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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 77: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE:
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 81: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 82: QUESTION OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED: REPORTS OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 83: WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 89: WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/348 and Add.1 and 2, A/37/237; A/C.3/37/L.16)

AGENDA ITEM 81: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/401)

AGENDA ITEM 82: QUESTION OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/408, A/37/435, A/C.3/37/4)

AGENDA ITEM 83: WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING (continued) (A/CONF.113/31; A/C.3/37/4)

AGENDA ITEM 89: WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/160, A/37/351 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Corr.1 and Add.2)

1. Mr. LINDQVIST (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, said that those countries were very pleased with the direction which the work of the International Year for Disabled Persons had taken. The theme of the Year - full participation and equality - had guided a great many people who were working to improve conditions for the disabled all over the world. Now the task must be to find ways of continuing the progress made during the Year.

2. The Advisory Committee for the International Year for Disabled Persons had completed its task by presenting to the General Assembly a World Programme of Action on which he wished to make some comments. The problems of the disabled had always been thought to involve only a few people, whose well-being and rehabilitation were the responsibility of medical specialists and social workers. The World Programme, on the other hand, made it plain that a great many people were affected by disability, either by being disabled or by having a disabled person in the family. It emphasized that all Governments must provide the disabled with the same rights and opportunities as other people. It also contained a number of important principles which should provide guidelines for future work. Action to improve the situation of disabled people must be taken, for example, in nutritional, medical and other areas in order to prevent and cure diseases and impairments. Whatever efforts were made, there would always be some people affected by lasting infirmities, either mental or physical, who must be given an opportunity for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation adjusted to individual and social needs was of extreme importance, but could not solve the whole problem. Even the rehabilitated disabled encountered thousands of obstacles when they tried to participate in public services and activities, because the services offered to the general public did not make provision for those who could not see, hear, walk around freely or react quickly. As far as equal opportunities were concerned, therefore, the task must be to allow the disabled access to all areas (physical environment, housing and transport, education, employment, and cultural and

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(Mr. Lindqvist, Sweden)

recreational activities). Full participation and equality of that kind could be attained only if such new approaches were combined with traditional rehabilitation and care. Whatever steps were taken should therefore be taken within the existing social systems, not separately. Anyone offering services or organizing activities for the public must assume responsibility for making them accessible to disabled people.

3. Another principle of the Programme was that the disabled should be able to influence their own situation as individuals and as part of a group. It was most important to give all possible support to organizations of disabled people, and to provide them with the means of influencing developments in areas of concern to them.

4. The application of the basic principles laid down in the World Programme of Action did not depend on a country's level of development. The integrated approach could be applied with success in developing countries as well as developed ones, and it was encouraging to observe that the approach was gaining ground internationally. Mention should also be made of the work of WHO, which was seeking to rehabilitate and train the disabled in their local communities, and of UNICEF, which was integrating programmes for disabled children into its basic services for children. It was nevertheless true that in developing countries faced with a general lack of resources, often linked to an uneven distribution of wealth, action for the disabled faced special problems. The situation would improve only if Governments made an effort to carry out social reforms and, especially, if the world community lent its support. The World Programme could not be fully applied in the developing countries without an effective and a generous policy of development co-operation.

5. The Nordic countries believed that the World Programme could be a very important instrument in future action for the disabled. They supported the resolution proposed by the Advisory Committee concerning the short-term follow-up to the Year, calling on all international bodies to launch programmes in the spirit of the World Programme within their respective fields. They also supported the idea that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna should make consultative services more widely available to Governments wishing to develop national programmes in connection with the World Programme. They sincerely hoped that the General Assembly's adoption of the World Programme of Action would inspire all Governments and international bodies to launch effective programmes to improve the situation of the disabled throughout the world.

6. Mr. LU Zongqing (China), speaking under agenda items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 89, said that the World Assembly on Aging, which had been held in Vienna from 26 July to 6 August 1982, proved that efforts by the United Nations to benefit the elderly and aged were bearing fruit. After an exchange of views and experience, the World Assembly had drawn up an International Plan of Action on Aging to guide efforts by States and regions with due regard for their individual circumstances. Bilateral and multilateral exchanges and co-operation, however, were also necessary. Although the World Assembly on Aging was over, international activities

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(Mr. Lu Zongqing, China)

in the field of aging should continue. The United Nations should continue to play a role in that field and pay more attention to the developing countries. The formulation and implementation of policies in that area fell within the sovereignty of each State. His delegation wished to stress that the question of aging, like other humanitarian problems, could be truly solved only in a world rid of colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, foreign aggression and all other forms of alien control.

7. In China, a country whose civilization went back several thousands of years, the elderly traditionally received respect and support from the rest of the population. That tradition had been carried further with the establishment of the socialist system, whose task was also to find ways of enabling the elderly to make a greater contribution to social development. A national committee responsible for organizing and co-ordinating nation-wide activities had been established. A general outline and specific programmes of action had been drawn up with a view to facilitating gradual development of activities in the fields of administration, scientific research, the mass media and education. An institute of gerontological sociology had been set up to conduct research in that area. His country wished, at the same time, to establish links with other countries and interested organizations with a view to learning from their experience and in order to follow up, in the light of its particular circumstances, the recommendations made by the World Assembly. The relevant departments were also considering the possibility of proclaiming a day for the aging.

8. With regard to questions relating to youth, his Government was aware that the reason why such importance was attached to those questions was that youth represented the future and hope of mankind. It was paying particular attention to the training of young people and to providing them, in all fields, with the qualifications required for the construction of a socialist nation. His country's development depended to a great extent on the initiative and creativeness of youth.

9. His country also attached great importance to the rights of young people, particularly to the right to work and the right to education. There were still not enough schools and, in particular, enough universities to meet the needs of youth. With a view to remedying that situation, government departments had established spare-time universities, introduced televised university courses and set up various kinds of technical schools and other types of schools in order to provide young people with the opportunity of pursuing further studies in accordance with their specific needs. With regard to the right to work, 26 million young people had been assigned to posts over the past three years.

