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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.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/C.3/37/L.7;
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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 and Add.1 and 2*)

1. Ms. YAMAZAKI (Japan), speaking on agenda item 89, expressed her delegation's satisfaction at the success of the International Year of Disabled Persons. To help meet the objectives of the Year, Japan had organized a Central Council for Policy on Mentally and Physically Disabled Persons, which included a Special Committee that served as an advisory organ of the Government. Many of the programmes and activities that had been carried out in the context of the IYDP had been continued, and early in 1982 the national IYDP headquarters had compiled a long-term plan containing measures for the disabled. With the ending of the IYDP, the national headquarters had been reorganized as the Headquarters for the Promotion of Policies Relating to the Disabled and had been given the task of implementing the long-term plan.

2. At the international level, Japan had contributed \$100,000 to the United Nations Trust Fund for the IYDP in 1980 and in 1981. It had also provided technical and medical assistance to several international projects dealing with the disabled in developing countries.

3. Her delegation believed that the effectiveness of the IYDP would depend largely on the successful implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning the Disabled. However, she noted with regret that the comments which had been submitted by her delegation to the Advisory Committee for consideration had not been reflected in the final draft of the programme contained in document A/37/351/Add.1. Paragraph 22, for example, might have defined the aim of education for the physically or mentally disabled more broadly. In the same paragraph, the reference to housing for the disabled overlooked the fact that it was simply not feasible to provide facilities for the disabled in all residential buildings; that reference ought therefore to be deleted.

4. She questioned the appropriateness of grouping public housing and public transport systems together in paragraph 114, particularly since housing was often a concern of the private sector. She proposed an alternative text for that paragraph.

(Ms. Yamazaki, Japan)

5. She pointed out that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons called for in General Assembly resolution 36/77 would duplicate a similar recommendation contained in the World Programme of Action. With regard to the establishment of identification cards for disabled persons, called for in the same resolution, she said that the question should be given careful consideration, since an international consensus had not yet been reached on a definition of disability and since policy on the disabled varied from country to country.

6. Mr. BANTHOUD (Congo) observed that the young people of the world constituted society's most important and dynamic group. The international community must therefore take measures to guarantee them a better life, particularly in view of the fact that the current economic crisis, war and the arms race were jeopardizing their future.

7. In view of the fact that young people represented two thirds of the Congolese population, his Government had always paid special attention to them. The Congolese Constitution granted youth all civil and political rights without distinction as to sex or religion. School enrollment had attained nearly 100 per cent and efforts had been made to take advantage of youth's dynamism in the employment sector. The Union de la Jeunesse Socialiste Congolaise also trained young people to deal with the problems of their society.

8. His Government was determinedly involved at all levels in preparing for the International Youth Year. A two-week youth festival held in August 1982 had enabled young people to get to know one another, exchange ideas and work together to prepare for the IYY.

9. His delegation believed that the success of the IYY would depend largely on the magnitude of the communications resources made available to young people. Contact must also be made on a regular basis between the young people of developed and developing countries. The International Youth Year would provide the youth of the world with motivation and hope, and his Government was working unstintingly towards that end.

10. Turning to agenda item 89, he stated that his Government had established a national committee for the IYDP and an association for the disabled. A complete census of the country's disabled had been taken and efforts were being continued to provide them with assistance and jobs and to integrate them fully into society. Short-term and long-term objectives had been included in the 1982-1986 five-year plan to upgrade the physical and mental training of the disabled.

11. Mr. AL-KALBASH (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons would have an impact on the international community's future policies with regard to disabled persons. He commended the work of the Advisory Committee and expressed his delegation's full support for the proclamation of the period 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, as that action would expand the framework for follow-up and implementation of the World Programme of Action. In addition, the Trust Fund established for the IYDP should be maintained as an international voluntary fund.

(Mr. Al-Kalbash, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

12. His country attached great importance to technical co-operation in fields relating to the welfare of the disabled, especially between the developed and the developing countries. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to assisting developing countries in the formulation of national programmes for disability prevention and rehabilitation. That assistance grew out of his country's deep belief in the high principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

13. Libyan society was characterized by close social relations and despite the years during which imperialism had been imposed on it, had maintained its authentic traditions, which included concern for the disabled. The Second World War had created many disabled, and its effects continued to be felt, particularly as many mines remained hidden underground.

