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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.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. Mr. SIGMUNDSSON (Iceland), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, said that groups of women who were especially vulnerable and without a secure social network needed the solid support of the international community. Despite the progress achieved, the objectives of International Women's Year had not been realized. The potential of women was far from being utilized and their access to health, education, employment and political participation was still limited. The international climate had not been favourable to the advancement of women: the United Nations Decade for Women coincided with a world economic crisis, the burden of which fell not least on women in both industrialized and developing countries.

2. The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade now included specific references to the interdependence between the achievement of major global and sectoral goals and the improvement of the status of women. The Nordic countries held the view that the ultimate goal was to see that women were totally integrated and equal partners in the development process. At the UNDP Governing Council in June 1982, the Nordic countries had supported the recommendations made by the Administrator in that connection and looked forward to the evaluation of the results achieved through the involvement of women in the development process to be submitted to the 1985 Conference.

3. The Nordic countries wished to express their appreciation of the work done by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. A total of 298 projects had been financed since the Fund had begun operations and that was indeed an impressive figure. They regretted, however, that administrative problems had arisen in connection with the Fund and hoped that they would be solved very soon. It was particularly important that the Fund should continue to maintain its close links with UNDP. As stated previously, the Nordic countries did not favour any change in the present location of the Fund.

(Mr. Sigmundsson, Iceland)

4. In the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen, the United Nations was urged to take the necessary steps to increase the proportion of women in the Secretariat by nominating and appointing women, particularly from developing countries, for posts at the decision-making levels. That question still needed attention and action by some organizations in the United Nations system: some organizations had not taken action endorsed by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the General Assembly.

5. The Nordic countries believed that the Advancement of Women Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which was serving as the secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory body for the 1985 World Conference, should be strengthened. The primary goals of the 1985 Conference should be an evaluation of the Decade and the achievement of world-wide acceptance of the need for further endeavours beyond 1985. The influence of the Decade on the actual situation of women should be thoroughly studied, the barriers to advancement identified, and the post-Decade period should be used to clarify the problems that existed and to formulate methods for overcoming them.

6. The achievement of the goals of the Decade was closely linked to the development of a more just international economic order. The integration of women in development was a long-term process and the right to work, education and participation of women in the decision-making process would no doubt be priority areas at the Conference. Finally, continued attention should be paid to women in especially vulnerable positions such as migrant women and women refugees, rural women and women living in urban slum areas. The Conference should recommend activities at the national, regional and international levels and lay the basis for the continued activities of the United Nations for the advancement of women. Evaluation and follow-up was a necessary element in any development strategy.

7. Mrs. ROSER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the need to secure opportunities for women equal to those enjoyed by men and to eliminate discrimination was as urgent now, in the seventh year of the Decade, as it had ever been. Equality for women could not be achieved by mere lip service or by isolated activities. It was only by pursuing a persistent and step-by-step policy that the present situation, which had evolved over centuries, could be changed. The two World Conferences held at Mexico City and Copenhagen had helped considerably in increasing awareness of the discrimination suffered by women. Nevertheless, women continued to be at a disadvantage in a number of ways and the progress achieved threatened to be eroded by the present world economic crisis.

8. It was important to reverse the tendency to impede women's access to training and jobs on the grounds that they were needed in the family. The law in the Federal Republic of Germany was based on the premise that marriage was a partnership in which husband and wife were free to decide how to share family responsibilities. Accordingly, the German Civil Code did not see the man exclusively in the role of breadwinner nor the woman exclusively in the role of housewife and mother. That policy was reflected in the planned improvement of social benefits for women in which the time spent bringing up children would be credited in computing their pensions. A policy aimed at equal rights for women

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(Mrs. Roser, Federal Republic  
of Germany)

should, however, seek to ensure that new technologies were just as helpful to women as they were to their male counterparts. That policy called, therefore, for timely alternative training for women to prepare them for new jobs whenever that became necessary.

9. The status of women could be considerably improved world wide if greater efforts were made to translate the respective parts of the Programme of Action into practice. It would also be necessary, at the end of the Decade, to take stock of the progress achieved and to evaluate it. With those goals in mind, the Federal Republic of Germany would play an active part in the preparations for the 1985 World Conference.

10. The Conference should focus on reaching agreement on specific measures to promote equal rights within the framework of existing organizational structures. Her Government, however, did not consider it advisable to draw up another programme of action or to strive for another official decade. It might be more profitable if, after 1985, topics relating to women's problems continued to be dealt with in the General Assembly and the various bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations, as well as in Member States. That would ensure a practical and effective approach to the many different problems that still existed and do justice to a matter of paramount importance to society, namely, achieving equal rights for women.

11. Mr. MBAI (Kenya) said that not much had been achieved in the advancement of women in the first seven years of the Decade and in many areas of the world their situation had deteriorated. His delegation was optimistic, however, that with more concerted and increased efforts, good progress could be made in the next three years.

12. In Kenya, the Government had made great efforts to improve the conditions for all its people, including women. The National Women's Bureau now co-ordinated all women's activities initiated by the Government and women's groups or voluntary organizations. Women had joined together in income-generating ventures and women's organizations had built hostels to accommodate the young women employed in urban areas. Women were active in church activities and their integration in the economic, political and social life of the country was very gradual but steady, even though they faced some obstacles.