10. Chinese young people were eager to know what was happening in the world and wished to develop friendly relations with the younger generation in all other countries, for the sake of world peace and human progress. Currently, they were maintaining friendly ties with youth and student organizations in more than a hundred countries. Chinese young people, who had followed the preparations for the International Youth Year with great interest, had participated in some regional activities, and in 1981 the All-China Youth Federation had sent representatives to the rural youth study group sponsored by ESCAP, which had visited various Asian countries.

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(Mr. Lu Zongqing, China)

11. Turning to the question of disabled persons, he said that his country had played an active part in the International Year of Disabled Persons. It had set up an organization committee for the Year, which had submitted a report to the Secretary-General on activities undertaken by China to mark the Year. It had extensively publicized the Year's main theme, namely, "Full participation and equality", so as to enable the disabled to participate, on an equal footing with other citizens, in social and economic development and to share the resulting benefits. It was important that at the outset all members of society should adopt a correct attitude towards the disabled and regard them not as abnormal, but as normal people with special difficulties. With the advance of socio-economic development in his country, the long-term goal of "Full participation and equality" would slowly, but surely, become a reality.

12. His country's relevant departments were ready to strengthen their contacts with friendly countries and interested international organizations with a view to exchanging experience and information on activities undertaken for the benefit of the disabled. In the mean time, an endeavour should be made to consolidate the achievements resulting from the International Year of Disabled Persons. The goal set forth in the draft World Programme of Action that the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons had proposed at its fourth session was good, but it must be realized that that was a long-term goal calling for much hard work. In the light of their own specific circumstances and in accordance with the order of priority they had set themselves, all States should gradually create conditions conducive to realization of that goal.

13. Mr. EHRLICH-ADAM (Austria), speaking under agenda items 82, 83 and 89, said that he first of all wished to thank all those delegations that had addressed kind words to his country, which had had the honour of hosting the World Assembly on Aging in the past summer. In adopting by consensus an International Plan of Action on Aging, the World Assembly had proved that the United Nations could identify current problems and help to solve future problems. The United Nations was often confronted with the reproach that it was incapable of reaching agreement on questions of vital importance to the world, and doubts were voiced as to whether it served a useful purpose. Although it was true that the United Nations often did not succeed in solving political problems that were highlighted by the information media, the common endeavour to tackle the problem of aging, which was a question of the utmost importance to millions of people throughout the world, showed that such reproaches were not entirely justified.

14. Referring to the various measures envisaged by his country in implementation of the International Plan of Action, he said that the National Committee established within the framework of preparations for the World Assembly on Aging continued to function and the debate on how to improve the situation of the elderly and to protect them from the impact of the economic decline experienced by Austria, along with most other countries in the world, was being pursued. For example, all possible steps were being taken to permit the elderly to retain their acquired rights, such as the 14-month annual pension paid to all retired persons in Austria. An endeavour was also being made to bridge the generation gap. The very

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(Mr. Ehrlich-Adam, Austria)

fact that the World Assembly had taken place in his country had contributed significantly to improving the image of the older generation.

15. If the momentum created by the World Assembly was to be preserved, prompt and full implementation of its recommendations at the international, regional and national levels would have to be ensured. Within the framework of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General would have to be in a position to advise Member States on how to implement the Plan of Action; he must therefore be given the necessary financial resources to enable him to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to him under the Plan. In that connection, there was an urgent need to strengthen the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. His delegation wished to appeal to all other delegations to ensure that endorsement of the International Plan of Action in the Committee was followed by corresponding decisions in the Fifth Committee. It hoped that the regional organizations concerned would continue to deal with questions relating to aging and that the necessary measures would be taken at the national level, in accordance with the Plan of Action. With regard to implementation machinery, it would be desirable to work out guidelines making it mandatory to submit reports to a United Nations body. The committee responsible for considering such reports should draw on past experience with other types of implementation machinery. With regard to the Trust Fund, his delegation hoped that it would be possible to draw up guidelines for its administration by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs that would guarantee speedy execution of projects and effective administration. With regard to the proclamation of an international day for the aging, in view of the proliferation of days, years and decades observed by the United Nations, any decision taken in that connection should be in keeping with the relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions.

16. With regard to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, his delegation noted that the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/351 and Add.1) indicated how the momentum provided by the International Year of Disabled Persons could be preserved. Member States should wholeheartedly support the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee for the Year. His delegation sincerely hoped that Secretariat departments would be provided with the means for effective implementation of the Advisory Committee's recommendations; the extent to which delegations were sincere would be put to the test when it came to consideration of the financial implications of implementation of the resolutions in question.

17. Mr. POWELL (United Kingdom), speaking on items 77 and 81, said that young people were sometimes treated in a patronizing manner of their elders, who felt that they had nothing to say worth hearing and that they could be more trouble than they were worth. As a result, young people were generally neither seen nor heard when major national and international problems were discussed. That was unfortunate, for young people suffered from the effects of those problems, often more than other categories of the population. They were, moreover, not impressed by the uses to which their elders had put the enormous opportunities which had been created over the past two or three decades. The world was now a more dangerous

(Mr. Powell, United Kingdom)

place than ever; poverty and hunger still made a misery of the lives of millions, and hundreds of millions more were as far away as ever from enjoying even a fraction of the rights set out so eloquently in a range of United Nations instruments. Young people indeed lacked experience and experience might bring wisdom, but it might also, it should be remembered, bring resignation and a closed mind. Young people had a natural irreverence and optimism which allowed them to question accepted wisdom, and that might lead them to see solutions where their elders saw only difficulties.