14. The main problem facing his country in the care of its disabled was the lack of accurate statistics. Currently available figures gave an unrealistic picture of the size of the disabled population and failed to define its various sectors with precision. He gave a breakdown of the disabled population by age, noting that, while older people constituted a large proportion, a significant number were young people who might become part of the active working population. In the past, care of the disabled had been a family, rather than a societal, responsibility. However, after the 1 September Revolution, in accordance with the humanitarian and socialist orientation of the country, a Committee for Rehabilitation had been established to provide the disabled with access to education, assistance and the appropriate services. During the period 1981-1985, \$270 million had been allocated for the establishment of a number of rehabilitation centres groups, such as the deaf-mute, the blind and mentally retarded children. A number of special hospitals had been built to assist the victims of such illnesses as diabetes and heart disease.

15. In the context of the IYDF, a national committee had been established to provide assistance to the disabled, and numerous publications pertaining to the disabled had been issued. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had participated in international conferences and scientific seminars on the disabled and had enacted Law No. 3 of 1981, which afforded broad protection for the rights of the disabled.

16. All countries should join in the fight against disability, caused by either illness or Zionist oppression. His country was doing so out of a sense of duty and an awareness of the humane role it had to play in society.

17. Ms. FANTHORPE (New Zealand) said that the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the International Plan of Action on Aging set the problems of those social sectors firmly in a broad economic and social context and sought the relevant solutions there. Her delegation welcomed the pragmatic approach to substantive issues taken by the World Assembly on Aging, which had resulted in a final document emphasizing solutions, rather than the adoption of large numbers of separate resolutions on various subjects. The World Plan of Action had struck a balance between the problems of individuals and the universal aspects of aging. Its emphasis on the cultural aspects of aging were particularly relevant, since the

(Ms. Pawthorpe, New Zealand)

aging had been most affected by changes in traditional values. Paragraphs 23 and 24 of the introduction were commendable for their attempt to deal with the spiritual or intangible aspects of aging. Also commendable was the Plan's development of themes contained in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and the International Development Strategy.

18. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, like the Plan of Action on Aging, emphasized the importance for its implementation of activities at the national level. Her delegation considered the World Programme of Action acceptable and useful. During the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, her delegation had stressed the need for action to sustain IYDP initiatives. In that respect, the New Zealand National Committee for the IYDP had produced a report on the Year which listed achievements and identified directions for future action. The report stressed the need to include the disabled in all areas of policy-making, a point also made by the World Programme of Action.

19. Her country was interested in the problems and experiences of other countries, particularly those in its own region. Special attention was being paid to the development of technical co-operation with other countries. In particular, she welcomed the establishment of Disabled People's International in Singapore in 1981, perhaps one of the most significant achievements of the IYDP.

20. She stressed the important role that non-governmental organizations could play in the formulation and implementation of programmes for the elderly and the aged, for the disabled, and for other groups. The efforts of those organizations should be fully recognized and supported.

21. Ms. CAMPBELL (Canada) said that her country was currently setting up plans for its active participation in the International Youth Year. It believed that youth organizations at local, regional and national levels should be the principal moving forces behind the activities of the Year and in the promotion of its objectives. The international community, the specialized agencies of the United Nations and each Member State had a direct responsibility in making possible a positive integration in every sector of activities of all the goodwill, energy and imagination that the young generation represented.

22. Turning to agenda items 82 and 83, she said that her delegation supported the objectives of the World Assembly on Aging and the International Plan of Action adopted by it. The Canadian report to the World Assembly was the result of nationwide consultation, so that the Canadian position would reflect a true consensus. The concern for a consensus was also evident in the composition of the Canadian delegation to the World Assembly, all groups concerned with the issue of aging being represented. At the World Assembly, Canada had placed particular emphasis on the need to involve the aged in decisions which concerned them, the position of aging women who might have difficulty in obtaining a secure income, and the role of the voluntary sector in the delivery of services to the aging. It was therefore happy to see those concerns reflected in the International Plan of Action.

(Ms. Campbell, Canada)

23. Her delegation continued to support the open formulation with respect to a Day for the Aging because of the flexibility it allowed each country. In her own country, the month of June had been designated Senior Citizens' Month at both federal and provincial levels.

24. Provision had been in Canada made for concrete follow-up to the World Assembly. A National Conference on Aging was planned for the spring of 1983, and its participants would consider how to provide the elderly and the aged with more security, as well as greater opportunities to contribute to national development, within the framework of the orientations set out in the International Plan of Action and the Canadian report to the World Assembly. Welcoming the good will demonstrated during the World Assembly, she expressed the hope that solutions for some of the most urgent problems would soon be found, so that a longer life could mean a better life for aging persons throughout the world.

