

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

*Official Records\**



THIRD COMMITTEE  
26th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 28 October 1982  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th 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)

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.3/37/SR.26  
2 November 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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/37/237, A/37/551; A/C.3/37/L.16, L.20)

AGENDA ITEM 81: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/401, A/37/551; A/C.3/37/L.23)

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; A/37/551; A/C.3/37/L.21)

AGENDA ITEM 83: WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING (continued) (A/CONF.113/31; A/C.3/37/4; A/C.3/37/L.21)

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, A/37/551; A/C.3/37 L.19, L.22)

1. Mrs. EL-ALI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the United Nations must devote attention to social issues, such as those concerning youth, the elderly and the aged, and the disabled, and must encourage Governments to consider them.

2. In her country, youth questions were discussed at the highest levels of Government. Education was free and was the right of all without discrimination. Young people participated in the adoption of legislation as representatives in the People's Assembly. Youth organizations were supported by the State and young people took part in various social campaigns, such as those promoting literacy and afforestation. Seminars to discuss youth questions were held frequently, festivals were organized and youth organizations participated in informational activities. They also worked to strengthen co-operation with young people in other countries, to support national liberation movements and to condemn racist and Zionist practices. Her Government was attempting to promote sports activities that would help the physical development of young people by building sporting villages in various towns and by granting advantages to sports champions in job recruitment and employment. It was making every effort to support the International Youth Year and welcomed the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/37/348).

3. The World Assembly on Aging demonstrated the attention paid by the international community to older people and its desire to improve their lot by adopting appropriate policies. His delegation welcomed the International Plan of Action for the Aging and felt that its recommendations would have a positive effect on the life of the elderly and the aged and help them to make a greater contribution to society. In Syria, a country where family links were strong, older people represented one of the pillars of the family, contributed to its prosperity and were treated with great respect. The Ministry of Social Affairs had considered their problems and had promulgated various laws on the subject, including a recent law which extended social security to those previously not covered by the system.

(Mrs. El-Ali, Syrian Arab Republic)

4. Turning to item 89, she said that her Government planned to open more institutions and centres for the disabled. A law had been passed to help the disabled in employment, and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health were co-operating to improve the services available to them. Films and books were published for the disabled, in co-operation with UNESCO. In April 1982, a symposium on the care of the disabled, held at Damascus, in co-operation with UNICEF, had adopted a number of important recommendations concerning, inter alia, the promotion of maternity homes, maternal and child welfare centres and public clinics, the prevention of diseases caused by malnutrition, care of the environment, the establishment of medical research centres, the fight against drug abuse and alcoholism, and the need to provide medicines at reasonable prices and to conduct information campaigns aimed at combating prejudice. The Government was studying disability problems encountered in schools and planned to establish school health sections to examine pupils and identify disabilities at an early stage. It was also conducting a campaign to train teachers of disabled students. Efforts were being made to promote organizations to protect the disabled, and there were plans to construct buildings and other public facilities in such a way as to facilitate access by the disabled, so that they could participate more actively in social activities, including sports. In conclusion, she said that the last week of April had been designated Arab Week for the Disabled.

5. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas), speaking on items 77 and 81, said that, given its strength in numbers, underutilization of the potential of youth or neglect of its needs must inevitably result in the retardation of development. The International Youth Year was a valuable opportunity to review youth policies and programmes and to adopt measures that would ensure their integration into the development process. National priorities for youth should be the primary focus of the Year, since it was national Government which had the responsibility of creating and maintaining the necessary machinery through which young people could become more meaningfully involved. Successful programmes and policies at the national level would undoubtedly manifest themselves in the broader regional and international context, since such policies resulted in greater youth participation in the work of regional and international forums. Her country believed that youth policies and programmes must first be initiated by young people themselves but must also be influenced by aspirations, objectives and goals of society as a whole. Therefore, youth should be taught to perceive itself as one of the several age groups making up the total population rather than as a special privileged entity.

6. The Bahamas favoured a practical approach to youth development, involving the broad national participation of government, business, industrial enterprises, the community and youth. Its objective was to shape a Bahamian personality which was self-disciplined, principled, accomplished and proud of its cultural heritage. An emphasis was placed on workable, innovative programmes, and special areas had been earmarked for national action, the main focus being on education. Her Government believed that education must move away from the traditional system to a system in which every student was given the education and training peculiar to his special abilities, aptitude and interests. That approach should go a long way towards

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

solving the problems of youth employment in countries which, like the Bahamas, suffered from a lack of skilled persons as a result of inadequate training in certain areas.