18. The International Youth Year should be a chance for youth to have its say and to participate at least in organizing an event that was to be its own. There was a danger that once again young people might be told what to do rather than being given the opportunity to decide for themselves. That would be unfortunate, since they would yet again inherit problems not of their making and could not be expected in the circumstances to show much enthusiasm for a programme of events which did not represent their freely expressed wishes. They would, of course, be happy to listen to the advice of their elders, provided it was not presented as if engraved on stone tablets.

19. As noted in section III of the Secretary-General's report (A/37/237), the United Kingdom stressed the importance of youth participation; it expected young people, together with voluntary organizations, to play a major role in organizing the Year so that it could best serve their interests. The voluntary organizations in charge of preparing for the Year would be setting up the necessary machinery. His delegation saw no need for new international instruments, further United Nations mechanisms or additional resources. It was accordingly sceptical about the need for the substantial increase in the financial provisions for the International Youth Year envisaged in document A/37/348/Add.1.

20. Young people did not want to be accorded special rights by their elders. There again, they preferred to decide for themselves what was good for them, and that was consistent with the principles set out in article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

21. Education was fundamental to the development of young people. It had to be of a good standard, because it would otherwise leave potential unfulfilled; tolerant, so as not to make open hearts bitter; and open-minded, so as not to stunt minds. Young people were necessarily dependent on their elders for their education, and the benefit they derived from it depended both on the quality of the teachers and on the quality of the society in which they lived. One of the greatest educational gifts they could be given was the liberty of dissent, the liberty to form their own political views and parties, the liberty to build their own future in their own way. Too often, the educational opportunities of young people were circumscribed by the political dogmas of the societies created by their elders.

22. The United Kingdom Government did not seek to prescribe what its young people should think; it simply sought to provide them with the best services it could. That was the basis for its consistent support of education-based youth services and

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(Mr. Powell, United Kingdom)

for its concerted efforts through various programmes to come to grips with problems of youth unemployment. A new youth training scheme which would start the following year would guarantee a full year's training to every unemployed 16-year-old who wanted it. The Government also provided financial support for many organizations engaged in community services, which gave many thousands of young people a chance to help those in need, including the elderly and disabled. Those schemes and organizations were voluntary. The United Kingdom believed that whether or not young people took part in organized activities was a matter for them to decide.

23. Mr. KOMISSAROV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on item 77, said that his delegation was pleased to see that United Nations bodies had for some time been giving considerable attention to the role of young people in social and economic development and the struggle for peace. The International Youth Year would allow young people to extend their efforts to solve the problems of the day. Indeed, given the worsening of international tension, the Year should focus on mobilizing the public, and especially the young, so as to remove the threat of nuclear war and guarantee everyone's right to life. The fact, moreover, that young people had been socially and politically active in most countries of the world reflected the desire of young people to work for a better future where war, exploitation and economic backwardness would have no place. The role that young people could play in that area depended upon the possibilities society offered them to develop, use their energies and realize their potential.

24. It should be said in that connection that in many capitalist countries young people enjoyed neither social equality nor acceptable health standards; they were the victims of discrimination and under-nutrition; moreover, many political, civil, social and economic rights were denied them. Their greatest enemy, however, remained a growing level of unemployment: according to figures published by the International Labour Organisation, half of the world's unemployed were young people below the age of 30. All those social inequalities prevented young people from fully realizing their potential and using their creative talents for the benefit of national development, peace in the world and the social and economic progress of mankind. It was for the Governments of countries to concern themselves with the future of their young people and to undertake national programmes that met their vital interests and their expectations.

25. In socialist society instead, there was a close link between the objectives of society and the aspirations of youth. Many ways were open to young people to thrive and become a useful part of society. Several articles of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, adopted in April 1978, concerned young people specifically. In addition to the rights to work, relaxation, education, health, housing and culture, they had a recognized right to participate in governing the country. Moreover, from the age of 18, young people could, as specified in article 85 of the Constitution, be elected to the Soviets of People's Deputies. The Supreme Soviet of the Republic currently included 89 young workers and young collective farmers. Following the elections of June 1982, 33.7 per cent of the deputies elected to the Soviets of People's Deputies were under 30 years of age.

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(Mr. Komissarov, Byelorussian SSR)

26. The Leninist Communist League of Youth (Komsomol), which had 1.5 million members, took an active part in solving political, economic, social and cultural problems and also took initiatives in the field of legislation. The young people of the Byelorussian SSR were helping to implement the decisions of the Twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to carry out the plans and goals of the eleventh five-year plan (1981-1985).

27. Byelorussian youth did not know what it meant to be unemployed. Under Soviet labour legislation, young workers enjoyed various important benefits. They had the right to occupational training free of charge. All young people had the right to free education, including higher education, without restriction. At the current time, more than 4,000 students, research fellows and trainees from 98 countries were studying in institutions of higher learning and in technical and professional institutions in the Byelorussian SSR.

28. Young people were brought up in a spirit of peace, equity, freedom, respect and mutual understanding, humanism, internationalism, patriotism and understanding among peoples. The young people of his country were building up their contacts with young people's associations in the socialist countries and with all progressive and democratic organizations. They took part in solidarity meetings with young people struggling for peace, freedom and national independence, in fund-raising activities for the victims of Fascist terror and reaction, in meetings with foreign young people through international friendship clubs and in exchanges of delegations; they worked and played in international student camps. The young people of his country had taken part in the International Peace March in 1982.

29. It was possible for Governments, through their legislative and executive organs, to solve the problems of young people in the content of their political, social and economic development programmes. It was also the responsibility of the representatives of youth and student organizations, especially those which had consultative status in the Economic and Social Council, to develop international co-operation on all aspects of the problems of youth. That was why, in the preparation and implementation of the Year, a great deal of attention should be given to strengthening co-operation between the progressive youth organizations and the United Nations.

