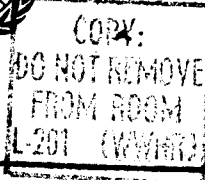


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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 91: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
(continued)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/37/3 (Part I), A/37/381, A/37/458 and Add.1, A/37/551)
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AGENDA ITEM 92: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
(A/37/349 and Add.1, A/37/540)

1. Mrs. SIVOLOB (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) express great satisfaction with the untiring efforts made by the United Nations to ensure the equality of men and women and given tangible form by the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women. The major objectives of the Decade - Equality, Development and Peace - had been defined and consolidated in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, and subsequently in the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. Those documents had been favourably received by the Ukrainian SSR because they echoed its own position on the current problems of women. In the message which he had addressed to the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Leonid Brezhnev had recalled that the Great October Revolution had paved the way for the total elimination of the de jure and de facto inequality of women and men in the USSR and had brought a radical transformation of the traditional concept of the role of women in the family and in society. For the past 65 years, the Communist Party and the Government of the Ukrainian SSR, inspired by the teachings of Lenin on the emancipation of women, had spared no effort to ensure that Ukrainian women could raise their level of education, be integrated into social, political and professional life and develop their full potential. The social programme adopted for the period 1981-1985 was intended primarily to enable women to reconcile their professional work and their social and political activity with motherhood and housework; in addition, it was designed to give them more spare-time activities in order that they might improve their professional skills.

2. In that connection, she said that secondary and higher education was becoming universal throughout the territory of the Republic: two thirds of the workers had some secondary or higher education, and the level of schooling was, on average, higher among women than among men. During the most recent five-year plan (1976-1980), 1,180,000 Ukrainian women had improved their professional

(Mrs. Sivolob, Ukrainian SSR)

qualifications, and 250,000 women had acquired a second profession. One engineer out of two, two doctors out of three, three teachers out of four and 40 per cent of all scientists were women. Tens of thousands of women were leaders of enterprises, institutes, social organizations, collective farms and State farms. Thirty-six per cent of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR were women and women filled half the seats of the Soviets of People's Deputies.

3. The Permanent Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR dealing with the question of the living and working conditions of women and with maternal and child welfare had been established in 1976 within the framework of International Women's Year to ensure the implementation of measures taken by the State in that field. That Commission was invested with broad powers - it could propose legislation or submit to the Supreme Soviet for consideration proposals bearing on the economic, social and cultural development of the State; bodies, organizations and Government officials were duty bound to meet its requests. Recently, the Permanent Commission had studied the working conditions of women in certain branches of industry and had studied the question of the establishment of a maternal and child welfare centre. The recommendations it had made in that connection and with respect to the socio-economic medical and legal work-related problems of women, as well as to some questions of vocational training, would be implemented as part of the current five-year plan (1980-1985). She also mentioned the Government's recent decrees on the strengthening of social welfare for the family and the continued improvement of social security for the population.

4. With regard to the participation of women in the strengthening of international peace and security, she drew attention to the current scope of the peace movement in the world and pointed out that women now participated by the millions in the struggle for peace. Ukrainian women militated actively for peace because they had not forgotten that the Ukraine had lost more than 5 million men and women during the last world war, and they were aware of the danger posed by the escalation of the nuclear arms race. The struggle for peace was decisive to the extent that peace was essential for equality and development and therefore for real improvement in the status of hundreds of thousands of women. That idea must be reflected in any document prepared by the United Nations. As a sponsor of the draft Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle for the Strengthening of International Peace and for the Solution of Other Vital National and International Problems (A/37/144 and Add.1), her delegation wished to state that the sponsors of the text had taken into account all constructive proposals made by States. While the General Assembly had approved the text as a whole at its preceding session, the sponsors, feeling that it could still be improved, had continued to hold consultations. There was good reason to believe that the General Assembly would adopt the draft Declaration at the current session and that it would constitute an important contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. She pointed out that the second half of the Decade had been marked by a great event, namely, the entry into force in September 1981 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Ukrainian SSR had been among the first States to ratify the Convention, in the preparation of which it had taken an active part. Moreover, the essence of the Convention's provisions had been enshrined in the Constitution and

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(Mrs. Sivolob, Ukrainian SSR)

legislation of the Ukrainian SSR and had long been implemented in the country. She strongly encouraged States that had not already done so to ratify the Convention or to accede to it so that that instrument of international law could become truly universal.