25. Turning to agenda item 89, she said that her country had been one of the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 31/123 proclaiming 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons, and had been a member of the Advisory Committee for the Year. Her delegation was in complete agreement with the World Programme of Action and hoped that it would be able to be one of the sponsors of the draft resolutions on the adoption and implementation of that Programme. Her Government was determined to implement the major recommendations of that Programme as soon as possible.

26. Canadians had responded enthusiastically to the International Year of Disabled Persons, which had provided them an opportunity to focus on the needs and concerns of disabled people in Canada and elsewhere in the world. Public awareness and interest had been unprecedented, and voluntary organizations, the private sector and Governments at all levels had initiated projects in virtually every sector of human activity. Active participation on the part of disabled citizens themselves had stimulated those developments and enhanced their self image and assertiveness. A Special Committee of the House of Commons had been established to study the needs of disabled persons and to recommend ways to improve their status. As part of its follow-up to the Year, the federal Government had responded to a number of the recommendations contained in the report of that Committee issued in February 1981. At the international level, Canada was providing technical and financial assistance to Disabled People's International, a new organization founded in December 1981 to provide disabled people with a voice of their own at the international level, so that it might become a key advocate and contribute to the international follow-up to the Year.

27. Of the preliminary steps required to ensure the implementation of the World Programme of Action, she singled out the role which the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs could play in assisting disabled persons in their efforts to establish national, regional and international organizations, which would help disabled persons to participate more fully and on an equal footing with the other members of the community. The Centre should also maintain its informational and consultative services to assist Member States in the design and

(Ms. Campbell, Canada)

implementation of national programmes for the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. If the Centre was to undertake those and other responsibilities, it might require additional resources. Canada would examine that possibility in the Fifth Committee in order to ensure that whenever the need arose, the appropriate resources would be found within the existing budgets of the United Nations system.

28. In conclusion, she reaffirmed her country's continuing commitment to the International Year of Disabled Persons and its hope and expectation that the implementation of the World Programme of Action would result in radical changes in the lives of the disabled. In putting the Programme into effect, there would necessarily be an interaction between the United Nations, as co-ordinating and initiating body, and the Member States, non-governmental organizations of and for disabled persons, and the private sector. The Third Committee should support the World Programme of Action and urge the General Assembly to promote its effective implementation.

29. Mrs. KALM (World Health Organization) said that WHO had taken an active part in the preparations for the World Assembly on Aging and in the Assembly itself. In implementing the strategy of health for all by the year 2000, WHO and its member States had accepted as a special challenge and commitment the application of that strategy to the aging. A large part of WHO's activities would focus on developing countries, since by that year three fifths of the world, or 400 million people aged 65 and over, would be in those countries. WHO's special report to the World Assembly on the Health Policy Aspects of Aging had been based on 10 principles developed in response to a request by a Conference convened by WHO at Mexico City in 1980 in preparation for the Assembly. Those principles concerned equality in the sharing of the benefits of societal development, individuality, non-dependence, choice, acceptability of services, cohesion among generations, mobility, productivity, and promotion of self, family and home care, and had been reflected in large measure in the International Plan of Action. WHO was gratified that the Plan of Action had recognized how important the health issues raised in individual country reports were in the policies and programmes recommended for the aging. It supported the Plan's recommendations concerning health and nutrition and was prepared to participate in their implementation.

30. In drawing up its medium-term programme for 1984-1989, WHO had decided to focus on a number of priority areas which were in keeping with the International Plan. Those areas included the dissemination of existing knowledge among the general public and the health professions and the development of new technologies through appropriate research; collaboration with countries in formulating programmes for community-based health care of older people and its integration within national primary health care systems; encouragement of cultural patterns that favoured the care of older people within the family, as well as self-care and self-reliance among them; promotion of the establishment of multidisciplinary committees and encouragement of research institutions in different disciplines with a view to re-orienting their activities to the priority social and psychosocial problems of older people; study of specific hospital care for older people, with a

(Mrs. Kaln)

view to ensuring the shortest possible period of in-patient care and rehabilitation; special studies on the availability of services for the aging and community involvement in the dissemination of information on health promotion for them, with an emphasis on day and home care; and development of technical guidelines and learning materials for health professionals caring for older people, promoting the inclusion in the curricula of such aspects as nutrition, accident prevention, mental disorders, medical care and rehabilitation. In the same period, WHO intended to convene a scientific group on nutrition and aging, to prepare a report on the use of epidemiology in the study of aging and, as resources permitted, to support collaborative research on various health aspects, including senile dementia. It also intended to collaborate in and promote multisectoral action for the aging in collaboration with other United Nations bodies.