30. His delegation wished to commend the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year on its useful report (A/37/348). However, it noted with concern that the addendum to that report (A/37/348/Add.1) gave a high figure for new financial implications which could not be justified. Since efforts were currently being made to stabilize the United Nations budget, his delegation could not accept that way of proceeding; it particularly rejected the idea of creating a special group responsible for youth questions within the United Nations Secretariat, for in its opinion it was the responsibility of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the most competent body in the field, to continue to deal with those questions as it had in the past. All that was necessary was to use its available resources more rationally.

31. His delegation was ready to contribute constructively to the attainment of the goals of the International Youth Year.

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32. Mrs. LLOYD (Zambia), speaking on items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 89, said that the many problems affecting society had greater impact on young people, since they were the larger group. Her Government attached a great deal of importance to the question of young people and, since the country's independence, it had been taking measures to involve young people in the decision-making process, from the planning stage to implementation, in all aspects of the country's development. It believed that they must be made to feel that they belonged to society and that their contribution was being appreciated.

33. Health, education, housing and, of course, unemployment were among the many common problems facing young people throughout the world; when they were left unsolved, they drove young people into crime or compelled them to engage in other activities which were unacceptable to society. Her country for that reason welcomed the fact that the international community was concerned with the problems of young people and had decided in 1979 to declare 1985 International Youth Year. Her country was endeavouring to find solutions to those problems in accordance with the Government's programme and the guidelines given by the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year. The national youth plan was a part of the national development plan. The programmes for young people were designed to enable them to participate in the planning and implementation of development objectives, to take part in the democratic process and to give their services to society as a whole, thereby developing a sense of self-reliance and confidence.

34. A major objective of the third national development plan for the period 1979-1983 was to reduce youth unemployment by directly involving young people in production schemes, such as agricultural settlements, agro-industry and other small-scale industries. It also provided opportunities for young people to participate in cultural, artistic and sporting activities.

35. In order to attain the Programme's objectives, the Ministry of Youth and Sport was conducting and supporting skills training projects to prepare school leavers for productive occupations, either self-employed or in co-operatives. In that connection, 50 rural construction centres involving 2,000 young people had been set up. It was planned to establish 50 community skills training centres, of which 2 were already in place; more than 70 skills training projects for young people had been sponsored by voluntary organizations and local district councils. In all, more than 12,000 young people were being trained through community-sponsored projects. Between 40 and 50 per cent had so far been found employment.

36. Her country expected shortly to establish a national co-ordinating committee to help in planning and implementing youth programmes. Since the problems facing young people were the same throughout the world, her delegation supported efforts being made to increase communication among young people of the same country and of different countries, in the belief that that would result in fruitful exchanges on ways of tackling not only the problems of young people but also problems of a general kind. Her country had participated in many international conferences and seminars on issues relating to young people. It noted with satisfaction that at their meeting in Malaysia in 1982 the countries of the Commonwealth had requested the Commonwealth Youth Programme to assist all Commonwealth countries in the

(Mrs. Lloyd, Zambia)

planning and implementation of the Programme of the International Youth Year. The Regional Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Youth Programme had made a good deal of headway in that direction at its meeting in July 1982. Her country would like to see its national youth organizations developing their contacts with similar organizations abroad and with the United Nations. Her delegation hoped that a great deal would be done to improve the general welfare of young people all over the world and that 1985 would provide an opportunity to take stock of what had been achieved.

37. On the question of the elderly and the aged, her delegation believed that such people, through their experience, could provide useful guidance to the young people who would be the future leaders of the country. Her country considered that families should look after their elderly people but that they could only do so given improvements in a country's general development. The Government, which was endeavouring to raise the standards of living of its people by co-ordinating the various development programmes, requested countries which were in a position to do so to increase financial and other forms of assistance to her country and other developing countries in order to help them to implement their development programmes. Her delegation hoped that the International Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly on Aging, held at Vienna, Austria, in July/August 1982 would be implemented.

38. Turning to the question of the disabled, she said that the Zambian Government, eager to make the disabled feel that they were part of society, encouraged the establishment of institutions to ensure communication and exchanges of views on how to improve their quality of life. That policy was in accordance with Zambia's philosophy of humanism, which valued man as such, irrespective of status, position or physical disability. The Zambian National Association for the Physically Handicapped, for example, had embarked upon a number of self-help projects for setting up small-scale industries (carpentry, metal-working, radio and television, tannery and sub-contracting workshops). Through that body, the disabled could make it known what skills they would like to acquire and what their basic needs were. The Ministry of Labour and Social Services co-ordinated all matters relating to disabled persons, within the context of the general development of Zambia.

39. In conclusion, she said that the Zambian delegation supported the steps taken by the United Nations to assist Governments to execute their programmes and projects on behalf of youth, the elderly and the aged, and disabled persons.

40. Mr. ZAYAS (Cuba) said that his country had been one of the sponsors of resolution 34/151, which designated 1985 as International Youth Year, and since that time had encouraged the active participation of Cuban youth in the activities organized within that framework. Cuba had also supported the Advisory Committee's specific programme of measures and activities, endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 36/28, in which it seemed particularly important to his delegation for international non-governmental organizations to participate. Cuba would continue to support the Advisory Committee and would submit to it comments and suggestions that might be useful in its work.

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(Mr. Zayas, Cuba)

41. The Third Committee was discussing items relating to youth at a time when the international situation was deteriorating under the combined influence of the severe economic crisis afflicting the capitalist system, the negative effects of which were weighing upon the world economy, and the stubborn attempts of the imperialists to turn back the course of history and to maintain their domination by force in the face of the victorious onslaught of revolutionary movements. It was essential for young people today to participate in programmes of co-operation with the countries that were still suffering the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and in the study and solution of the main contemporary problems, namely, the struggle for independence, self-determination, the establishment of the new international economic order, the safeguarding of peace and the ending of the arms race.