13. Although some institutions now extended credit to organized women's groups in Kenya, there was still a need to devise measures to eliminate some discriminatory practices. With the rising cost of living everywhere, women found it increasingly necessary to seek employment to supplement the family income. As a result of the general low level of education of the majority of women and the lack of training in specific skills and trades, their opportunities were limited. However, through literacy classes and other avenues now opening up, women continued to improve their skills, especially leadership skills. In that regard, it was essential that the non-literate and literate women learned to work together, for both had much to contribute to the overall national development effort.

(Mr. Mbai, Kenya)

14. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was one source of funds that could help women in developing countries to achieve some of their goals. The Consultative Committee on the Fund had stated that the Fund's main areas of concern were employment and income generation, human resource development, food production, research and rural development. All those activities could go a long way towards promoting women's involvement and participation in the national development process. His delegation hoped that the Fund would continue its good work for many years to come. That, however, would be possible only through the good will of Member States and their generous contributions to the Fund. In that connection, he hoped that other States would follow the example of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Belgium and Finland and establish committees with special interest in the Fund and that women would convince their Governments that their needs deserved priority status in development programmes.

15. His delegation appreciated the work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in research studies that could help women to participate fully in the development process. It also commended the efforts of other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular, UNICEF, which had been the first agency to achieve the 25 per cent goal set by the General Assembly for all bodies and organizations of the United Nations system in the employment of women in the professional staff during the Decade.

16. Kenya had already started making preparations for the 1985 World Conference. It would in due course submit a formal letter of invitation to the Secretary-General offering to act as host of the Conference. Finally, Kenya fully supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26 and was prepared to co-operate with all Member States and the Secretariat of the United Nations in assuring the success of the Conference.

17. Mr. THWAITES (Australia) said that Australia was firmly committed to equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination and equal status for women everywhere. It had sought to give practical effect to that commitment through vigorous participation in activities undertaken at the regional and international levels under the auspices of the United Nations Decade for Women, as well as by the adoption and implementation of measures in the domestic sphere. Australia believed that the 1985 World Conference would provide a valuable opportunity to examine the progress achieved so far and to map out practical and realistic programmes for the remainder of the Decade. It was clear that strong follow-up action was required so that the momentum generated at Copenhagen was not lost. Australia's election to the Commission on the Status of Women gave it a direct interest in the preparations for the Conference, since the Economic and Social Council had decided that the Commission should serve as the preparatory body for the Conference, a decision Australia fully supported.

18. The goals and objectives set out in the Copenhagen Programme were relevant today and would still be relevant in 1985 and there was no need for a further broad plan or programme of action. Instead, the emphasis at Nairobi should be on the further application and development of the aims and achievements of Copenhagen. That could best be done by giving the 1985 Conference a heightened focus on the role of women in development in a long-term perspective, looking to the year 2000,

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(Mr. Thwaites, Australia)

and by bringing together experts in the various development sectors. The Copenhagen documents would provide a basis for measuring progress and could be used to obtain a more expert analysis and emphasis on practicalities rather than rhetoric. The review and appraisal should be carried out in the form of thorough analysis by experts, with results which should be available to participants before the Conference began. The Conference preparations and documentation should give special emphasis to the particular aspects of the impact on women of the development process and to ways of enhancing women's participation. The specialized agencies should be able to monitor the effects of their programmes and policies against international indicators of women's status, and should be able to indicate clearly the level of resources allocated to status of women activities.

19. Regional consultations and activities should be an integral and significant part of the preparations for the Conference. The 1980 Conference had been preceded by regional meetings which had produced useful programmes of action for the regions and should have been given much closer attention at Copenhagen, especially in the formulation of the World Programme of Action. His delegation would prefer a series of sectoral preparatory meetings of experts in each region rather than a single regional conference. They should be able to provide the kind of penetrating analysis and review required at the end of the United Nations Decade for Women.

20. Australia actively supported the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, particularly in the ESCAP region. Over the past year, it had doubled its contribution to the Fund, believing it to be a most effective catalyst to integrate women in the development process. However, it had become seriously concerned that the administrative arrangements for the Fund were becoming inadequate to deal with its increasing and important work. It therefore supported the views expressed in operative paragraph 11 of draft resolution A/C.3/37/L.24. In particular, and subject to the prerogatives of the Secretary-General, the full-time staff of the Fund should be recognized as an organizational unit with sufficient delegated authority to carry out the day-to-day administration of the Fund's resources, and the staffing of the unit should be commensurate with United Nations norms in terms of the workload of projects sponsored.

21. Australia had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the World Conference in Copenhagen. It regarded the Convention as the most important international instrument related to women's rights and was working actively towards its ratification.

22. In 1981 Australia had taken an active part in the discussions in the Third Committee on the proposed 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. As stated in its reply (A/37/144) to the Secretary-General's request for comments on the proposal, it felt that the proposal reflected serious misconceptions. It continued to have reservations about the need for such a draft declaration; however, it welcomed the more co-operative atmosphere that now prevailed and would continue to work with the sponsors of the proposal in the hope of reaching a conclusion that would be acceptable to all.

(Mr. Thwaites, Australia)

23. Finally, he wished to express his delegation's support and appreciation for the efforts of the Department of Public Information in furthering the objectives of the Decade. The ultimate success of all the efforts of the international community depended upon the involvement and commitment of millions of people who would never attend a United Nations conference or read a United Nations document or report. The Department's radio series on women, in particular, had found a wide audience in Australia and would continue to contribute in a most positive way to the understanding of people in developed and developing countries of the situation and circumstances of women everywhere.