7. Through the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Community Affairs and Culture, further programmes were being developed to increase youth participation in national and personal development, providing, inter alia, employment and career counselling, apprenticeships and job experience, and training in management practices. In addition, youth co-operatives, youth agricultural programmes and 4-H clubs played a significant role in youth training and development. Through Junior Achievement, a joint venture between government and the private sector, young people created, owned, managed and operated their own small companies, making use of materials that were either indigenous to the Bahamas or readily available there.

8. The Bahamas used the media to share constructive ideas and information with youth, youth leaders, youth organizations and the general public, aiming particularly at unattached young people, those who were out of school and not part of any formal youth organization. The competent Ministry published a quarterly magazine and issued a pamphlet providing basic information on major social problems such as drug abuse and alcoholism, as well as timely advice on self-image and job-seeking. A radio programme and a "youth hot line" were planned for the years preceding the International Youth Year. Sports and recreation continued to be promoted as an integral part of character-building. In the years preceding the IYY, the Youth Advisory Council, a body representative of all youth organizations, would continue to function as the Government's primary advisory body on youth matters.

9. Her delegation welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that regional meetings should be held during 1983. A regional meeting in Latin America would permit the timely discussion of issues pertinent to the area, such as the need to duplicate youth policies and programmes several times over within archipelagic States such as her own. Her country would continue to be involved in regional and international activities relating to youth, primarily through the Commonwealth Youth Programme, sporting and cultural exchanges, and its participation in the United Nations. It was, however, firmly convinced that all international efforts should serve only to complement national efforts. International forums should be concerned with the systematic evaluation of national and regional action and the exchange of ideas.

10. Mrs. KABA (Guinea) said that the main aim of the International Youth Year was to promote the active participation of young people in social and economic activities and in the defence of peace. The training of the young had been given a high priority in Guinea and formed part of its national policy from the moment it had gained independence. Thus, throughout their years of education and until they started their working life, young people were joined together in the same national organization, the Jeunesse de la Révolution Démocratique Africaine, whose programme reflected the ideals of the Guinean nation. Through that organization, young people participated fully in the development process and became accustomed to

(Mrs. Kaba, Guinea)

exercising responsibility in all sectors of national life. They also participated actively in changing rural social and economic conditions, helping to achieve a significant growth in agricultural output. Their reforestation campaign, although it had achieved only modest successes, indicated that they had become aware of the danger to the country's agriculture posed by drought.

11. Guinea fully supported all the recommendations and suggestions made by the Advisory Committee in the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year. Young people in Guinea had begun a campaign against alcoholism, drug use, the corruption of morals and other damaging vices. In order to prevent juvenile delinquency, her delegation fully supported the idea of drafting a declaration, or even an international legal instrument, on the rights and responsibilities of young people. The youth of Guinea had always co-operated actively with national youth organizations everywhere which shared the ideals of liberty, justice and peace. It maintained indirect contacts with international organizations through the Pan-African Youth Movement. Her delegation felt that the United Nations should invite regional movements to take part in the preparatory work for the Year.

12. Turning to items 82, 83 and 89, she said that the human values cherished by communities in her country meant that older and disabled persons were never left to their own devices but were always taken care of by their local community. An effort had been made to institutionalize those traditions in order to adapt them to the requirements of development and social progress. Social legislation concerning the disabled had been enacted, particularly with regard to employment, free access to education and the establishment of specialized centres. Moreover, her delegation felt that care should be taken to provide disabled children with legal protection, since one child in ten was born with a disability or became disabled at a later stage. It also felt that donor countries should increase their contributions to the United Nations specialized agencies and should support the initiatives undertaken in national and international plans to prevent disabilities and rehabilitate the disabled.

13. In conclusion, she said that her delegation supported the Plan of Action proposed by the World Assembly on Aging.

14. Mr. VEITIA (Venezuela) said that the International Youth Year was an opportunity to gain knowledge on the needs and aspirations of youth throughout the world and to promote specific programmes in behalf of youth, who themselves should participate in the study and solution of the main regional, national and international problems. It should not be forgotten that the high level of awareness of youth, especially in the developing countries, was a solid basis on which to undertake with youth integrated measures for development, especially at the national level.