42. The problems of young people must be looked at in the context of the problems of the societies in which they lived, but to solve them it would be necessary to attack their causes, which included discrimination on grounds of race or sex, oppression, unemployment, drug abuse, restriction of their social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights, and undemocratic educational systems.

43. Since 1959, the Cuban revolution had concerned itself systematically with the training, of young people, who had played a fundamental role in the economic and social development of the country despite the difficulties caused by underdevelopment and imperialist hostility. Cuban youth had demonstrated their internationalism, their impartial solidarity and their revolutionary altruism in many admirable missions and had collaborated with a number of developing countries. In addition, Cuba had welcomed more than 16,000 students from non-aligned countries. In concerning itself with young people the Cuban Party was faithful to its aim of fighting the corrupting influence of the moral decadence that reigned in developed capitalist society and the pernicious inheritance of long years of exploitation and ignorance.

44. At the same time, given the trend towards an increase in the population aged 65 and over, Cuba was trying to develop geriatrics, in order to be able to offer its aging population specialized high-quality care. Indeed, a similar effort for effective assistance to the elderly was needed at the world level.

45. The position of the elderly mirrored the socio-economic situation of the countries in which they lived. Since 1959, Cuba had worked to enable all old people to remain part of society and receive medical care, and had taken social, legislative and medical steps to that end. The health of the elderly was protected by a national health system which served even the most remote communities free of charge. Thanks to those efforts, Cubans currently had a life expectancy of 73 years. The World Assembly on Aging had yielded positive results, enabling the participating countries and bodies to become more aware of the need to embark without delay on an international programme of action designed to safeguard the economic and social security of the elderly and enable them to be integrated into social life and to participate in the development of their country.

(Mr. Zayas, Cuba)

46. Cuba was ready to co-operate with other countries and with the specialized agencies in seeking solutions to the problems posed by aging. It had already agreed to participate in a regional study of old age undertaken under the auspices of the Pan American Health Organization. It was also ready to engage in cultural and scientific exchanges with other countries in the field of gerontology and geriatrics. It urged all States which had participated in the World Assembly to co-ordinate their efforts and to devote themselves to the noble and humanitarian aim of the United Nations in that regard.

47. Cuba attached great importance to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, as the activities planned and carried out by the Cuban National Committee bore witness. To make the World Programme of Action wider and more effective, it would be desirable to encourage exchanges of experience, especially among developing countries, with particular regard to rehabilitation techniques, preventive campaigns and the medical and social care afforded to physically and mentally disabled persons. In Cuba, the disabled were the subject of special attention as part of a vast programme of activities carried on by the Ministry of Public Health, in co-operation with other relevant public bodies. In response to the recommendations emerging from the International Year of Disabled Persons, Cuba had indefinitely extended the mandate of the National Committee set up to deal with the activities organized as part of the International Year, so that it could continue its work.

48. Mr. ROKOTOMALALA (Madagascar) said that the economic crisis and the recession not only threatened the development efforts of the poor countries but also affected the social welfare of their population, the most disastrous effects being felt by the most vulnerable groups: young persons, the elderly and the aged, and the disabled. Madagascar, while feeling the full weight of those problems, was sparing no effort to overcome them.

49. Turning to General Assembly resolution 36/28, he said that the Malagasy State was currently devoting 5.40 per cent of its GDP to education (as against 3.16 per cent between 1966 and 1972), an effort that was explained by the fact that more than half of the 10 million inhabitants of Madagascar were under 20 years of age. The aim was to enable all children to have access to free education, so as to facilitate their access to industrial skills, whether traditional or advanced. In 1982, 80 per cent of the basic communities had their own primary schools; the number of teachers had tripled since 1975; and the planned school enrolment of an additional one million children had been exceeded, with 1.2 million being enrolled. The rate of admission to secondary schools had appreciably increased: 46 per cent of the former sub-prefectures now had their own general secondary schools and 43 per cent of the former prefectures had their own high schools. Each province had an institution for training secondary school teachers. The University of Madagascar currently educated 45,000 students throughout the six provinces of the island. Higher education was being decentralized thanks to considerable sacrifices and a calculated risk taken by the authorities. The opening of the university centres was democratizing the bases for the recruitment of the country's future cadres, and the current structural reform, by enabling the various centres

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(Mr. Rokotomalala, Madagascar)

to specialize, was designed to furnish training which was truly adapted to the country's needs. For those who were not accepted by the University, priority had been given to training which would ensure their rapid integration into society. Three types of schools provided vocational training: training colleges, technical secondary schools and technical high schools. Through social clubs and socio-economic development centres, the Ministry of Population trained young people who had been unable to complete the normal span of general or technical education: they received both technical training in, for example, carpentry, building or sewing and general and civic instruction. Those who were interested were subsequently enrolled in production pre-co-operatives and in "community villages" with an infrastructure and farm implements, where they learned the practical side of production. That policy made it possible to reduce rural unemployment gradually and helped to increase agricultural output, especially for local consumption. The Government had recently taken further steps to improve the standard of living of the peasants by raising the status of agricultural work and allocating substantial resources to the agrarian reform so as to enable it to cope with the effects of the international crisis, the deterioration of the terms of trade and the damage caused by the catastrophic floods which had afflicted Madagascar in early 1982.

50. Madagascar, accordingly, was attempting to lay the foundations for harmonized and full-scale development under especially difficult circumstances. In view of the reluctance of some countries to furnish additional resources for technical co-operation and the lack of understanding of the problems of developing countries, Madagascar reiterated its appeal to all Governments and all intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for more resources to be given to developing countries for the implementation of their development programmes. Madagascar was convinced that a new international economic order which would bring about a new distribution of wealth in the world, would lead to true social change in the developing countries and the diminishing of international tensions and distortions, thus ensuring the peace to which all peoples aspired.