24. Mrs. KAKES-VEEN (Netherlands) said that, in preparing for the 1985 World Conference, it should be borne in mind that the goals of the Decade would probably not be met and that the spirit and energy which marked the Decade must continue after 1985 into the twenty-first century. That, however, did not necessarily imply that another Decade for Women should be proclaimed. The current Decade had already contributed to bringing about a change of attitudes, but more fundamental changes were needed.

25. Turning to the three themes of the Decade, she said that, without peace, there could be no equality, development or survival. Women should become advocates for peace in order to guarantee a worthwhile future for their children. Peace and justice were inextricably linked and justice meant equality of rights and opportunities for men and women alike.

26. The first prerequisite of equality was the right of equal access to training and education facilities. That, however, was not enough by itself since women were often given less encouragement than men to make use of existing opportunities. Furthermore, women wishing to return to the labour market after a long absence were often confronted with the absence of special training or refresher courses. The mass media could play an important role in changing traditional educational patterns and concepts.

27. To achieve equality, women also had to participate fully in decision-making, but the number of women at decision- and policy-making levels was still very small. Women should also play an active role in shaping the organizational structure and policies of trade unions and political parties. She noted that there were few women members of delegations to the General Assembly and that the goal of 25 per cent had yet to be reached in the United Nations and the specialized agencies. As far as employment was concerned, it was a sad reality that, particularly in times of recession, women were among the first to lose their jobs. They had no place to go but home, where they tended to return to their conventional task of looking after the family. In short, the emancipation process was in danger of being eroded.

28. There could be no equality for women without development. Unfortunately, many women in the third world did not even have a chance to think about emancipation because they were too busy in the daily struggle for survival. That was true of the millions of refugees, the women in southern Africa who were being discriminated against on grounds of race, sex as well as social class, and the wives of migrant workers, who were often compelled to stay behind with their children for long

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(Mrs. Kakes-Veen, Netherlands)

periods of time. The situation of wives who accompanied migrant workers to industrialized countries was not much better. Although they benefited from the higher earnings, they generally had to put up with poor housing, a new and sometimes very different cultural environment and often discrimination on grounds of sex and colour. The wife of a migrant worker usually had no resident permit in her own right and was required to leave the country if her husband did, even if that was undesirable because of special circumstances.

29. Emancipation had proved to be only for those who were educated and did not have to fight for their daily existence because they belonged to the more privileged social classes. It should not, however, be a privilege; it was an absolute necessity if men and women were to have equal rights. Therefore, the Netherlands attached the greatest importance to a grass-roots approach in development policy and the involvement of women from the third world in developing and implementing development programmes. The growing number of third world non-governmental women's groups and organizations deserved full support because of the very useful role they played in the development process as a platform and a channel of communication for women's ideas and activities.

30. The Netherlands development policy was geared towards creating the conditions for changing the relationship between the sexes in ways that would improve the living and working conditions of women in developing countries. A great deal of attention had been paid to collecting and improving information on the condition of women in developing countries, while development programmes were regularly reviewed and examined to ascertain their influence on the economic, social and cultural position of women in those countries. Attempts were also being made to increase the number of female staff dealing with development programmes and to ensure that all staff members were aware of the importance of the role of women in the development process so that their needs and concerns were integrated in all bilateral and multilateral development activities of the Netherlands Government. The same awareness should be shown in United Nations and European Community development programmes. The Netherlands therefore advocated the incorporation of women's interests in official United Nations and European Community rules and procedures to be used in the field of development.

31. The Netherlands supported efforts to develop channels of information and communication between women in developing countries by contributing to the International Women's Tribune Centre, which promoted the transfer of communication and information techniques and a systematic exchange of information between women's organizations.

32. As an active supporter of and contributor to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, the Netherlands felt that the Fund performed an extremely vital function as an advocate for the integration of women in development. Moreover, with its low overheads and the full use it made of existing channels, including non-governmental organizations, the Fund stood out as a positive example of what co-ordination and co-operation within the United Nations system and in the field should be like. She commended the staff of the Fund, but said that her delegation was still concerned about its administration and hoped that the Secretary-General would take adequate steps to solve that problem. As for the more

(Mrs. Kakes-Veen, Netherlands)

distant future, her delegation felt that the interests of women in developing countries would be best served if, by the end of the Decade, existing United Nations agencies had integrated the activities of the Fund into their regular programmes. In order to encourage them to do so, her Government continued to contribute financially to specific women's programmes of ILO, UNICEF, FAO and other agencies.

33. Turning to agenda item 91 (c), she referred to the Netherlands comments on the subject in document A/37/144/Add.1. Her delegation still considered that there was no clear need for the declaration which had been proposed. The emancipation of women would be better served if the potential role of women in such areas was discussed in a serious manner in the appropriate United Nations organs and forums.

34. Her delegation felt that the 1985 World Conference should concentrate on the implementation of existing instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which her country hoped to become a party in 1983. Attention should be paid to ways of measuring progress achieved and to the formulation of quantitative targets. The Conference should try to emphasize common elements rather than politically divisive ones. It would be most unfortunate if, as in 1980, political issues were introduced, diverting attention from the real needs of women, especially those in the third world. Therefore, emphasis should be laid on regional preparations for the Conference, and adequate financing should be made available for that purpose. At the Conference itself, efforts should be made to determine common global trends on the basis of the results achieved by intensive regional preparation. She hoped that the Conference, like that in Copenhagen, would offer a well-structured opportunity for non-governmental women's organizations to participate in an exchange of ideas which could be a source of inspiration for the official Conference.