15. Venezuela was a young country with nearly 75 per cent of its population below the age of 29. The Government had promoted the active involvement of citizens in order to ensure that decisions were taken not in a paternalistic manner, merely on

/...

(Mr. Veitia, Venezuela)

behalf of the people or for the people, but rather with the participation of the people. The concept of Venezuela's youth policy was an extension of that overall social policy - a policy of action "with youth" rather than "for youth". It was an eminently democratic policy which required the contribution of youth in the analysis of national problems and in the search for solutions to those problems. Venezuela's youth programmes were broad and comprised basically activities in training, culture, science and technology for development, civics, sport and health and juvenile camps.

16. Venezuela had noted with interest the strengthening of co-operation between the United Nations system and youth organizations, and it regarded as fundamental the contribution of the mass media in disseminating information in connection with the problems confronting young people. The role of non-governmental and regional organizations was also important in the preparation of activities related to the International Youth Year. His delegation believed that it was fundamental to promote among youth the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. Peace should be promoted in terms of development and that peace/development relationship should be translated into tangible action for youth participation.

17. His delegation agreed that the aging of the population would have social and economic repercussions at the national and international levels. It believed that those questions should be dealt with in an integrated manner within the context of national development plans and that joint action should be increased in order to exchange knowledge derived from national experiences. Venezuela was prepared to exchange the modest knowledge it had acquired. It had taken action in the area of social security for older citizens in order to meet their specific needs. The National Institute of Geriatrics and Gerontology had implemented assistance programmes for the elderly and the aged. Venezuela again endorsed the efforts made within the United Nations by the international community through the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and in particular the preparatory work for the recently held World Assembly on Aging. The results of that Assembly had been satisfactory, and his delegation hoped that the recommendations contained in the International Plan of Action on Aging would soon be implemented.

18. With regard to item 89, his delegation believed that there was a need to extend the action programmes, through the proclamation of 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. That would make possible a systematization of the programmes and provide an opportunity to evaluate the results obtained, particularly with respect to the prevention of disability. Those programmes should be strengthened at the subregional level in order to permit exchanges of experts and programmes. To that end, the Special Education Committee of the Andrés Bello Agreement had recently been constituted, comprising Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Spain and Venezuela.

19. At the national level, Venezuela was contemplating a broad programme for persons with physical, mental or developmental disabilities. It was carrying out through the communications media an important campaign aimed at bringing about a

(Mr. Veitia, Venezuela)

change in the community's attitude towards disabled persons and preventing factors which caused disabilities. The Law for the Integration of Disabled Persons would soon be promulgated to ensure equality in work, social security and other important fields breaking the physical and social barriers to the full participation of the disabled.

20. Mr. KBAIER (Tunisia), speaking on agenda items 77 and 81, said that the increasing attention given to questions concerning young, disabled and older persons as part of international economic co-operation for development and the many initiatives and measures undertaken demonstrated new perception of the social element in development policies. The poor international economic climate, compounded by a weakening of the spirit of international co-operation, made the need to find suitable solutions for those social problems all the more evident.

21. His Government, which devoted a large proportion of its budget to education, attached great importance to young people. It had welcomed the proclamation of the International Youth Year and had supported the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during the Year. The aims of that Programme were in line with the efforts of his Government to bring young people into the process of economic and social development. Young people, particularly in developing countries, should be able to play a major role, inter alia, in science and technology. An effort to mobilize young people in the key area of North-South co-operation would do much to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries. It was therefore important to undertake education and training programmes for young people in that sector. Young people should also be guided towards development research and the possibility of introducing them to "integrated research" should be considered.

22. He expressed his delegation's interest in the report contained in document A/37/348 and said that the additional guidelines proposed in it, particularly those concerning young migrant workers, were very important and should be given all necessary attention.

23. Noting the importance of the participation of young people in United Nations activities, he said that the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (General Assembly resolution 2037 (XX)) had been a landmark in the field of co-operation between young people and the United Nations. Another important event had been the World Youth Assembly held at United Nations Headquarters in 1970. He suggested promoting an exchange of information between young people and the United Nations, both through national information centres and through more extensive seminars and symposiums designed to acquaint young people with United Nations activities. On a more general level, he said that the success of the International Youth Year depended on the effectiveness of the channels of communication between young people and the United Nations, on the degree to which young people contributed to United Nations youth policies and programmes and on the extent of the possibilities offered to young people to participate in the overall development process and in decision making; Governments and United Nations agencies must take those three factors into account.