51. Mrs. TAVARES ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that, although prevented by the economic crisis from fully implementing its social policy, the Government of the Dominican Republic was aware of the social and humanitarian problems faced by the population, and particularly by the most vulnerable sectors. Consequently, it had decided to establish a Department of Social Welfare, which was subdivided into offices responsible for the advancement of women, the protection of children, the advancement of young people, the protection of the elderly and the welfare of the family. That step would make it possible to centralize the responsibility for social programmes, to enhance the status of those programmes and to increase their impetus.

52. With regard to agenda item 89, concerning disabled persons, she said that her country had implemented the relevant General Assembly recommendations through a programme of action which was adapted to the constraints imposed by priority needs and limited resources. The country's rehabilitation centre had been described by international bodies as a model centre, since, under a single administration, programmes of physical rehabilitation, specialized education, occupational

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(Mrs. Tavares Alvares, Dominican Republic)

rehabilitation and integration of disabled persons into active life were all carried out. The institution was also exemplary in that its activities were the harmonious result of both State efforts and those of voluntary organizations. The State allocated the necessary funds for the execution and expansion of the programmes and the Dominican Rehabilitation Association administered the funds and provided technical and economic assistance in other ways.

53. A national committee had been established to monitor the progress of the physical, mental and sensory rehabilitation programmes. The Dominican Republic had hosted two regional training courses for therapists and the first Latin American training course for instructors in workshops for the mentally retarded, which had been organized by the Dominican Rehabilitation Association and the Latin American Occupational Rehabilitation Group. Finally, the Dominican Republic had done everything possible to promote the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons and to reaffirm the right of disabled persons to participate in the political, economic and social life of the country.

54. Although the elderly represented only 4.8 per cent of the total population of the Dominican Republic, measures to benefit them had been adopted. In 1978, the Division for the Protection of the Elderly, which was to become part of the Department of Social Welfare, had been established. In 1980, the Dominican Government had been the first in Latin America to request consultative services from the Pan American Sanitary Bureau in the field of gerontology. The Government not only had participated in the meetings of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging, but had also taken an active part in the Assembly itself and had been elected one of the 21 Vice-Presidents. Because the developing countries had limited resources, they had difficulty in giving priority to the elderly and the situation of tomorrow's elderly population, since they were already struggling to cope with the problems of today. That was why the Dominican Republic had suggested that a specialized body be created within the United Nations system whose sole responsibility would be to deal with problems created by the aging of the world population and which would play for the elderly the role which UNICEF played for children. The world economic crisis had unfortunately prevented such a body from being established, but it was to be hoped that it would become a reality in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs must do what was required to implement the International Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly. The voluntary fund established for the World Assembly must now begin execution of the Plan of Action, and her delegation requested Member States to continue to contribute to the fund and to increase their contributions. The General Assembly should include the item in the agenda of its forthcoming sessions in order to maintain the interest in the problems posed by the aging of the world population. It would be wrong if the excellent Plan of Action prepared by the World Assembly became submerged in the flood of United Nations documents and a historic chance to benefit the aged of tomorrow was lost.

55. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia), speaking on agenda items 77 and 81, said that the future of mankind depended on how young people were prepared for the future and what opportunities to participate in social, economic and political activities were made available to them today. Such participation not only enabled young people to make concrete contributions, but also ensured the continuity of social progress.

56. Because young people held an important place in Ethiopian society, in terms of both their numerical strength and their productive role, his Government had given the utmost priority to their participation in the national life and to the need for organization in order to enable them to meet their obligations and safeguard their rights. The Ethiopian revolution was proud to have created conditions which had made it possible to involve 6 million young people in 20,000 basic associations extending into urban and the most isolated rural areas.

57. Thanks to the efforts and dedication of young people, the national literacy campaign, which had received awards from UNESCO and other international organizations, had attained remarkable results. The contribution of young people to national reconstruction, the consolidation of the gains of the revolution and the defence of national unity and territorial integrity had been no less significant. The growing interest of Ethiopian youth in human solidarity, national liberation struggles and international peace and security was also very encouraging.

The positions taken by young people on racism, colonialism and imperialism, and the problems of international peace and security were the results of their own initiatives and the opportunities made available to them by the Ethiopian Government.

58. With regard to the International Youth Year, he said that his delegation would co-operate unstintingly in order to make it a success. He believed, however, that the activities of 1985 must not be seen as an end in themselves. Since development and peace were continuing needs of society, the participation of young people must also be continuing.

59. Ms. MAVROMMATIS (Cyprus) speaking on agenda items 77 and 81, said that the youth of Cyprus were looking forward to the International Youth Year, 1985, as a landmark in their participation in the country's internal life as well as its international affairs. At the national level, the Ministries of Education, Labour and Agriculture had initiated programmes and activities closely associated with youth that were being co-ordinated by an inter-ministerial youth committee. The committee was responsible for encouraging the widest possible participation of young people in the various fields of the island's life, such as community development, preservation and improvement of the environment, further education, and elimination of illiteracy. The young people of Cyprus were also making their contribution to the United Nations, the Commonwealth, UNESCO and the Council of Europe youth programmes, by undertaking various tasks for the promotion of world peace and security, international co-operation, respect for human rights and the elimination of racial discrimination. Those tasks included organizing camps for work volunteers, cultural exchanges and youth conferences.

(Ms. Mavrommatis, Cyprus)

60. During the period of progress and prosperity following the independence of Cyprus in 1960, youth had taken an active part in the development process, and their fundamental rights, such as the right to education, the right to work and the right to enter into contracts, had been safeguarded by Constitutional Provisions and by legislation. Unfortunately, those gains had been compromised by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Thousands of young people had been killed, hundreds were still missing and many had been uprooted from their homeland. Moreover, 38 per cent of the educational institutions and some 35 per cent of youth centres and related facilities had been destroyed or were in the occupied areas. The Turkish invasion, the resulting upheavals and the continuing violation of the basic human rights had undermined the young Cypriots' opportunities for co-operation. However, the Government's determination to associate young people with the reconstruction of the country was demonstrated by the establishment of youth centres and associations designed to enable all young Cypriots, without discrimination, to fulfil their aspirations in sports, culture, welfare and individual development.

