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Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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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)

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1. Mrs. AZIZUDDIN (Pakistan), speaking on agenda items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 89, said that the Government and people of Pakistan had whole-heartedly supported the decision taken by the United Nations to designate 1985 as the International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace.
2. Her Government endorsed the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee for the Year on the further implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during International Youth Year, and would also take a very careful look at the draft declaration on the rights and responsibilities of youth. It would be desirable to strengthen the Youth Unit within the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in such a way as to enable it to discharge adequately its responsibilities in connection with the observance of the Year.
3. The development of young people, the channelling of their energies into productive pursuits and their preparation for shouldering their future responsibilities were clearly important, but her delegation wished to point out that, despite the work that had already been done to improve the conditions of young people throughout the world, the situation was still far from satisfactory. It was therefore necessary to emphasize the need to do everything possible to enhance the welfare of the young. Young people were suffering from malnutrition, lack of education and training, disability, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and disillusionment; the solution of all those problems called for concerted action at the national, regional and international levels. The observance of International Youth Year would play a useful role in that respect by increasing awareness of the existence of the problems and of the need for measures to solve them.
4. According to available figures, the world youth population was expected to reach 1.18 billion by the year 2000 and the number of young people would have almost doubled over the period 1975 to 2000 in the three major regions of the

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(Mrs. Azizuddin, Pakistan)

world, namely Africa, Asia and Latin America. In view of the serious impact that increase in the number of young people would have on economic growth and social progress, the developing countries would have a particularly difficult task in meeting even the minimum requirements of the young. The international community would therefore have to do everything in its power to help them cope with that task.

5. Her Government had set up a special ministry to deal with the problems of youth; special attention was being paid to education and training of the young, and they were being given every opportunity to fulfil their role as responsible members of society. Efforts were also being made to promote the development of young people by providing them with various facilities in the fields of health, social welfare and recreation. A national youth organization had also been established with the aim of promoting contacts between young Pakistanis and their counterparts in other countries.

6. The question of the elderly and the aging had engaged the attention of the international community for several years. She stressed that her Government had taken an active part in the deliberations of the World Assembly on Aging and had fully supported the International Plan of Action on Aging adopted on that occasion. It shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the Plan of Action should be considered within the framework of other international strategies and plans, especially the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

7. If present trends continued, the number of people over the age of 60 would increase from 350 million in 1975 to 590 million by the year 2000. It was estimated that by then more than 60 per cent of the aging would be found in the developing countries, compared with 52 per cent in 1975. That change in the world demographic picture presented both opportunities and responsibilities for the international community. It was incumbent upon it to ensure that the aging were able to play an active part in society.

8. Although the extended family system was still in existence in her country, thereby providing a great source of protection and promotion of social and economic security for the aging, the socio-economic changes taking place in the country and the effects they were expected to have on that system would call for other measures. The high growth rate of the aging population (from 1.76 million in 1950 to 5.59 million in 1980 and to a projected 16 million in the year 2000) was one of the major factors to be taken into account, and her Government had therefore drawn up a comprehensive national plan ensuring social and economic security to the aging, as well as affording them opportunities to contribute to national development. A national committee had been established to co-ordinate the implementation of that plan.

(Mrs. Azizuddin, Pakistan)

9. The Government and people of her country had participated enthusiastically in the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons. A national committee for the Year had been set up, a press campaign launched to promote awareness among the masses of the rights of the disabled to proper care, welfare and rehabilitation, and increased budgetary allocations had been made to improve the lot of the disabled, four model centres having been established for the deaf, the blind, the physically disabled and the mentally retarded respectively. In addition, the Government had established a special fund to help the destitute disabled, and a law had been promulgated fixing a 1 per cent voluntary quota for the employment of the disabled in governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Government had declared the period 1982-1991 as the Decade of Disabled Persons in Pakistan and had prepared a 10-year programme to enhance the welfare and development of the disabled by fully integrating them into society. It fully endorsed the draft world programme of action concerning disabled persons and supported the proposal to proclaim the period 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. It also commended the idea of optional international identity cards, which it strongly supported.