35. Ms. REYNOLDS (United States of America) said that in June 1982, she had accompanied her country's Ambassador to the United Nations to several African countries where they had met with women leaders and visited women's development projects as a demonstration of United States commitment to the integration of women in development. Her country had long considered women's full integration in development to be an important issue, since development which did not fully involve women was not only inequitable but inefficient. In recognition of women's significant role in the development process, the United States Congress had amended the United States Foreign Assistance Act in 1973 to include provisions for bilateral assistance to programmes, projects and activities which integrated women into the national economy of their respective countries. As a result, USAID and the Peace Corps had established offices to work for the integration of women in development.

36. Her delegation shared the view that the integration of women in development should be part of the policy of United Nations agencies, and was encouraged by the progress made thus far. She welcomed the strong and productive working relationship which continued to exist between UNDP and the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and pointed out that her country had supported and would continue to support a number of Fund projects. She expressed support for draft resolution L.24, particularly the recommendation contained in paragraph 11. Her delegation

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(Ms. Reynolds, United States)

had also drafted a resolution for discussion under agenda item 91, entitled "Integration of women in development". She believed that that draft resolution would meet the need for more readily available information on the specific ways in which United Nations agencies and the regional commissions were working to achieve that goal and would give further encouragement to all United Nations agencies in that area. The draft resolution might also result in action that would facilitate the preparation of the World Conference to be held in 1985.

37. Her delegation agreed that the World Conference should summarize the achievements of the Decade and, most important of all, chart a practical course for the future. While it had refrained from making specific suggestions about the Conference agenda before the preparatory meeting, it had urged that the sub-themes of health, education and employment should be maintained as primary areas for discussion, since those were prerequisites for the well being of all persons, regardless of their country's stage of development. The Conference should encourage leadership roles for women at all levels and should recommend strategies for achieving that participation. The Conference should also make recommendations to ensure that women would have greater access to resources, training, new technologies and equal opportunities for employment. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to play as full a role as possible in the preparations for the Conference, since NGO forums generated great interest and support for women's priorities and would enhance the visibility and significance of the Conference.

38. International human rights instruments such as the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women constituted the backbone of the United Nations Decade for Women and all international women's activities. Her Government believed that, in principle, those instruments afforded women adequate legal protection; however, those principles must be put into action. In her own country, for example, great strides had been made towards the achievement of full equality for women; nevertheless, some inequities remained in its laws. The President and State Governors had begun work on a project to ensure that those inequities were removed. The President had also given his personal support to a recent Senate bill to delete many such discriminatory provisions from the federal code and had formed a White House Co-ordinating Council on Women to help ensure that legislation was complemented by action and that national policies were responsive to contemporary needs.

39. She had been greatly concerned to learn from the report of the Joint Inspection Unit that only the United Nations Secretariat came close to achieving the 1982 target, established in resolution 33/143, of having 25 per cent of all Professional posts filled by women. There also appeared to be a disturbing disparity between the percentage of female employees in high-level Professional posts and the percentage occupying low-level posts. She agreed that more needed to be done to recruit women and promote them to higher levels and urged the Secretary-General to ensure that women employees in all United Nations agencies received their fair share of training and challenging assignments. It was also her hope that the percentage of women in the field would also rise considerably from its present level, since, in many cases, development goals could not be reached without the work of female experts in the field.

40. Miss SHALHOUB (Jordan) said that, although the United Nations Decade for Women was drawing to a close, a firm foundation had been laid at both the national and international levels which filled her delegation with hope for the advancement of women, their participation in the progress of their societies and the strengthening of their role in improving the lot of new generations in a better world where, it was hoped, peace would one day prevail. For the achievement of that end, and in the light of plans made by officials in Jordan within the framework of the present Five-Year Development Plan, her delegation was of the view that it was necessary to maintain international momentum after the end of the Decade at the regional level, as had been proposed by the secretariat of the Council of Europe. Advantage was to be gained from the experiences of other States and of United Nations regional organizations in handling the problems arising from the implementation of development plans in such a new and complex field. Moreover, the different regions had different problems and requirements and it would be helpful if it was decided to proclaim a new decade for women at the regional level, for States to confront the problems within their own regions and to draw up programmes for their solution in that context so as to contribute to raising the level of women locally. At a later stage, regional organizations could consult with a view to elaborating international principles which might form a basis for convening a new and more comprehensive world conference.

41. Her country faced many problems concerning the situation of women. It was subject to brain drain and exported specialists and workers in search of higher incomes in neighbouring countries. As a result it had to cope with the problems of having to make up the shortfall in such skills. That was because women had not entered public life to the extent desired, either because of their lack of the required skills or because of their involvement in domestic duties. One of the goals of the previous Five-Year Development Plan had been that 50 per cent of the work force should be women; that goal had not been reached and in 1981 women represented only 14 per cent of those in employment. That situation had prompted the Ministry of Social Development to strengthen its Women's Department and to draw up a programme to help make up the deficit in the employment sector by raising the occupational level of women through the establishment of new vocational schools, the reduction of the illiteracy rate to 20 per cent, the institution of nine years of compulsory education and the improvement of health standards in the countryside by increasing the number of health centres for women and children from 66 to 215.