61. The young people of Cyprus promoted co-operation and understanding among peoples as well as world peace and security by organizing international conferences and symposia in Cyprus on those topics promoting youth exchange programmes, maintaining contact with other international youth organizations and promoting the implementation of United Nations resolutions on human rights.

62. The young Cypriots claimed for the youth of the whole world the right to an education based on freedom and international solidarity which would enable them to join with other democratic forces to fight against apartheid, racism, colonialism and the arms race. Youth were the future of every nation and were entitled to a proper education that would stimulate them to be always on guard against aggression from fascist or expansionist régimes. The youth of Cyprus expressed their solidarity with their Palestinian, South African, Namibian and Latin American brothers and sisters in their continuing struggle for freedom and justice. Young people, like their elders, must have the right to make decisions affecting their lives and to be involved in governmental policies of direct concern to them.

63. Mr. JHA (Nepal), referring to agenda items 77 and 81, said that the introductory statement by the Director-General for International Economic and Social Affairs and the documents submitted under those items would help to initiate a very constructive debate which would promote the effective implementation of General Assembly resolutions 34/151, 35/126, 36/28 and 36/29. The General Assembly's decision, in resolution 34/151 to observe an International Youth Year was a major step in promoting the interests of young people all over the world, and the choice of 1985 had made it possible to adopt a medium-term and a long-term approach which would increase its significance. His country supported that decision and believed that it offered a sound basis for integrated action, particularly at the national and local levels, in the economic, social and cultural fields of concern to youth. The year before, his delegation had supported the three-phase programme strategy for the period 1981-1985 proposed by the Secretary-General and had shared his view that 1985 should be an occasion not only for the observance but also for an evaluation of the initial Plan of Action.

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(Mr. Jha, Nepal)

64. As the success of the International Youth Year depended on the implementation of the specific Programme of Measures and Activities at the national level, it was essential to establish national committees and a regional committee which should meet as soon as possible to find ways of implementing the programme.

65. Nepal had established a national co-ordinating committee for the International Youth Year, which included youth representatives. That committee would be responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations and would serve as a liaison body with the United Nations. A sub-committee had also been set up to co-ordinate youth activities at the national level, and a detailed short-term and long-term programme of youth activities had been worked out. Nepal placed special emphasis on the integration of youth in the community.

65a. His country's university education programmes were aimed at associating young people with the national development process, particularly in the fields of health, family planning and welfare, literacy programmes, agriculture extension, water supply, soil conservation and the like. The Sixth Five-Year Plan for 1980-1985 also laid stress on that objective.

66. His country also attached great importance to physical education and sports exchanges among young people as a means of fostering better understanding between individuals and people. It appreciated the activities of UNESCO in education and sports.

67. His delegation considered that the guidelines, recommendations and decisions of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year were of major significance and that their adoption by the General Assembly augured well for the achievement of the aims of the International Year. Nepal had established special funds to strengthen policy-making and planning capacity in the field of youth, and the Government's attention had been drawn to the need to allocate adequate funds for the implementation of the national Plan of Action, as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

68. Since, according to the Secretary-General's report preparations for the International Youth Year were far from satisfactory in many countries, national co-ordinating committees should be established in all countries without delay, and the United Nations should provide financial and technical assistance where necessary. His delegation also considered it important for five regional meetings to be organized in 1983, as recommended by the General Assembly. His delegation likewise felt that the cost of participation in those meetings by representatives from the least developed countries among the developing countries should be borne by the United Nations.

69. While his delegation commended the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs on the work it had done, it believed that the role of the Youth Unit should be strengthened in order to facilitate the implementation of the specific Programme of Measures and Activities. In that connection, it was happy to

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(Mr. Jha, Nepal)

note that one of its nationals had been entrusted with a responsible task in the Youth Unit. His delegation also felt that it would be advisable to have a secretariat for the International Youth Year.

70. His delegation was also pleased with the progress achieved in the implementation of guidelines on channels of communication between the United Nations and youth organizations, and it appreciated the assistance being provided by the United Nations family of organizations. It likewise supported the Secretary-General's observations and suggestions in paragraphs 84 and 85 of document A/37/237, as well as the proposals for additional guidelines.

71. His delegation appreciated the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in the development of a plan of action to assess the needs and aspirations of youth in the region. It wished to thank the organizations of the United Nations system for their contribution to the various programmes relating to the International Youth Year, and it fully agreed with the observations of the Secretary-General in paragraphs 49, 50, 51 and 52 of document A/37/401.

72. Lastly, his delegation was fully confident that the preparations for the International Youth Year and its observance would contribute to a reaffirmation of the goals of the new international economic order and the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, and that they would serve to disseminate among youth the ideals of peace and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, solidarity and understanding among peoples and balanced development leading to the building up of a better and more just world.

73. Miss SHALHOU (Jordan), speaking on items 77 and 81, said that, as in all developing countries, the majority of the population of Jordan, namely, 60 per cent, consisted of young people. While that high percentage was due both to a declining mortality rate and to the maintenance of a high birth rate, it was also attributable to the substantial brain drain among the economically active population, 80 per cent of whom had emigrated, particularly to other Arab countries. The result had been an additional burden on other sectors of society and substantial economic problems which planners were endeavouring to resolve. Apart from measures to foster economic and social development as a whole, her Government was attempting to provide young people with the means to give free expression to their aspirations, while at the same time associating them with the collective development effort. Young people's clubs had been established in the various regions of the country in order to encourage cultural, social and sports activities for young people of both sexes. Also, a "Human Forum", bringing together students and young workers, was making it possible for them to establish contact with world youth bodies and to work with them to improve the world situation. In addition, one third of the nation's youth benefited from free education, and universities had been established by the Government to meet certain specific needs of the population. Jordan had high expectations for the International Youth Year and welcomed the actions which had been taken within the framework of the specific Programme of Measures and Activities.