/...

24. Mr. MANALO (Philippines) said that the ultimate goal of the International Development Strategy was to strengthen the capabilities of all sectors of the community as a basis for their full and effective participation in development and for a fair and equitable distribution of economic benefits. The Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulated that every person was entitled to live in dignity, and a meaningful implementation of the World Plan of Action for Disabled Persons and the International Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly on Aging should take full account of the principles contained in those United Nations instruments. Because of the link between the problems of the elderly and the aged and those of the disabled as problems of human resources and world economic stability, there was a need for a total and multisectoral approach to those problems. The Philippines fully supported the recommendation made in document A/37/351/Add.1 by the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

25. Unfortunately UNDP did not accord high priority to activities concerning disabled persons. His delegation therefore appealed to the developed countries to ensure that the Trust Fund for IYDP would continue so that both the developed and the developing countries might contribute to it. On a long-term basis, the Fund would also assist in establishing linkages between national projects. There was no need to inject North-South complications into the discussion of humanitarian problems. The basic consideration was co-operation, not contentious confrontation.

26. In the Philippines, the elderly and the aged were regarded with respect, bordering on reverence. They were, by reason of experience and acquired wisdom, viewed as unquestioned authorities on family life, and the Philippines hoped to preserve that cultural tradition. The Philippines had established a National Committee which met regularly to monitor the implementation of the National Plan for the Aging. That Committee was now negotiating with the National Development Authority of the Philippines for the inclusion of the programme for the aging in the National Development Programme. There was no need to establish homes for the elderly and the aged in the Philippines, for the foundation of the society was the extended family, and they were very much a part of that system.

27. A number of participants at the World Assembly on Aging had agreed on the need to generate greater awareness of the situation of aging women. Traditionally, women were discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities and economic benefits, and that discrimination was even more pronounced in the case of older women. The Philippines therefore supported the recommendation that their situation should be considered at the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. Furthermore, his delegation believed that appropriate measures should be undertaken by Governments to prepare the elderly for retirement, providing them with opportunities to undertake rational retirement programmes.

28. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of strengthening the work of the regional commissions in dealing with the problems of aging. It urged the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to continue its activities in helping to implement the International Plan of Action at the regional level.



(Mr. Manalo, Philippines)

The Philippines believed that there was ample scope for international co-operation in dealing with the problems of the elderly and the aged, and his Government was therefore prepared to collaborate with other Governments on the implementation of the International Plan of Action.

29. Mr. RODRIQUES (Jamaica) said that young people today should be viewed not merely as potential participants in the decision-making process but as active participants in their own right, with their own specific needs and aspirations and contributions to make to the development of society as a whole. His Government fully recognized the important contribution that young people had made to the development of Jamaican society and was actively seeking to involve that sector of the population in all its development plans. However, the problems being faced by young people in Jamaica were complex and required well-thought-out solutions. The strengthening and development of policies and programmes in that regard should be considered within the context of the country's overall planning for its development. To that end, Jamaica had undertaken the Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART) programme, designed to provide training and employment for thousands of young people each year.

30. Jamaica fully supported the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year which were contained in document A/37/348. His delegation also wished to associate itself with the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/37/237) and reaffirm its belief that the themes of the IYY should provide a sound basis for the full integration of youth into the development process.

31. Jamaica had traditionally approached its older citizens with great respect, in recognition of the essential role which they had played and continued to play in the achievement of national development goals. In Jamaica's cultural and social experience, the elderly and the aged were revered mentors, trusted counsellors, teachers, folklorists and examples to future generations. They had been, to a large extent, the oral interpreters of history, preserving and perpetuating social and cultural experiences which would otherwise have been lost. The aging also continued to be a vital force in the political and economic areas of society, and, as voters representing over 10 per cent of the population, they continued to make their political will known. In the economic field, the aging continued to contribute skills and expertise based on their years of practical experience. His Government was taking steps to meet the needs of the older citizens in the areas of health, housing, social welfare services and income security. The economic security and the social and psychological well-being of the aging throughout the world were vital to the preservation of a sense of historical continuity in each society for future generations.

32. Jamaica had achieved notable successes with regard to activities in behalf of disabled persons, and their participation in all aspects of public and social life had been increased. The disabled in Jamaica showed heightened confidence and received greater respect from the public in general. The momentum gained during the International Year of Disabled Persons should not be lost, and Jamaica was building

/...