31. Turning to agenda item 89, she said that WHO's general policies and programmes concerning the disabled were fully consistent with the objective of the International Year of Disabled Persons, its follow-up and the World Programme of Action. In May 1981, the World Health Assembly had recommended that member States should build on the efforts of the IYDP and develop permanent programmes of rehabilitation and disability prevention as an integral part of activities aimed at attaining the goal of health for all by the year 2000, and it had requested the Director-General to collaborate with member States in support of those programmes and to enhance co-operation with other United Nations agencies and with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in their planning and implementation. While giving high priority to preventive measures, WHO fully recognized the great efforts needed to meet the needs of those already disabled; accordingly, it had developed a programme of community-based rehabilitation and a Manual for Training the Disabled in the Community. The interregional meeting on community-based rehabilitation held in Sri Lanka in July 1982 had concluded that WHO's approach had proved to be an appropriate, effective, feasible and economically viable way of providing the most essential rehabilitation to the disabled not currently reached by services in developing countries. WHO hoped that by 1989 at least 50 per cent of all countries would have initiated community-based rehabilitation programmes which were available and acceptable to all sectors of the population, especially the rural and urban poor.

32. WHO was encouraged by the close co-operation that had developed between the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations during and after the IYDP. WHO was joining UNDP and UNICEF in initiating country-specific activities in the prevention of disabilities and, in addition, was co-operating with those organizations and ILO in a number of field projects. It hoped to expand its co-operation with the United Nations and all organizations concerned with the problems of the disabled.

33. On the subject of youth, she drew attention to WHO's activities mentioned in document A/37/237. The preparations for the International Youth Year presented an excellent opportunity to re-examine and co-ordinate the relevant activities within WHO, in order to maximize their impact on the health and well-being of young people and to develop WHO's co-operation with other United Nations organisations.

(Mrs. Kalm)

An internal working group had recently been convened to discuss WHO's programmes and strategies for the International Youth Year, and the conceptual framework for addressing the health issues involved had been prepared. Current plans in preparation for the Year called for the designation of a senior official within WHO as a focal point for the Year; the promotion and support of workshops and seminars at the national level; the convening of a study group in 1984 on adolescents and health for all by the year 2000, with the participation of the relevant technical programmes within WHO and in conjunction with other agencies; and the study of youth involvement and participation in primary health care, possibly including the designation of that topic as the theme for World Health Day in 1985.

34. The Very Reverend Monsignor DI FILIPPO (Holy See) said, with reference to agenda item 89, that limitations and sufferings in body and mental faculties emphasized the mystery of human existence. The human condition called suffering had a moral dimension which could be a stimulus to moral and spiritual development leading to a conscious realization of higher levels of life and more significant contributions to society. By recognizing and promoting the dignity and the rights of the disabled, people recognized and promoted their own dignity and rights. The fundamental approach to the problems connected with participation by the disabled in the life of society must be inspired by the principles of participation and personalization. The International Year of Disabled Persons had offered a favourable opportunity for a more precise overall reconsideration of the situation, of the problems and requirements of millions of human beings, particularly in the developing countries. The contribution of science and of all levels of society would lead to better understanding of the disabled and, above all, with the personal sharing of the suffering of others, would foster sincere and active love for every human being in his or her uniqueness and specific situation.

35. Turning to the items on aging, he said that the International Plan of Action offered a realistic framework for action at local and international levels in the context of present and future needs and the challenges of aging. As His Holiness Pope John Paul II had said in his message to the World Assembly, the Plan admitted of the concept of old age as a possible phase in the natural development of the life of every human being, of which it represented the culmination, and not only as a process of biological deterioration or a period separate from the other seasons of life. For many, old age was still a time of physical vigour and intellectual capability. Yet, for most, there was little conscious awareness of the opportunity of the need for continuing growth, changing roles and new kinds of functions and responsibilities. While the Church's concern in the past had been limited to the frail, the time had now come for more systematic attention to training, education and continued personal development. There was a need for theological participation along with the participation of economists, political scientists and gerontologists.

36. The implementation of the Plan of Action could not be the sole responsibility of Governments. The conclusions and recommendations of the Plan must be taken into account by the international community at large and by all United Nations bodies and non-governmental organisations concerned; the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should act as the focal point for activities, particularly in view of the International Conference on Population to be held in 1984.

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(The Very Reverend Monsignor Di Filippo,
Holy See)

37. In conclusion, he said the Holy See was confident that the World Assembly would, in the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, progressively yield abundant and enduring fruit. Having collaborated in the preparation of the Plan of Action, the Holy See would not fail to take an equally active part in its implementation.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.