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(Miss Shalhoue, Jordan)

74. Turning to items 82 and 83, she said that there were 90,000 older people in Jordan, or one for every five families. The concept of homes for the aged, where older persons could be fed and have their medical needs attended to, was receiving increased acceptance. At the same time, greater attention was being given to the specific problems of the aged, such as medical assistance, the impact of retirement after a long period of active life and methods for enabling older people to participate fully in the development process. In that connection, her Government was actively studying the possibility of a retirement system based on a progressive reduction in the number of working hours. Under Jordanian law, male descendants were required to support the aged. Where there was no male descendant, a system of retirement and social security made provision for needed income. Jordan welcomed the positive contribution of the International Plan of Action on Aging, particularly the exchange of information and experience which it made possible between countries regarding the role of older people in society.

75. She pointed out with regard to item 89, that the International Year of Disabled Persons had helped to increase the awareness of the people of Jordan regarding the problems of what had long been a marginal group. A number of laws had been adopted by the Jordanian Government to facilitate the re-education and re-integration of disabled persons into society and to safeguard their rights. Her delegation had welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/351/Add.1) and had transmitted it to the Jordanian Government for its comments.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

76. The CHAIRMAN said that the Director of the Human Rights Centre had requested the Third Committee to come to a decision as soon as possible on the principle of extending invitations to two Special Rapporteurs and a Special Representative. The Commission on Human Rights, in three resolutions which had been subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council, had requested Mr. Dieye, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Chile (resolution 1982/25), Mr. Pastor Ridruejo, Special Representative on the situation of human rights in El Salvador (resolution 1982/28) and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Special Rapporteur on human rights and massive exoduses (resolution 1982/32) to submit their reports to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. That would imply that the Third Committee approved the principle of inviting them, taking into account the financial implications, which were for the Special Representative on the situation of human rights in El Salvador - \$1,620 (including travel, Madrid-New York-Madrid, and subsistence for five days); for the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Chile - \$2,710 (including travel, Dakar-New York-Dakar, and subsistence for five days); and for the Special Rapporteur on human rights and massive exoduses - \$1,822 (including travel, Geneva-New York-Geneva, and subsistence for five days).

77. Mr. ROSALES-RIVERA (El Salvador), referring to the invitation which the Third Committee proposed to send to Mr. Pastor Ridruejo so that he could submit a provisional report to the Third Committee on the situation of human rights in El Salvador, said that the status of Mr. Pastor Ridruejo had not changed so far as

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(Mr. Rosales-Rivera, El Salvador)

the Government of El Salvador was concerned. His Government wished to confirm its legal position to the effect that the report was based on seriously flawed resolutions which El Salvador had refuted one by one. It continued, moreover, in its refusal to recognize the legitimacy or legal validity of Mr. Pastor Ridruejo as Special Representative.

78. When Mr. Pastor Ridruejo had requested permission to go to El Salvador, he had been authorized to do so as a Spanish citizen and, as such, had been extended every possible facility: El Salvador had considered that, in that capacity, he would be able to submit an objective view of events, particularly those which had taken place since the elections of 28 March. The facilities granted to Mr. Pastor Ridruejo did not, however, mean that there had been any change in the legal position which El Salvador had adopted towards him.

79. His delegation considered that Mr. Pastor Ridruejo's presence before the Third Committee was inopportune and was apt to encourage propaganda excesses which were not relevant to the consideration of the question of human rights but merely served sectarian political purposes. His delegation was concerned that the central issue of human rights might be set aside for the profit of ill-intentioned schemes. Mr. Pastor Ridruejo's presence would hamper a calm and balanced analysis of the question in so far as it might lead to consequences prejudicial to the good name of El Salvador. The ultimate and virtually entire responsibility for that situation rested in the final analysis on Mr. Pastor Ridruejo himself. If his presence should serve propaganda purposes not related to respect for human rights but benefiting a particular ideology, the informal collaboration thus far offered by the Government of El Salvador - for the reasons which had just been explained - would be terminated, always assuming, of course, that Mr. Pastor Ridruejo was really interested in maintaining such form of co-operation with the Salvadorian Government.

80. The proposal, moreover, that the report should be presented on a personal basis was inherently selective and discriminatory towards the countries of Latin America and formed part of a scheme which threatened the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. He requested that due note should be taken of his statement and that it should be transmitted to Mr. Pastor Ridruejo as representing the official position of the Government of El Salvador.

81. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the representative of El Salvador had not raised a formal objection; he had merely requested that the position of his Government should be made a matter of record and that it should be transmitted to Mr. Pastor Ridruejo.

82. Mr. LAGOS (Chile) said that he wished to express reservations about the appointment of a special entity for a study of the situation in Chile because that represented a selective and arbitrary procedure to which Chile would refuse to extend its co-operation.

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83. The CHAIRMAN said that it was a question of inviting and not of summoning the Representative or the Special Rapporteurs. It was for them to accept the invitation or not. The Third Committee did not in any case have the authority to decide that they must submit their reports regardless of the circumstances. In any event the views of the various representatives would be duly noted and transmitted to the parties concerned.

84. Mr. GONZALEZ DE LEON (Mexico) and Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia) asked whether the Special Rapporteur would submit his report to the Third Committee or to the Special Political Committee, as the latter was also seized of a similar item.

85. The CHAIRMAN explained that the Special Rapporteur would have to be invited to submit his report to the Third Committee, in any event, since the question of massive exoduses was included in the report of the Economic and Social Council which the Third Committee was to consider. He therefore suggested that the invitation to the two Special Rapporteurs and the Special Representative should be approved.

86. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.