(Mr. Rodriques, Jamaica)

on those achievements and to continue with follow-up activities. However, international co-operation was needed to address some of the problems faced by the disabled and to supplement national efforts. In that connection, Jamaica had recently hosted, in collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat, a Caribbean Symposium on Technical Assistance as a follow-up to the IYDP. Implementation of the recommendations of that symposium would go far towards ensuring that the needs of the disabled were met.

33. His delegation supported the draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and believed that there was a need to place emphasis on the prevention of disability, while ensuring the fullest rehabilitation of the disabled and their integration into society. The development process of a country depended not only on the financial resources available, but also, and more fundamentally, on the resources of all its people, including the young, the aging and the disabled.

34. Mr. GHAZALI (Malaysia) said that youth formed more than 40 per cent of the world population and more than half the population of some developing countries. Malaysia was giving priority to the development of youth, as the responsible citizens and the leaders of the future.

35. The proclamation of 1985 as the International Youth Year marked the recognition of the significant role played by youth in nation-building. A number of youth leaders had won seats in the recent general elections in Malaysia and had subsequently been appointed to high governmental offices.

36. The Malaysian Youth Council, formed in 1948 and now recognized by the Government as the National Council for Youth Organizations, was concerned with the balanced development of youth in the economic, social, educational and political spheres and was the voice of youth in the country. Governmental support was provided through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, whose Youth Division was responsible for harmonizing the activities of youth associations and organizations. Those associations and organizations were given facilities, guidance and support by the Ministry but maintained their autonomous status, thus reflecting the principle that the Government and the youth movement were partners in the national development effort.

37. Malaysia would be celebrating the International Youth Year at the national, regional and international levels in co-operation with the Asian Youth Council, the Committee of ASEAN Youth Co-operation, the Malaysia Youth Council, ESCAP, the United Nations Volunteers and the Commonwealth Youth Programme. Youth activity programmes had been drawn up for implementation in the period up to 1985, and plans were being made to form more youth clubs and to increase the present membership from 1.6 to 2.5 million by 1985. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports was also planning to build four new youth training centres, for heavy industry, agriculture, business and vocational training, to be operational by 1985.

(Mr. Ghazali, Malaysia)

38. At the regional level, Malaysia's National Youth Co-operative (KOBENA) had recently signed with its Indonesian counterpart (KOPINDO) a co-operation agreement under which efforts would be made to persuade the other three ASEAN countries to form their own youth co-operatives, with a view to the formation of an ASEAN Youth Co-operative in 1985 in conjunction with the observance of the International Youth Year.

39. At the international level, an International Youth Centre was under construction at Kuala Lumpur, to provide youth training facilities and serve as a focal point for the various international youth organizations in Malaysia. The National Youth Training Centre at Pertak was being upgraded to serve youth leaders and field workers coming from friendly countries for training in youth work. His Government was planning to co-operate with other friendly countries, in the belief that the exchange of experience was beneficial. Malaysia was ready to share its knowledge, experience and facilities.

40. In connection with the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the International Youth Year, he mentioned that Malaysia, as the current President of the Asian Youth Council, would be host, early in 1983, to an international youth conference which would discuss the possible formation of youth councils in Asian countries where they did not exist. The conference could also serve as a forum for discussing the curriculum for the International Youth Leadership Centre.

41. With regard to an earlier proposal made by the representative of Romania for the establishment of a unit in the United Nations to promote international activities in the field of youth and co-ordinate the relevant activities of the Organization, his delegation believed that at present another unit would be redundant, since the existing Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was adequate for co-ordinating all United Nations activities in preparation for International Youth Year.

42. The inauguration of the International Youth Year should not be merely a matter of festivals, seminars and conferences but should aim at achieving tangible results in the general effort to make young people self-reliant and aware of their rights and responsibilities. Co-operation, co-ordination and mutual understanding between Governments and non-governmental youth organizations were indispensable. As President Roosevelt had said, it was not always possible to build the future for youth, but it was possible build youth for the future.

43. Mr. MAHALLATI (Iran), speaking on agenda items 82 and 83, said that in the wealthy and developed countries old people were increasing in number and were living longer, as a result of better medical and other care, but because of the social system they no longer had a place in the family.

44. In his own country, however, the elderly and the aged were regarded as an asset to society. Care for their well-being was not left solely to charitable, religious and voluntary activities: during the present year, legislation had been enacted to reinforce private and communal efforts, and a special fund had been set

/...