42. Jordanian legislation was also aimed at helping women to shoulder their responsibilities in the home and outside. A bill was before the National Consultative Council for study and discussion, which would be submitted to His Majesty King Hussein for approval and which contained a number of basic provisions improving the lot of working married women. Among those provisions were an increase in maternity leave to 10 weeks, the right of the working mother to leave work for one hour a day over a one-year period in order to feed her child, the obligation on the part of establishments in which more than 20 women were employed to provide a nursery supervised by a trained nurse and a reduction in the workload of women in the later stages of pregnancy. A municipalities bill, also before the Council, would grant women the right to vote and to stand as candidates in village and municipal elections.

(Miss Shalhoub, Jordan)

43. In view of the importance of the role of women in the economy and in political life in addition to their role in voluntary work, the Central Department of Statistics had established a data bank on women which would, in the long term, contribute greatly to the adoption of more effective measures to integrate women in the development process.

44. Her country was of the view that work for peace was a matter in which men and women participated on an equal footing, that the absence of peace affected them equally, that, living together in the same society, both were affected by what happened in that society and that there were no grounds for favouring one sex over the other. It was the role of the State to promote the advancement of all segments of society equally and to create similar opportunities for both sexes. If it began to favour one sex over the other in matters which concerned both of them, it would create divisions within society at a time when the aim should be to increase cohesion in a world in which wars, economic difficulties and social problems increased the joint responsibilities of men and women. Her delegation spoke from bitter experience of frequent wars extending over a period of 34 years which had had far-reaching effects upon both men and women and they continued to battle the problem of their survival as a people. Not only women required protection through the strengthening of world peace, but so did their families and children.

45. Her country wanted more than ever to improve its social conditions and to raise the quality of life for both men and women. Although it had achieved a great deal for its citizens since independence, more remained to be done if men and women were to participate more effectively in society.

46. Since the outlook of her country remained optimistic and since it had capacities which were capable of improvement, it hoped to share with the world new and positive experiences from which all peoples could benefit. Because of their importance in any society, her country regarded women as active, productive and useful participants in the development process. It had concentrated on their participation in practical life in all of its aspects and was seeking ways of attracting them into public life. It had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1980.

47. Ms. BOZHKOVA (Bulgaria) said that her country had always actively participated in discussions pertaining to the United Nations Decade for Women and attached great importance to United Nations efforts to enhance women's role in society and achieve full equality between men and women. In that respect, the instruments adopted by the World Conferences at Mexico City and Copenhagen were significant, particularly the first part of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women, which recognized that the strengthening of international peace and security was a prerequisite for the achievement of the other two objectives of the Decade. That had become even more important at a time when the threat of a nuclear conflagration overshadowed the very existence of mankind. Consequently, many international forums of women had been convened, including the Meeting of High-Level Experts of Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries Concerned with the Role of Women in Development, held at Havana in May 1981, and the World Congress of Women: Equality, National Independence, Peace held at Prague in October 1981. The participants at those events had declared their firm intention of preserving

(Ms. Bozhkova, Bulgaria)

peace. Women also participated on a large scale in the powerful anti-war movement in Europe and throughout the world, a factor that politicians must reckon with.

48. Against that background, her delegation held the view that sensible thinking would prevail in Europe and that peace would be maintained. However, she asked whether equality could have meaning without peace and, in that context, referred to the millions of Palestinian men and women suffering in refugee camps as a result of the Israeli policy of genocide and the men and women in Namibia and South Africa living under colonialism and apartheid.

49. Her delegation was concerned that vast amounts of resources were being wasted on arms production, when many of the basic needs of much of the earth's population were not being met. Moreover, the harmful impact of the arms race on the economies of all countries was undeniable. In the conviction that women must play an important role in combating those social problems and in restructuring international economic relations on a just and democratic basis, her delegation supported the adoption of a declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for strengthening peace and security and against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, occupation, aggression and all forms of foreign domination. She hoped that the Third Committee would reach agreement on the text of the declaration at the current session of the General Assembly, since the adoption of such a declaration would constitute an important step towards the achievement of equality between men and women. She offered her delegation's full co-operation in working to achieve that objective.

50. As women constituted one third of the world labour force, it was clear that their full integration in political, social, economic and cultural life was not just a question of social justice but a social need. Since women's equality was dependent on the nature of the national socio-economic systems under which they lived, it could not be achieved without political and socio-economic change. In some countries, for example, women's rights were equal to those of men and yet equal payment was not guaranteed for equal work.

51. In Bulgaria, women enjoyed constitutionally guaranteed equality in all spheres of life. Moreover, in past decades, increasing numbers of women had become active members of public and political organizations. Under national social policy women were viewed in their roles as mothers and as socially active persons and workers. One of the mainstays of that policy was the establishment of better conditions for combining motherhood with active employment and involvement in public affairs. To that end, kindergartens were being expanded and comprehensive maternity benefits were being provided. Such accomplishments were an integral part of the socialist system.

52. Her delegation welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the election of the members of the Committee established pursuant to its provisions. Her country had been one of the first to ratify that Convention and believed that it would contribute decisively to the achievement of equality between men and women, provided that it was universally accepted and carried out.

53. Miss MAGANARA (Greece) said that her country would make every effort to participate in the preparations for the 1985 World Conference to Renew and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women.

54. The Government of Greece had initiated specific programmes and institutional arrangements with a view to implementing article 4 of her country's Constitution, which embodied the principle of the equality of all citizens regardless of sex. One of the priority objectives of the Socialist Government of Greece that had been elected in October 1981 was the achievement of full equality between men and women in all aspects of life and the full integration of women in the country's development. The women of Greece, constituting half the population, represented approximately one third of the labour force.