10. She recalled that there were today more than 500 million disabled people in the world, 80 per cent of whom lived in isolated rural areas in developing countries. The Government of Pakistan considered that the disabled were entitled to the same rights and opportunities as all other human beings. It further considered that the establishment of a new international economic order would make a significant contribution to improving the standard of living of the disabled, and shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the international community should not ignore the plight of all those refugees suffering from physical or psychological disabilities caused by persecution, violence and sundry hazards, most of whom lived in third world countries where services and facilities were extremely limited.

11. Although the observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons had heightened interest at all levels in the welfare of the disabled, much remained to be done. The Government of Pakistan thus considered it essential to preserve the momentum generated by that event through concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to promote the well-being of the disabled and to provide them with opportunities to participate fully in the social life and development of their societies.

12. Mr. BELLO (Nigeria), speaking on agenda items 77 and 81, said that his Government took its commitments to young people in Nigeria and the rest of the world very seriously. It understood perfectly the concerns which had led the United Nations to designate 1985 as the International Youth Year, and had already begun to take appropriate measures to contribute to its success.

13. His delegation wished to emphasize the need to develop programmes which would promote participation by young people and encourage their long-term development. Since young people constituted a sizeable proportion of the Nigerian population, the problems of youth were not merely academic to his delegation, which attached

(Mr. Bello, Nigeria)

the greatest importance to efforts to promote integration and the full participation of young people in national life.

14. The Nigerian Government attached particular importance to basic education and professional training for young people, and endeavoured to instil into them a sense of responsibility and a commitment to community service, as well as a desire to excel in sports, and in cultural and social matters. It had striven to define the rights and responsibilities of young people, who could vote from the age of 18 and be elected to national and state assemblies from the age of 25. In Nigeria, remuneration depended solely on qualifications and the type of work performed, the age of the worker being irrelevant. Young people in Nigeria enjoyed full freedom and, through national youth organizations, participated in a number of activities aimed at resolving the problems of development.

15. In its capacity as a member of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, Nigeria fully endorsed the theme of the Year - participation, development, peace - and trusted that it would provide an opportunity for greater exchanges of ideas and experience between countries and national youth associations. Nigeria was always willing to share its experience and learn from the experience of others. The problems of young people in most countries of the world were basically the same and, accordingly, global solutions should be sought by means of concerted action.

16. Mrs. RADIC (Yugoslavia), speaking on agenda items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 89, said that the draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons was among the most positive results of the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), and should be adopted by consensus at the current session of the General Assembly. The proposed short-term activities to implement the Programme of Action were of particular importance, and her delegation fully supported recommendation 2 (IV) which the Advisory Committee had adopted at its fourth session.

17. In implementation of recommendation 3 (III), relating to support activities for the development of technical co-operation in the fields of prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities in developing countries which the Advisory Committee had adopted at its third session, her Government had organized a seminar on community services and locally produced prostheses, held at Ljubljana from 11 to 22 October 1982, in which countries from every region of the world had participated, together with experts from the United Nations, ILO, WHO and a number of other organizations.

18. The participants in the seminar had adopted general recommendations dealing with urgent problems of disabled persons living in developing countries and measures to develop the services available to them. They had stressed the need to ensure the implementation of the World Programme of Action and the Vienna Affirmative Action Plan adopted by the IYDP World Symposium of Experts, and had agreed that particular attention should be accorded to the needs of the disabled in developing regions. They had also recommended that regional centres or institutions should be established throughout the world, and that the Secretary-General of the

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(Mrs. Radic, Yugoslavia)

United Nations and the heads of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system should provide assistance and continue to help the Yugoslav Government to complete the technical co-operation activities it had undertaken with a view to improving the situation of the disabled in developing countries. Finally, they had stressed the need for greater co-operation between United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in providing assistance and in organizing technical co-operation aimed at preventing disability, promoting rehabilitation and equalizing opportunities for the disabled.

19. With regard to questions relating to young people, preparations for the elaboration of programmes of activities at the national and international levels as part of the International Youth Year had already begun in Yugoslavia, co-ordinated by the Socialist Youth Alliance. The Federal Executive Council would establish a national co-ordinating body for the Year in 1984. Working groups would be established at every level to elaborate concrete programmes for the Year, which would serve as the basis for a comprehensive programme in which priority would be given to national activities, without neglecting regional and international activities.