(Mr. Mahallati, Iran)

up for their welfare in rural areas. Mindful of the Koran, which enjoined the young to care for their parents in their old age, the youth of Iran had assumed their responsibility for the financial and emotional protection of their parents. The close parent-child relationship prevented psychological problems on both sides, and children competed for the privilege of having their parents live with them. Today the older citizens of Iran played an active part in political, social and spiritual affairs, and institutions such as old-age homes were not needed. In the exceptional case of people without relatives, the Government provided all the necessary social services.

45. Regarding agenda item 79, he said that as a result of the so-called peace-keeping efforts of the Iraqi régime, in residential as well as combat areas, the number of disabled had increased dramatically since the start of Iraq's war of aggression. In spite of difficulties, it had been possible to provide services and facilities to relieve their sufferings. A factory to manufacture artificial limbs had been established; the disabled were given priority in private and public housing and had been allocated the best-equipped and most comfortable houses left by the associates of the Shah's régime after the revolution; and since most of them had been injured in the defence of their Islamic land and faith, they enjoyed the appreciation of all Iranians.

46. In connection with agenda items 77 and 81, he said that the achievements of youth during the revolution had been astonishing, in the light of the fact that they had been living under a social order which was characterized by imported immoral modes of life and under which every effort had been made to prevent them from achieving political and ethical awareness. Iran was now realizing that a nation's most valuable and lasting asset was its young people. It was Iran's youth that had destroyed the centres of corruption, which had been replaced with centres for cultural, spiritual and physical development.

47. Following the closure of the universities two years earlier, in order that the higher education system might be reconstructed on Islamic principles, the young people, including university students and high school graduates, had continued their role in political, social, spiritual and educational services, while a new curriculum was being prepared on the basis of the country's social, political and spiritual needs and aspirations. In June 1979, the Crusade for Reconstruction (Jihad-e-Sazandegi) had been established by order of Imam Khomeini; as a result, Iran's revolutionary youth - who had helped to expel the invading troops from Iran - had carried out the main work of constructing medical clinics, mosques, houses, schools and libraries, building bridges and rural roads, cultivating large areas of land and supplying water and electricity to villages.

48. Young people had also assumed responsibility for internal security and had been successful in combating the major problems of illiteracy and drug abuse inherited from the former régime. Half a million people had learned to read and write in the past year, and the number of students attending high school had increased sixfold since the days of the former régime.

(Mr. Mahallati, Iran)

49. One of the most important aspects of the lives of young people was the idealism that guided them. Their morale, wisdom and courage was illustrated by the spiritual testament of Hossein Shakar Reez, who had died at the age of 17 fighting the invaders. In it, he thanked Allah for granting him the courage to face death, expressed pride in his martyrdom for a divine cause and urged others to continue the Holy War.

50. It was customary under the present agenda item to report on how youth were being educated; but Iran was determined to learn from youth, rather than try to teach them. The founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, had said: "Our leader is that 12-year-old child, with his small heart, which is more valuable than hundreds of our tongues and pens, who threw himself under an enemy tank with a grenade in his hand, destroying the tank and achieving martyrdom."

51. Mrs. MANGANARA (Greece) said that the countries of the world had attached great importance to the World Assembly on Aging because of the increase in the world's aging population, which had resulted from improved social services and living conditions. The World Assembly had been designed to explore that phenomenon's implications for development in both the industrialized and the developing countries and to determine ways to solve the problems of the elderly and the aged. However, implementation of the Plan of Action would depend on the commitment of individual countries.

52. Her own country's population had aged relatively rapidly in recent years. The elderly had traditionally constituted an integral part of the Greek family structure, particularly in middle-income and lower-income groups. However, in recent years, younger people had often been unable to give serious consideration to the needs of the older members of their families because of the stress of modern daily life. That problem was particularly severe with regard to older women, disabled persons and refugees. To cope with that situation, her Government had conceived programmes and activities for the aging within the framework of the recently established open-care centres. It had also introduced a pension scheme covering all uninsured elderly and aged persons. In preparation for the World Assembly, Greece had established a national Committee composed of representatives of the Government, interested organizations and experts in the field of aging. Her delegation supported the idea of designating a special day for the aging. Her Government would make its contribution to the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging later in 1982.