55. Her Government had formulated political guidelines and adopted legislation in areas of high priority, such as social security for women in rural areas, motherhood and health, the participation of women in decision making, equal employment opportunities and international co-operation on matters of concern to women. More specifically, her country had established a committee to revise family law, passed a law instituting civil marriage and granted rural women the right to a pension. Women, for the first time, were serving in decision-making posts, for example, as prefects and presidents of public organizations, and Greek women had been elected members of the European parliament.

56. Her country had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and was actively working for its ratification; it had ratified International Convention 103 of the International Labour Organisation for the protection of motherhood; and it had appointed a Special Adviser to the Prime Minister and established an Advisory Council to the Prime Minister to deal with matters relating to equality. The primary task of that Council was to formulate a national programme of action and to take the necessary steps for its implementation. The Greek Government also supported the recently established Institute for Studies on Mediterranean Women. In addition, special programmes designed to enhance the role of women were being developed for radio and television, and the Government, through the Ministry of Education, was working on changes in school books to reflect equality between men and women.

57. Her delegation was pleased with the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women, and it commended the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for the assistance provided to Palestinian refugee women in 1982. It was to be hoped that non-governmental organizations concerned with the objectives of the Decade would undertake similar activities.

58. Her country was prepared to work closely with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which was engaged in activities and programmes to promote the full participation of women in development.

59. Her delegation expressed the hope that the conflicting views on the administration of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women could be reconciled in the near future.

(Miss Maganara, Greece)

60. The Government of Greece attached great importance to the preparations for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. Her delegation strongly supported the main themes of the Decade: Equality, Development and Peace and the subthemes: Education, Health and Employment. The question of migrant women should also be discussed at the Conference.

61. Mrs. YAMAZAKI (Japan) said she welcomed the fact that the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women was being vigorously carried out despite the economic constraints on Governments and on the United Nations. Her Government had faithfully sought to implement the decisions reached at Mexico City and Copenhagen in the belief that the Decade's success was dependent largely on the attitudes of individual countries. To that end, it had formulated a set of priority targets for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women in the National Plan of Action, with a view to integrating the Programme of Action into national policy.

62. As the information provided by States to the Secretariat on steps they had taken to give effect to the Programme of Action was useful for purposes of review and appraisal, it was regrettable that only 43 Governments, or one third the total number of Member States, had provided such information. She therefore urged countries that had not submitted such information to do so in the near future.

63. Her delegation welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26 on preparations for the 1985 World Conference, and as that Conference would provide an important opportunity for reviewing the achievements of the Decade and considering measures for dealing with long-term problems, her delegation would actively co-operate to ensure its success. It was unfortunate that relatively few countries had responded to the invitation to Member States, in that same resolution, to submit their views on the proposed goals and specific themes of the Conference, to the Secretariat and she urged them to submit their replies as soon as possible so that the discussions of the Commission on the Status of Women at its extraordinary session in 1983 would be productive. Her delegation would, of course, extend its support and assistance to the preparations for the World Conference being made by ESCAP.

64. Although commending the work of the Voluntary Fund, her delegation was dismayed at the delay in the provision of information on the current status of the Fund and felt that, in the circumstances, it was unfair and unreasonable for the Third Committee to be asked to consider the Fund's current problems. The circulation of a draft resolution on the Fund, apparently sponsored by the members of the Consultative Committee of the Fund, seemed strange when no detailed background information had been provided, and especially in view of the implication in paragraph 11 of the draft that there were grounds for concern regarding the administrative status of the Fund. As her Government had already made a substantial contribution to the Fund and was contemplating an additional contribution, it was to be hoped that the situation would soon be clarified.

65. The statement by the Director of INSTRAW on that Institute's activities, and especially the information that operating through networks would constitute the

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(Mrs. Yamazaki, Japan)

basic feature of future Institute development, were encouraging. Her country looked forward to hearing of new activities and would continue to co-operate with the Institute in carrying them out.

66. Noting that 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 had been the subject of comments by only 20 Governments in response to General Assembly decision 36/428, her delegation felt that it did not deserve any further consideration by the Third Committee, especially as 14 countries had expressed a reluctance to consider, and much less adopt, the Declaration at that time. In that connection, she urged Committee members to heed views such as that expressed by Zimbabwe in document A/37/144/Add.1. In her own delegation's view, it was doubtful whether the draft Declaration would actually contribute to the enhancement of women or to the realization of world peace.

67. Her Government was continuing its efforts to prepare for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and hoped that that would take place in the near future.

68. Mrs. DRACHEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union had always attached paramount importance to activities aimed at improving the status of women and guaranteeing them equality with men in all spheres of social life. Concern for ensuring true equality for women and steady improvement in the status of women had been an integral part of the social policy of the Soviet State ever since its formation. The Great October Socialist Revolution had brought about the liberation of working women in her country. From the first days of Soviet power, action had been taken to ensure that equal rights for women and men under the law would be put into practice as quickly as possible. Equality for men and women in all areas of life was guaranteed by a whole range of social, economic and legislative measures. The achievements of the Soviet State on questions relating to women had been consolidated by the 1977 Constitution of the USSR, the fundamental principles of which included the principle of full equality of rights for men and women and the Soviet State's concern for the family.