20. As to the idea of establishing a new international body to deal with questions relating to young people, her delegation considered that it would be preferable to strengthen the Youth Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. It did, however, support the establishment of a fund for the Year.

21. As for the problems of the elderly and the aged, her delegation firmly believed that they could not be resolved partially and without changing the inequitable economic and political relations prevailing in the contemporary world. The International Plan of Action on Aging should therefore not be confined to highlighting the responsibility of Governments towards the elderly, facilitating the exchange of experiences or encouraging international co-operation but should also promote public awareness of the imperative need for profound changes in international relations so as to improve the status of all peoples. Any national and international activities in that respect should become an integral part of the struggle to establish the new international economic order. It should also be stressed that steps had to be taken to accord to the elderly a social status that enabled them to play as direct a role as possible in decision-making on all issues pertaining to their social and economic situation.

22. Mr. HENAR (Suriname), speaking on agenda items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 99, said that his Government had endorsed the specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken before and during the International Youth Year when it had voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 36/28. It would not be realistic to assume that all the problems of youth could be solved in international forums, and thus regional and national action were just as important as international conferences.

(Mr. Henar, Suriname)

23. An estimated 300 million young people were currently in search of employment in the developing countries alone. Increasing unemployment among the young was of great concern to his Government, which for that reason gave high priority to solving the problems of young people and had some years earlier established a Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports.

24. Regarding the question of the elderly and the aged, the increase in the aging population in every region of the world had serious social and economic implications, and in that respect Suriname was no exception. The Government of Suriname therefore hoped that the International Plan of Action on Aging adopted at Vienna, which included measures to strengthen the implementation of existing instruments and programmes and to place them in a broader context with a view to stimulating national and international action to meet the needs and resolve the issues relating to aging, would be endorsed by consensus at the current session of the General Assembly. Suriname was committed to carrying out the Plan's recommendations for national action and it strongly supported its recommendations regarding action to be taken regionally and internationally. It particularly supported a recommendation that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be strengthened, and it appealed to those responsible to give due consideration to providing the necessary resources for the follow-up activities of the Plan. In that connexion, his delegation endorsed the proposal that the Centre should make a careful analysis of the many national reports prepared for the World Assembly on Aging and submit its conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly at the thirty-eighth session.

25. Suriname also favoured the continuation of the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging and believed it should be used to meet the rapidly increasing needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed among them.

26. His delegation fully supported the draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus. It also supported the draft resolution submitted by the Advisory Committee as contained in the annex to document A/37/351/Add.1.

27. The draft World Programme of Action rightly placed great emphasis on the prevention of disability through action to eliminate malnutrition, pollution, water-borne diseases and accidents of all types. It was a well-known fact that an overwhelming majority of the world's disabled population lived in developing countries, where a lack of financial resources and trained personnel were obstacles to progress. His delegation therefore hoped that international programmes established to assist the disabled would result in a transfer of technology and resources.

28. Mrs. DAHAL (Nepal), speaking on agenda items 82, 83 and 89, said that the World Assembly on Aging had been a unique event in the social history of the world in that it had aroused public awareness of the international community's responsibility towards the aging. The report of the World Assembly brought out the fact that aging, natural though it was, had implications on many

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(Mrs. Dahal, Nepal)

different levels - demographic, social, cultural, financial and environmental - and that the growing world population called for thoughtful social and economic policy planning and a careful review of the trends at those different levels. Her delegation endorsed all the recommendations of the International Plan of Action on Aging and stated that Nepal would co-operate in their implementation to the extent that its means permitted. It shared the view that every State was responsible for elaborating and pursuing a policy on aging that corresponded to its own objectives and needs.

29. It was traditional in Nepal to treat the aging population with love and care. The observance of a day for the aging would nevertheless make young people more aware of their responsibility towards old people. Moreover, the elderly should be encouraged to participate in the spiritual, cultural, social and economic life of their countries. That was the function of the Nepal Elders' Organization, which had been set up for the specific purpose of enabling the elderly to take an active part in the nation's development. The National Social Service Council was responsible for identifying the various problems that faced the country.