53. Speaking on agenda item 89, she said that the IYDP had been an important first step towards the international community's recognition of the need to integrate millions of disabled persons into society. Her delegation endorsed the adoption by consensus of the draft Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and welcomed in particular its emphasis on disability prevention and rehabilitation and on the equalization of opportunities for the disabled. Greece believed that States should set up sheltered workshops for those disabled individuals who could not find employment in the free labour market. Governments should assume primary responsibility for formulating and implementing policies for the disabled.

/...

(Mrs. Manganara, Greece)

Accordingly, Greece had established a special office to ensure the vocational guidance, training and placement of the disabled. Similar organizations were planned at the local level.

54. In the aim of fostering research in the field of the disabled, a work team had been established within the Ministry of Labour to gather information covering all aspects of the situation of the disabled in Greece. The Government was also considering the establishment of a central organization which would co-ordinate the activities of those ministries that dealt with the disabled. With regard to the proclamation of a United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, she said that her delegation was prepared to join in a consensus on such an idea.

55. Mr. AL-QAYSI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Committee's task was not to discuss the war between Iran and Iraq. However, since the representative of Iran had been the first to mention it, he wished to remind Committee members of the well-known fact that Iran had declared that war. Referring to that representatives's allegation that the war had caused the disablement of thousands of persons, he noted that, in general, war destroyed countries and inflicted casualties on both sides. Iraq had repeatedly expressed its desire to halt the war, having approached the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Islamic Conference and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The war's continuation was thus the result of Iran's arrogance and stubbornness.

56. Iraq also had a disabled population as a result of the war. Children, in particular, had often been victims of exploding mines. While it was true that those children included many who were Iranian, his country had followed the teachings of the Islamic faith, which held that the child was sacred, and it had shown compassion and cared for those children, many of whom were under the age of 15. It was also that fundamental belief in Islam that had kept his country from invading Iran.

57. Mr. MAHALLATI (Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was shameless for a representative to address the Third Committee on ways and means of assisting the old, the disabled and the young when his régime had committed unprecedented crimes against those groups in his country. The Iraqi accusation that Iran had initiated the present war was a lie. He reminded Committee members that during the recent Iraqi shelling of Dezful more than 20 civilians, including children, had been killed and more than 100 injured. He also drew attention to a statement in which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Iraqi régime, speaking at the Non-Aligned Movement's ministerial conference at Hanava, expressed satisfaction that the Iraqi army had been able to kill at least 40,000 Iranians even though it had lost control of captured Iranian territory. Furthermore, a recent official letter from the International Committee of the Red Cross expressed regret that two Iranian prisoners of war had been killed in Iraqi prisons, in violation of all internationally accepted conventions. The Third Committee must put pressure on the Iraqi régime to give humanitarian treatment to Iranian prisoners of war.

(Mr. Mahallati, Iran)

58. Iraq was not the only régime that spoke in favour of Islam while acting in opposition to it; Mr. Begin was doing the same thing. Iraq's Islam was therefore equivalent to Begin's Islam.

59. Mr. AL-QAYSI (Iraq) said that his delegation was accustomed to hearing such allegations. With regard to the killing of Iranian prisoners of war, he wished to point out that journalists had recently witnessed the bodies of Iraqi soldiers who had been trampled to death by Iranians, a crime that had been condemned by many organizations. With regard to the shelling of Dezful, he observed that the Iranians had continued to use heavy artillery to bombard the southern, central and even northern sectors of Iraq. The cities of Basra and Mendeli were shelled regularly. Foreign diplomats had observed the damage done to the civilian population by the massacre of old people, women and children. Such acts were contrary to all international law.

60. He himself had met with representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and had made many complaints to that body about Iran. With reference to the Islamic faith, he said that the Arab peoples considered themselves honoured to have been the first recipients of its message; nevertheless, Islam belonged to all men.

61. Mr. MAHALLATI (Iran) suggested that Governments should make inquiries at their embassies in both Iran and Iraq to learn for themselves what was happening there. Iraqi documents seized at the front showed that Iraqi soldiers had been ordered to treat Iranian prisoners of war, particularly the Revolutionary Guards, as war criminals, killing or torturing them as they saw fit. He therefore urged Member States to contact the International Committee of the Red Cross to verify the treatment of prisoners of war in Iraq and Iran. As to the comments made by the representative of Iraq with respect to the Islamic faith, he said that it would be ridiculous and useless to respond to them.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.