69. Measures to improve the working and living conditions of women in every way possible, to protect mothers and children and to improve social assistance to the family were a component part of State economic and social development plans. As a result, the level of employment of women in her country was the highest in the world, with women accounting for half the manual and non-manual workers and for 59 per cent of specialists with higher and secondary specialized education. Women played a prominent role in health care and in education, where they accounted for two thirds of all physicians and almost three quarters of all teachers. In addition, some 40 per cent of all scientific workers in the USSR were women. In order to appreciate the scale of those achievements, it had to be realized that in 1897, 80 per cent of working women had been employed as domestic servants or farm workers, by contrast with only 13 per cent in industry and a total of 4 per cent in health and educational institutions. At the same time, only 11 women in every thousand had received an education beyond the primary stage.

(Mrs. Dracheva, USSR)

70. Women could not become socially active without becoming involved in social matters and the management of affairs of state. One of the most important indicators of how socially and politically active Soviet women were was the steady rise in the number of women deputies to higher and local organs of State power and of women occupying posts of responsibility. There were more women deputies in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR than in the parliaments of all the capitalist countries put together. More than 50 per cent of all deputies in local councils were women, and women accounted for 65 per cent of the managerial staff of State and economic bodies and the governing bodies of co-operative and social organizations.

71. Soviet women enjoyed favourable working conditions that took into account their physiological characteristics. Under the Constitution of the USSR, women were guaranteed employment and health protection. A wide variety of measures relating to employment protection enabled women to combine participation in social production with giving birth and rearing children. Women were entitled to fully-paid maternity leave and were granted work breaks for infant feeding. In addition, they could retire at an earlier age than men and enjoyed many other benefits. State expenditure for the construction of pre-school institutions had increased by a factor of 23 over the period 1940-1980 and continued to grow. The network of kindergartens, boarding schools and pioneer camps was also expanding.

72. Under the social programme adopted by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at its twenty-sixth session, the working conditions of women as well as general social services were being further improved, and additional benefits relating to the upbringing of children were being established. Those measures would result in a significant increase in the well-being of every Soviet family and would ensure further improvement in the status of women and their increased participation in social activity.

73. The efforts of the Soviet State had led to the de facto as well as the de jure liberation of women and had enabled them to become free members of Soviet society, enjoying equal rights with men and playing an active role in life. Soviet women as well as Soviet men had defended their homeland from invasion and had restored the war-torn economy. Soviet women were justifiably proud of the great contribution they had made to the prosperity of their socialist homeland. There had been many prominent women in the history of the Soviet State, including the first female cosmonauts in the world, Valentina Nikolaeva-Tereshkova and Svetlana Savitskaya.

74. As the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women correctly emphasized, the decisive factors in improving the position of women were the strengthening of peace and international security, cessation of the arms race, the guaranteeing of détente, and the establishment of a new international economic order on a just, equal and democratic basis. The provisions of the Programme were particularly relevant at a time when highly aggressive imperialist forces, in their attempt to block social progress, were carrying out a policy of increasing world tension, intensifying the arms race and imposing the threat of a nuclear war. That policy put a heavy burden on working people, particularly women, and aggravated social problems such as mass unemployment, unprecedented inflation, growing homelessness, closing of schools and hospitals and curtailment of many social programmes.

(Mrs. Dracheva, USSR)

75. Since a nuclear war would be catastrophic for all mankind, it was quite logical that women were becoming more and more actively involved in the mass social movement for peace and international security and against the arms race. One example of that movement was the "Peace March-82", which had been organized by the "Women for Peace" movement in the Scandinavian countries, the Committee of Soviet Women and the Soviet Committee for the Defence of Peace. That march had demonstrated the steadfast will of millions of people to achieve peace, détente and disarmament. Moreover, as its participants had pointed out, it showed that the growing peace movements of East and West were united in their rejection of nuclear weapons throughout the world and their support for disarmament and peace.

76. As had been rightly pointed out in the report on the twenty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, proper attention should be given by United Nations bodies to issues concerning the role of women in the struggle for international peace and disarmament and against the threat of a nuclear catastrophe. Those aims were in harmony with an appeal circulated at that session of the Commission by the Committee of Soviet Women. The appeal was addressed to the women of the world and urged them to unite their efforts in the struggle against the threat of war and on behalf of a reduction in international tension and disarmament. It was similar to the joint statement made by the delegations and observers from socialist countries represented in the Commission and addressed to the participants in the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

77. In full accord with the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, the Commission had decided to consider at its thirtieth session the question of the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression and occupation, and all forms of foreign domination. That decision had been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1982.

78. The General Assembly, for its part, should take action to further the efforts of the Commission and the Economic and Social Council in that regard. For example, it should adopt 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, which had been submitted by the German Democratic Republic. Stressing the constructive approach of the co-sponsors of the draft declaration, who had held intensive consultations to reach agreement on the text, she expressed confidence that it would be adopted without further delay.

79. As the aims of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, remained relevant, the preparatory work for the 1985 World Conference must be conducted in the context of those three goals in order to help mobilize the efforts of States to implement the plans and programmes of the Decade.

80. The adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been a major contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Decade. Her country, as one of the initiators of the Convention and as one of the first States to ratify it and implement its provisions, was

(Mrs. Dracheva, USSR)

gratified that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had started work. Since the cause of improving the status of women would be promoted if the Convention became truly universal, the General Assembly should renew its call to those States which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention or to accede to it.