30. Nepal had actively co-operated in the observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons, and had thereby gained a better understanding of the problems of the disabled, which had led it to take decisive steps on their behalf. Thus, an organization for the disabled, under the aegis of the Social Service Co-ordination Council, had been made responsible for creating homes for disabled men, women and children, setting up special schools for the disabled and introducing separate wings for the blind in regular schools.

31. The prevention of disability and the equalization of opportunities were indissolubly linked to the problems of development, and action in that area should be aimed at improving nutrition, education, housing, sanitation and health care. Nepal needed more information and scientific aids to improve the life of the disabled and would like the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to undertake basic research in those areas.

32. Mrs. BOZHKOVA (Bulgaria), speaking on agenda items 82, 83 and 89, observed that the question of the elderly and the aged was closely linked to problems of socio-economic development. As world population data showed, the elderly and the aged represented the fastest-growing category of population. The convening of the World Assembly on Aging was evidence of the international community's desire to take steps to solve the problems created by such a trend. It should in any case be borne in mind that the situation of the elderly depended on the level of economic development and the socio-economic system of each country. Thus, the current economic recession in the developed capitalist countries was accompanied by a reduction or an elimination of subsidies for social services and also by a decline in pensions and retirement benefits, which affected many elderly persons in particular. In the case of the developing countries, which were striving to improve the overall welfare of their populations within the framework of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Decade for Development, the question of the elderly should be considered both from the humanitarian angle and from the point of view of development.

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(Mrs. Bozhkova, Bulgaria)

33. Her delegation attached great importance to the World Assembly on Aging and the International Plan of Action it had adopted, the Plan rightly emphasized that the problems of the elderly could be solved only in conditions of peace, security, curtailment of the arms race and restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis. If those goals were attained, it would be possible to use the resources squandered for military purposes to improve the socio-economic conditions of various population groups, including the elderly.

34. It was to be hoped that the International Plan of Action would help Governments to adopt new measures to provide guarantees for the enjoyment by the elderly of their rights to work, social security, medical services and adequate housing. Her delegation also supported the recommendations contained in the Plan of Action on the strengthening of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, but considered that that should be done only by enhancing the effectiveness of the Secretariat.

35. In the year 2000, one fifth of the Bulgarian population would be over 60. Bulgaria had already taken a number of significant steps to solve the serious problems created by that situation. Consequently, national legislation guaranteed social security for all Bulgarian citizens and accorded virtually all citizens who had reached a certain age, notably agricultural workers, the right to a pension, the level of which was calculated on the basis of the fundamental needs of the beneficiaries. Women enjoyed full economic independence and, consequently, secure incomes in their old age. The major goal of current social policy in Bulgaria was the further improvement of the social security system to suit the changing living conditions of the population.

36. With regard to assistance for the elderly, the provision of social services at home had been recently added to the traditional forms of social assistance, comprising old age assistance grants and homes for the elderly. One of the distinguishing features of Bulgarian society was the unity and mutual help among the generations. Youth organizations helped retired persons, who in turn helped to bring up the young generation.

37. All elderly people in Bulgaria were given the opportunity to enjoy periods of rest at resorts, holiday houses and sanatoriums. Many pensioners played an active part in the work of public organizations and in the governing bodies of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and were elected to serve as deputies in the National Assembly and as jurors. The status of the elderly was linked to the sweeping changes made by the socialist system and was a reflection of the motto for Bulgaria's social and economic policy: "Everything in the name of the people, everything for the benefit of the people".

38. Referring to agenda item 89, she said that, since the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Government and the people of Bulgaria had continued to pay attention to the problems of disabled persons, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/77. The National Committee on the Disabled, which was headed by one of the Deputy Chairmen of the Council of Ministers and included representatives of

(Mrs. Bozhkova, Bulgaria)

many ministries, departments, public organizations and unions, had continued its activities. In compliance with the national programme, various long-term measures were envisaged for the prevention of disabilities, the improvement of safety systems and the integration of disabled persons in social life. The objectives of full participation and equality set in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons would remain an ongoing priority in Bulgaria.