5. Mrs. WANG Yuping (China) said that women constituted half of mankind and represented a force that could not be ignored. The Chinese Government therefore took a great interest in measures to enable them to play their full role. Both the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women emphasized above all the principle of equality, which was the only basis on which women could achieve full development and participate in all activities of society. For historical reasons, women did not enjoy complete equality in the present-day world, and the situation of Chinese women was no exception. Since the founding of new China, however, the Government had promulgated a series of laws aimed at ensuring the equality of men and women and the protection of women's and children's rights. The Constitution, the marriage laws and the criminal laws contained provisions for protecting the rights and interests of women.

6. During the past two years in particular, her Government had made great efforts to improve the status of women. With regard to women's participation in political life, she said the Central Government had one woman State Councillor, four women ministers and five women deputy ministers. At the provincial or regional level, 11 women had been appointed deputy provincial governors, deputy mayors or vice-chairmen of autonomous regions. At the county level, 14.9 per cent of senior posts were held by women. The number of women employed in national economic development had increased to 39,350,000, or 36 per cent of the total number, by 1981. Growing numbers of women were participating in democratic management and decision-making in factories and enterprises. There had also been encouraging changes in the fields of science and technology where women constituted 33 per cent of scientific and technical staff. In the fields of culture, education and health, half the staff were women. In 1981, 15 women scientists had been elected to the Academia Sinica, which previously had had only one woman member, and many women working in research and education had been promoted to the rank of researcher or professor.

7. Education was one of the main themes of the Programme of Action; in the past two years there had been progress in regular and spare-time education, and in 1981 the proportion of women students in higher, secondary and primary education had been 24.4 per cent, 39 per cent and 43.9 per cent respectively.

8. Women in the rural areas were considered a priority category in the Programme of Action. Since the rural population represented over 80 per cent of the total population, the Government had drawn up a new set of economic policies in the past two years to stimulate production and diversify the economy in the rural areas. Thus, in addition to their work in the fields, women had participated extensively in productive activities, which helped to increase their income. In health, too, emphasis had been placed on rural areas. Since 1979, a medical screening and treatment programme involving 50 million women in the rural areas had been in operation. The Ministry of Health had sent more than 30 medical teams to relatively backward areas to treat women suffering from gynaecological ailments.

(Mrs. Wang Yuping, China)

9. The Government believed that international peace and security would benefit all peoples and the women of all countries, and in the past two years it had fostered friendly contact between Chinese women and women of other countries to promote understanding and contribute to international peace. China's organization for women shared the common hope for peace and worked not only for the emancipation of women in China but also for the liberation of their sisters throughout the world, especially those still suffering the effects of racial discrimination and wars of aggression. The women of China were ready to strengthen their solidarity with the peace-loving countries and women of the world and would continue their unrelenting efforts for the maintenance of peace, for equality and for the speedy and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

10. Mr. FREYBERG (Poland) said that in his delegation's view the problems of women were by no means limited to employment, health and education but had always been bound up with the pursuit of equality, development and peace, which were the main objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. His Government was convinced that development and social progress, including the advancement and emancipation of women, could not be achieved unless mankind escaped the disaster of a nuclear war, and it had always attached the greatest importance to international peace and security and supported all efforts aimed at consolidating them. His delegation therefore believed that the question of the effects of peace and disarmament on the status of women in the world should be the subject of wider discussion and study in the United Nations system.

11. Women today represented a tremendous force ready to devote all their efforts to preventing a world conflagration. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the Draft Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle for the Strengthening of International Peace and for the Solution of Other Vital National and International Problems (A/37/144 and Add.1), drawn up by the German Democratic Republic. Women also played a decisive role in bringing up the younger generation in a spirit of peace, tolerance and mutual respect and understanding between peoples. Their role in that connection was directly linked with the objectives set forth in the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-third session on 15 December 1978 (resolution 33/73) and in the resolution adopted at the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women held at Copenhagen in July 1980 (resolution 7).

12. A conference of representatives of women's organizations from many countries had been held on that subject in October 1982 at Warsaw. The debate had covered the role of women in all aspects of political, economic and social life. Under the slogan "Give life, defend life and unite for peace" the conference had launched an appeal for the women of the world to unite.

13. In the opinion of his delegation, there could be no successful social and economic development until all forms of discrimination and social injustice had been eliminated and until women had become full members of the society in which they lived. By fighting for their fundamental rights, women could help to secure justice in their respective societies and put an end to discrimination.

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(Mr. Freyberg, Poland)

14. In spite of temporary difficulties, Poland would spare no effort in implementing the recommendations of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women. Equality of rights and duties between men and women was one of the principles and practices of the socialist system. For that reason Poland had been one of the first States to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had come into force on 3 December 1981.