81. In conclusion, she stressed that her delegation was still ready to co-operate constructively with other delegations in devising effective measures to achieve the lofty goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, as quickly as possible

82. Mrs. AZIZUDDIN (Pakistan) said that, although considerable progress had been made since 1975 in enhancing the welfare of women and integrating them into the mainstream of national life, a great deal more remained to be done. The deterioration of the world economy in recent years had had adverse consequences on the conditions of women, especially in developing countries. It was therefore essential to make every effort at the international, regional and national levels to improve the situation of women, who should be able to participate on an equal footing with men in all sectors and at all levels of development.

83. Her country would take an active part in the preparations for and deliberations of the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women.

84. As the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women had been playing a useful role in support of the activities undertaken to achieve the goals of the Decade, her Government had decided to contribute 100,000 rupees to the Fund for 1983. If the report on the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Consultative Committee on the Fund had been available, her delegation would have been in a better position to offer comments on the Consultative Committee's and the Voluntary Fund's activities.

85. It was gratifying that the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women was concentrating on research and training as well as on the provision of advisory services to countries and institutions. The concept of networks as the basis for the operations of the Institute in co-operation with other United Nations bodies would help to increase its effectiveness still further. Her country would, as in 1982, contribute 50,000 rupees to the Trust Fund of the Institute for 1983.

86. It was to be hoped that progress in the preparation of a world survey on the role of women in development would continue and that the Secretary-General would be able to submit the survey in its final form to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. It was essential for the Commission on the Status of Women to be actively involved in the preparation of the survey.

87. Refugee women in various parts of the world deserve special care and support on the part of the international community. There were currently 2.7 million Afghan refugees, mostly women and children, in Pakistan, and the people and Government of the country, as part of their humanitarian and Islamic duty, were

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(Mrs. Azizuddin, Pakistan)

doing their utmost to care for them with help from United Nations bodies and the world community. It was imperative to create conditions of peace and security in the world in order to prevent the flow of refugees in general. In the particular case of Afghan refugees, urgent steps must be taken to enable them to return voluntarily to their homeland.

88. Although Pakistan had voted for General Assembly resolution 34/80, by which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been adopted, and while it generally supported the goals of the Convention, it had not been able to sign or ratify the Convention because some of its provisions were not in accord with the laws of Pakistan and the tenets of Islam. Legal experts in Pakistan were studying the implications of the Convention and procedures for signing it.

89. In accordance with the teachings of Islam and the relevant provisions of her country's national Constitution, her Government had been endeavouring to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women and to integrate women into the mainstream of national life. Islam had been the first religion to emancipate women, and it regarded women as equal participants in the social order. Women consequently enjoyed rights in such matters as education, employment, voting, seeking and holding public office, selection of a spouse, divorce, inheritance, ownership and disposal of property, and full participation in national life. They also enjoyed political rights on equal terms with men.

90. Article 34 of the Constitution provided that steps should be taken to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life. A Women's Division at the federal level had therefore been set up in 1979 to draft and implement programmes and projects designed to enhance women's participation in economic and social development activities. In addition, various studies had been conducted, and National Conferences of Women had been organized, to obtain information concerning the special needs and interests of women in society.

91. All possible efforts were being made to provide adequate resources for the advancement of women, particularly in the fields of employment, health and education. The Government of Pakistan was fully conscious of its responsibility towards women and was determined to do its utmost, within its limited resources, to enhance the welfare of women and to integrate them fully into the development process.

92. Mrs. SARANGEREL (Mongolia) said that she considered the United Nations Decade for Women to be an important factor in the struggle for the equality of women, their right to participate in all spheres of life and their active involvement in the movement for the consolidation of international peace and security. The emancipation of women could not be achieved in isolation from the struggle for peace and security, disarmament, national independence and social progress, and against colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid. It was understandable that millions of women in different parts of the world were becoming increasingly involved in the active struggle for equality, peace and disarmament. Her country fully 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, and it attached great importance to the

(Mrs. Sarangerel, Mongolia)

provision in the draft declaration that the elimination of colonialism, apartheid, racism and racial discrimination was a vital condition for the achievement of equality for women.

93. Mongolia called on all States which had not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Her delegation requested the Secretariat to comply strictly with the decisions of the General Assembly concerning the site and duration of the session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. If any changes were necessary, they should be clearly endorsed by the members of the Committee.

94. Adequate preparations were necessary to make the 1985 World Conference a success. In addition to reviewing and appraising the progress achieved during the Decade for Women, the World Conference should prove to be a valuable contribution to the achievement of the closely interrelated objectives of the Decade: Equality, Development and Peace. With a view to bringing about the equality of women, the World Conference should emphasize the participation of women in the struggle for international peace and security, disarmament and social progress. The Conference should also focus on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas.

95. Complex economic and social problems could not be solved without the participation of women, since one third of the world's material wealth was produced by women. The problems of inflation and unemployment seriously affected the situation of women and mothers. The Mongolian People's Republic and other socialist countries had made great strides in granting women equal social and political rights. Her country possessed an effective instrument for monitoring the observance of the institutional rights of women in the form of the standing committees of the Great People's Khural concerned with women's work and life and with maternity and child care. Similiar committees also functioned at the local level. The State endeavoured to improve the material welfare and working conditions of women and the health care of mothers and children. Working mothers were given paid maternity leave and other privileges, such as lighter work schedules if they had small children.

96. Illiteracy has been completely eradicated. More than half the students in higher educational institutions were women. In addition, women participated actively in political life and held administrative positions in public organizations. A total of 87.3 per cent of able women were currently employed in every branch of the national economy.

97. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers on agenda item 94 would be closed at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 9 November.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.