39. Mr. BEIN (Israel), speaking on agenda item 89, read out a message from the Prime Minister of Israel, in which he had said, at the opening of the International Year of Disabled Persons, that the Year would serve to heighten public awareness throughout the world of the needs and the capabilities of the disabled. The Prime Minister had said that societies in which the disabled were not fully integrated wasted enormous human resources and Israel, still a young nation facing tremendous challenges in development as well as in national security, could not afford such waste. The Jewish and humanistic traditions to which Israel's society adhered placed special emphasis on the value of every human being. Israel was thus committed to the integration of its disabled citizens into the country's social, economic and cultural life and to the full utilization of that human resource. Having learned through experience, Israel, which had successfully absorbed thousands of disabled survivors of the Holocaust and had rehabilitated the wounded veterans of four wars, had made significant strides in that area.

40. Moreover, the International Year had given Israel the opportunity to launch a country-wide campaign with the slogan "Disability is only a handicap if the disabled are not given the opportunity for full participation and integration in society." In that spirit, the Israel Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons had initiated several new projects, and the Roof Association of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities had been established to help effect a change in the public attitude towards the disabled and to improve their self-image. The Association had undertaken or actively participated in numerous activities. Among its achievements were the establishment near Tel Aviv of the Israel Centre for Technical Aids, Housing and Transportation for the Disabled, whose goals were to help disabled persons to choose the aids most suited to their needs, thus enabling them to live more independent lives; to be a national clearing-house for problems concerning disabilities and to promote the development of new technical aids. Employing occupational therapists assisted by volunteers, the Centre sponsored courses and seminars for rehabilitation specialists. Similar centres were to be built at Jerusalem and Haifa. The Roof Association had also been instrumental in planning the Olympiad for Disabled Children, the installation of specially designed devices for the disabled and both the broadcasting of radio programmes and the distribution of films to educate the public regarding problems of the disabled.

41. The Akim Association for the Rehabilitation of the Mentally Handicapped had initiated the first week-end respite care programme for mentally handicapped children. A pilot project at Jerusalem made it possible for mildly mentally disabled schoolchildren to participate in community centre programmes, thereby encouraging their integration and development. A village for the physically and/or

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(Mr. Bein, Israel)

mentally handicapped who did not require intensive care was being planned in the outskirts of Jerusalem. Independent housing, also at Jerusalem, with special facilities for the handicapped, had enabled disabled persons to leave special care institutions and live on their own. The Association for the Vocational and Occupational Rehabilitation for the Disabled was involved in solving employment problems.

42. Of course, education played a major role in assisting the disabled. Israeli universities trained special education teachers and occupational therapists and provided for the introduction of technical innovations in their curricula. A learning difficulties clinic and a music therapy training programme had just been established.

43. In the area of legislation, the National Insurance Law, which had been unanimously adopted by the Knesset 30 years ago, included provisions for disabled persons, so that they received monthly allowances, vocational training and reimbursement of living and diagnostic expenses.

44. Minority groups had received special attention during the International Year of Disabled Persons, as was evident from the study day organized in the northern district in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, during which teachers responsible for social activities in Israeli Arab schools had heard lectures in Arabic on the rehabilitation of the disabled.

45. Israel had also hosted several meetings, conventions and conferences related to rehabilitation during the International Year, such as the first International Convention on the Medico-Legal Aspects of Disability, the International Symposium on Blind Infants and Young Children, the International Exhibition on Aids for the Disabled and Rehabilitation Equipment and the Conference on Uses of Computers in Aiding the Disabled.

46. Mrs. DMITRIEVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on agenda items 82, 83 and 89, pointed out that the discussion provoked by the World Assembly on Aging had revealed the existence of a close link between the solution of social problems, particularly those of the elderly, and the strengthening of international co-operation, between socio-economic development and the consolidation of international peace and security. The World Assembly had shown that the international tension connected with the frantic arms race in which the imperialist forces were engaged constituted an increasingly urgent subject of concern; the armed conflicts which were breaking out in various regions of the world were causing a huge increase in the number of disabled persons of all ages and were causing suffering, particularly among the elderly, who were the most vulnerable group of the population. In that connection, she recalled the World Assembly resolution concerning the elderly in Lebanon, which had enjoyed wide support. The World Assembly had also revealed that a number of Western countries grappling with serious social and economic problems were unable to provide appropriate living conditions for the elderly: unemployment, inflation, the rising cost of living and the reduction of social programmes in those countries were affecting the elderly.

