rights acts of 1964 and 1965) as inadequate. The legislation, he said, provides for liberty but not for equality. Blacks are free to compete in a white society but due to past and present deprivations "equality of opportunity almost insures inequality of results," he reported. "To bring the Negro American to full and equal sharing in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship," Dr. Moynihan concluded, Federal Government programs "should be designed to have the effect, directly or indirectly, of enhancing the stability and resources of the Negro American family."

The Moynihan report, and its emphasis on family stability as a criterion for reshaping Government policy, was overshadowed by events of the day. Dr. Lee Rainwater of Harvard University, speaking last week in New York at a briefing held by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, explained that increasing American activity in Vietnam forced President Johnson to spend a decreasing amount of time and money on domestic problems. This, and the fact

that interpreters of the Moynihan report emphasized its descriptive materials in an attempt to explain the Watts riot, rather than to develop guidelines for new policies, caused the report to lose its impact.

Dr. Rainwater, reviewing social events since 1965, believes that data used in the report, are still valid and useful today. The deterioration of the black family, pointed to by Dr. Moynihan, continues. In 1950, for example, 18.7 percent of black births were illegitimate. At the time of the Moynihan report the figure was up to 25 percent. Dr. Rainwater points out that data for 1968 show that the figure has risen to 31.2 percent. In 1950 78 percent of black families had both parents in the home. In 1970 this figure was down to 70 percent. The other 30 percent were female-headed. In the early 1960's 25 percent of the poor blacks were on welfare; now 48 percent of them are.

These trends, the Moynihan report implied, are central to the race-equality problem. Female dominance and welfare dependency destroy the black man's drive and incentive. Dr. Rainwater, agreeing with this, says he believes it is time the report's findings and recommendations be reevaluated by sociologists and Federal policy makers. If the problem of inequality is not solved, said Dr. Moynihan, "there will be no social peace in the United States for generations." □

ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

Priorities for the 1970's

During the decade of the 1960's scientists gained a better understanding of atmospheric processes. At the same time, they became painfully aware of the unforeseen effects of human activities on these processes.

In a report issued this week, the National Research Council's Committee on Atmospheric Sciences recommends priorities for the 1970's that focus on using improved meteorological capabilities to meet human needs.

The CAS, headed by Dr. Robert G. Fleagle of the University of Washington, gives highest priority to improved prediction, stressing the need for support of the Global Atmospheric Research Program (GARP). In addition, the committee recommends a pilot Local Weather Watch for a selected urban area and a selected rural area. Satellite cloud pictures, ground-based weather radar pictures and automatic station observations would be coordinated by computer and made available to any television screen in the region. To assess the possibilities for seasonal prediction, the committee recommends increased studies of the dynamics of climate.

The second main objective is air pollution control. Development of models of the urban atmosphere should be accelerated, and a field program of at least two years' duration should be carried out to measure the fate of pollutants emitted from an urban area, the group said. To understand the processes that determine air-pollution concentrations on a regional scale, the chemical composition of precipitation would be measured for selected areas.

The scientists also recommend studies of weather modification techniques. The Executive Office of the President should be responsible for examining public-policy issues associated with weather modification, they believe. The committee further urges the United States Government to present to the United Nations a resolution dedicating all weather-modification efforts to peaceful purposes and establishing an international mechanism to consider weather modification problems of potential international concern.

The final major objective for the 1970's, said the CAS study, should be to reduce human casualties, economic losses and social dislocations caused by weather. Achievement of this objective, the scientists emphasize, will depend on accomplishment of the other objectives.

To achieve these goals, the report concludes, predictably enough, that the level of support for atmospheric research must be raised. □