15. In Poland the problems of women were the special responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Wages and Social Affairs and the Council for Family Affairs headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and concerned with strengthening the family and dealing with the problems of specific groups of the population such as women, young people, older citizens and the disabled, in the context of economic and social development. The Council worked out proposals on employment, education, training and family health care; it also carried out scientific and statistical research and appraised the situation of Polish women and their participation in development.

16. Since women represented more than 46 per cent of the working population of the country, the State had adopted legislative and organizational measures to help working mothers. The Labour Code provided for, among other things, rights and privileges relating to maternity. Mothers were entitled to a three-year leave of absence to care for their children and received, during that time, an allowance equivalent to the minimum wage. That amount was doubled for women with two children or with a disabled child. Some categories of village women were also entitled to such benefits. Recently the procedures for obtaining assistance from the Alimony Fund had been eased.

17. Women's committees had recently been established within the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party as well as in the United Peasants Party and the Democratic Party. Their purpose was to help women in poor economic circumstances, in particular the elderly and the disabled, and in the longer run, to implement - in close co-operation with the Council for Family Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, Wages and Social Affairs and with other ministries, institutions and women's organizations - the national programme for achieving the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

18. Mr. SVIRIDOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) requested that the vote on the draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 77, 81, 82, 83 and 89 should be postponed so that delegations might conclude their consultations.

19. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), speaking as Chairman of the Working Group on the elaboration of a draft declaration on the human rights of individuals who are not citizens of the country in which they live, said that the working group had held the six meetings allotted to it by the Third Committee to consider the draft declaration and that it was now for the Third Committee to take a decision on its subsequent programme of work.

20. Mr. WALKATE (Netherlands) said that the Working Group had made progress on the issue but had now reached the point where it should interrupt its work to give delegations time for reflection or an opportunity to receive instructions concerning the major points dividing the group. With the approval of the Bureau, the working group might, in the mean time, consider the question of the elaboration of a code of medical ethics, about which several delegations had held informal discussions in recent weeks, which had helped to define a very constructive framework for discussion.

21. Mr. VILLAGRA DELGADO (Argentina) also considered that the group had made significant progress in its work. He stressed that the Working Group, established under General Assembly resolution 36/165, must fulfil its mandate, which was to elaborate a draft declaration on the human rights of individuals who are not citizens of the country in which they live and should therefore not deal with any other issue.

22. Mr. TARASYUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the Ukrainian delegation, which had participated in the work of the Group, considered that progress had been made in the consideration of the draft declaration and that it would be possible to conclude examination of the draft at the present session of the General Assembly. It was absurd for the Group to stop in mid-course to consider another question which the General Assembly had not even requested it to study. The Ukrainian delegation, which had participated in the informal negotiations on the elaboration of a code of medical ethics, recognized that the results of the negotiations were quite promising. Nevertheless it still believed that the Working Group should continue to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. It was to be hoped that the Bureau would consider his delegation's point of view in taking a decision on the future programme of work of the Group.

23. Mr. JOHNSON (United States of America) supported the Netherlands proposal and said that he agreed with previous speakers that the Working Group had truly made progress in its work, which it could now interrupt temporarily to give delegations and Governments time to reflect on various problems raised and on the differences of opinion concerning the applicability of the draft declaration. The Working Group could use that time to consider the code of medical ethics. The United States delegation considered that the Working Group was not obliged to deal exclusively with the draft declaration on the human rights of individuals who are not citizens of the country in which they live.

24. Mr. OGURTSOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) considered that the Working Group had no right to transgress General Assembly resolution 36/165 by dealing with a question which was not part of the mandate entrusted to it by the Assembly. The Byelorussian delegation therefore supported the proposals of the Ukrainian SSR and Argentina that the Group should continue exclusively to consider the draft declaration on the human rights of individuals who are not citizens of the country in which they live. He stressed that the working group had made good progress in its work and that, if it continued to do so, it might conclude consideration of the question at the present session of the General Assembly.

25. The CHAIRMAN remarked that, since there were differences of opinion on the matter, the task of the Bureau would not be easy. There was no need to take the dogmatic view that it would be a violation of General Assembly resolution 36/165 to ask the working group to consider a question other than the draft declaration on the human rights of individuals who are not citizens of the country in which they live. It was more appropriate to consider whether it would be useful to continue work on the subject and thereby make it possible to complete consideration of the issue at the present session of the General Assembly. In any case, the Bureau would study the matter very closely and would make suggestions. It would be for the Third Committee to take the final decision.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.