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(Mrs. Dmitrieva, Byelorussian SSR)

47. The International Plan of Action on Aging showed that the situation of the elderly could not be really improved until a decision was taken to end the arms race once and for all and to reallocate to social and economic development the resources being devoted to military expenditure, to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism and neo-colonialism as well as genocide and racism, to establish the new international economic order and to implement the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. Her delegation fully endorsed the idea that the execution of the Plan was the responsibility, first and foremost, of national bodies. It also supported the recommendations contained in the Plan with regard to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as well as the idea of taking from the general pool of United Nations resources the additional resources to be allocated to the Centre.

48. The Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR guaranteed to all citizens of the Republic the right to material security in their old age, during illness or in the event of total or partial industrial disablement. For that purpose, the State paid various social allowances, as well as retirement and invalidity pensions, and when necessary equipped work places to meet the needs of the disabled. Noting that in certain capitalist countries there was a tendency to lower the retirement age, allegedly in order to deal with unemployment among young people, she stated that in the Byelorussian SSR the right to work, guaranteed by the Constitution, extended to the elderly, who could continue paid professional activity even while receiving a full or partial old-age pension from the State. They were free to give up a job, to resume one or to change branch. The Government of the Byelorussian SSR entrusted to various organs, including the Ministries of Social Security, Health and Housing, as well as to the National Labour Committee, the task of studying questions connected with the aging of the population and of formulating specific measures to enable the elderly to remain active in the professional and creative spheres, so that society could derive benefit from their great experience.

49. With regard to the disabled, the Government of the Byelorussian SSR was actively working to prevent disability and to ensure vocational rehabilitation and integration of the disabled into the country's social life. It devoted special attention to persons disabled in the Second World War, who enjoyed special advantages with regard to housing and community services, public transport, medical care, and accommodation at sanatoria and summer resorts; the State provided special vehicles free of charge, so that they could remain mobile. With regard to the draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Byelorussian SSR endorsed the idea of measures designed to strengthen international peace and security so as to avoid wars, which figured among the causes of infirmities. On the other hand, it believed that section C did not sufficiently highlight the need to establish national systems for the social security of disabled persons and their integration into professional life. The possible creation of an optional international identity card for disabled persons would pose technical and legal problems, particularly in view of the lack of a universally accepted definition of disability; there was also the possibility of discrimination against disabled persons who did not carry the card.

50. Mr. AL-SAYGHI (Yemen), speaking on agenda items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 89, emphasized that young people would be the creators and the beneficiaries of the future and that the security of the State currently depended on them. That was why many countries were endeavouring to create a climate conducive to the education and self-fulfilment of young people, and to their participation in social and economic life. Yemeni youth organizations had contributed to the strengthening of the State and actively participated in the country's development projects. The Yemeni Government was therefore concerned about the fate of youth and had created cultural and sporting associations for young people; it endeavoured to derive the maximum benefit from the energy and skills of young people. Youth participation had increased in all areas: development, co-operative movement, health programmes, education in rural areas and literacy campaigns; co-operation between Yemeni youth organizations and international youth organizations had expanded. In addition, the State gave young people an opportunity to acquire a skill. It had increased the number of schools, universities and vocational training institutes.

51. There was no ostracism of disabled persons in Yemen. The Institute for the Blind, established in 1967, had been given all necessary equipment and it provided blind persons with physical and psychological assistance which enabled them to participate fully in the productive activities of society.

52. The problem of the elderly did not arise in Yemen, because the Islamic structure of society meant that families were responsible for old people until their death. Indeed, Moslem education promoted moral values and close family ties. Elderly people who had no family were looked after by the State.

53. Mr. IBRAHIM (Maldives), speaking on agenda items 77, 82, 83 and 89, said that the subjects before the Third Committee concerned the entire human race, and all countries. The Republic of Maldives was a small country with a population of only about 160,000 and with hardly any natural resources, except for the sea. It was nevertheless ready to make its modest contribution to the work of any international organization striving to improve the living conditions of the young, the elderly and the disabled.

54. In connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Government had established a special committee to undertake a detailed survey of disabled persons throughout the archipelago, which was still functioning in order to maintain continuity in the efforts undertaken for the welfare of those concerned. It had also established a special centre for the disabled, where those who so wished could live. The year 1982 had been proclaimed National Year for Disabled Persons and a national day would be observed each year. Those were the principal steps taken by the Government in response to the appeal of the United Nations, but that did not mean that disabled persons had been neglected in the past. The faith of Islam encouraged respect for the value of human life. The Republic of Maldives supported the draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

55. The problems confronting the elderly could vary considerably from country to country, depending on the level of national development. In Maldives, the elderly were treated with respect and affection by the members of their family and were

(Mr. Ibrahim, Maldives)

encouraged to participate in social life. His delegation was aware of the fact that the situation was not the same everywhere, and it appreciated the need for efforts at the international level to encourage the Governments of countries experiencing problems to implement the International Plan of Action on Aging.

56. Youth was the foundation for tomorrow and all activities in that regard, whether at the national, regional or international level, should be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The growing generation represented the hope of any society, because the preservation of international peace, the establishment of a more just economic order and human progress depended to a great extent on youth. It was therefore essential for young people to understand and respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Declaration of Human Rights. To that end, priority must be given to education and to inculcation of the right ideals and values.

57. Young people under 25 years of age constituted nearly 50 per cent of the population of the Republic of Maldives; the population was distributed unevenly, a fact that made development, particularly in the field of education, complex and costly. The Government was nevertheless endeavouring to provide education for as many children as possible. It had set up a National Youth Council, and started vocational training programmes and sports and recreational activities. It intended to take the measures required to make the youth of the country aware of the objectives and purposes cited in the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/348).

58. The least developed countries, including the Maldives, needed material and technical assistance. International Youth Year could give youth organizations and movements in different countries, particularly in the developing countries, an opportunity for the exchange of experience. The Republic of Maldives was anxious to preserve its culture and to assure the development of its young people so that they might grow up to be citizens dedicated to its independence and national identity; it remained ready and willing to make its modest contribution to the success of the work which was being started.

59. Mr. JANKU (Albania) said that the problems of youth were extremely important because the world's young people represented the most vital force in society and played a decisive role in its development. Contemporary young people were aspiring to a better life and to material and spiritual conditions which would give them the opportunity to contribute to social progress. Current reality was such, however, that the aspirations of the younger generation in the majority of countries remained utopian. His delegation therefore held that problems concerning the younger generation and its future had to be analysed in a world context.

60. The economic, political, social and spiritual crisis prevailing in the capitalist and revisionist countries placed a heavy burden on the youth of those countries who were the first to suffer from the tension caused by the aggressive and hegemonistic policies pursued by the imperialist super-Powers and other reactionary forces in their efforts to maintain their political and economic

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domination, to plunder and exploit the resources of other countries and to repress the peoples' liberation movements. The expansionist policy pursued by the super-Powers in the Middle East, for example, had made it possible for the Israeli Zionists, armed with the most modern American weapons, to kill and massacre thousands of young Palestinians just because they were fighting for the legitimate right to have their own land. In Afghanistan, too, the bravest sons of the people were being killed by Soviet bullets because they were fighting for the independence and freedom of their country. Every day scores of young men and women were being killed in the fratricidal conflict between Iraq and Iran instigated by the super-Powers.

61. In similar fashion, the young people of Namibia and South Africa, who continued to suffer the consequences of the hateful policy of apartheid, and the youth of many countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America who opposed the colonialist and neo-colonialist system, were the victims of oppression, exploitation and social injustice. In Europe and America, young people were protesting against the arms race and the threat of nuclear war which menaced its future.

62. The imperialist revisionist bourgeoisie, which feared the revolutionary potential of young people more than anything else, was doing its utmost to corrupt them morally and politically and to deprive them of their revolutionary spirit by trying to disseminate the spirit of passivity and indifference to social and political problems. Apart from unemployment and illiteracy, the scourges of criminality, parasitism and the drug abuse were developing in an alarming fashion among the youth of many capitalist and revisionist countries.

63. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania, recognizing the capital role of young people, had guaranteed all their rights, created material conditions in which they could study, work and develop, and tried to inculcate in them the best moral values of the Albanian people. That was why the younger generation in Albania was not experiencing the evils from which young people in the rest of the world were suffering: they did not know the hunger, the political and economic dependence on imperialism or the unemployment, inflation, corruption and fear of the future which were widespread in most capitalist and revisionist countries. Young people in Albania contributed to the building of the socialist society and life of the Albanian people, whose revolutionary traditions they were making every effort to preserve and enhance. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania attached high importance to the need to bring up young people with a socialist and patriotic spirit at a time when the imperialist and revisionist bourgeoisie, through its aggressive and chauvinistic ideology, was striving to eliminate nations, to propagate cosmopolitanism and to negate the traditions and linguistic and cultural heritage of peoples.

64. Young people in Albania resolutely rejected such an ideology and defended the cause of proletarian internationalism in complete solidarity with the progressive and revolutionary young people who were struggling throughout the entire world against United States imperialism, Soviet social imperialism, modern revisionism

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and all reactionary forces, in order to gain national independence, democracy and social progress.

65. In early October the eighth Congress of the Labour Youth Union of Albania had been held in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and had once again been an occasion for the young people of Albania to demonstrate their profound loyalty to the Party of Labour of Albania and the Albanian people and to express its revolutionary readiness to be in the vanguard in the battle to build up and defend their country.

66. His delegation wished to express its conviction that the young men and women of the entire world would know how to use International Youth Year to demonstrate their strength and resolve in the struggle for freedom and independence, for equality and social justice; the youth of Albania would continue to make its modest contribution to that struggle.

67. Mrs. SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic), speaking on agenda item 89, said that the International Year of Disabled Persons had been marked by activities aimed at identifying current situations and problems concerning physically and mentally disabled persons and at proposing measures which would better ensure the participation of such persons on an equal footing in the life and development of society. The draft World Programme of Action prepared by the Advisory Committee reflected the principal social and medical requirements which would have to be met if the goals of the International Year of Disabled Persons were to be achieved. The German Democratic Republic, which was a member of the Advisory Committee, had approved the draft programme but wanted to take the opportunity to raise once again a problem which did not appear to have been given proper emphasis in the proposed programme. In order to improve the living conditions of disabled persons, it was necessary to identify and specify clearly the causes which underlay the coming into existence of disabilities with a view to eliminating them and taking concrete relief measures which would take account of specific requirements in relation to different kinds of disability. The description of disability causes in the draft World Programme of Action did not seem to be sufficiently comprehensive. For example, there was no reference to the extent to which acts of war affected human health. It had to be borne in mind that, for a large number of men and, increasingly, also for women and children, each armed conflict resulted in disability which entailed a life-long need for assistance. The primary end of all activities for the benefit of the disabled throughout the world must therefore be to eliminate hotbeds of war and acts of aggression and to take a committed stand against anything which jeopardized peace. It was for that reason that the German Democratic Republic, in furtherance of the goals of the International Year of Disabled Persons, consistently strove to preserve and strengthen peace as a contribution towards the prevention of avoidable disabilities caused by man.

68. With regard to action on behalf of persons of all age groups who were suffering from as yet medically unavoidable disabilities, a wide variety of measures had for a number of years past been in effect in the German Democratic Republic; such measures provided for early diagnosis and treatment, the development of special adjuvants and the provision of education and professional training for the disabled.

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(Mrs. Saelzler, German
Democratic Republic)

69. The commission which her Government had set up in observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons had examined the effectiveness of existing regulations and practical arrangements with respect to disabled persons and proposed that they should be developed further in line with specific priorities. A standing working group in the Ministry of Health had been recently established to ensure the necessary follow-up and supervise relevant activities.

70. As a member of the Advisory Committee, the German Democratic Republic hoped that the tasks and objectives set forth in the World Programme of Action would help to bring about an early improvement in the situation of disabled persons throughout the world and that all countries, in the knowledge that the preservation of peace represented the best prophylactic for preventing avoidable disabilities and handicaps caused by man, would intensify their efforts to counteract war and aggression.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.