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at 6.15 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 6.20 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. CHADERTON MATOS (Venezuela) said that his country was convinced of the importance of integrating women into all sectors of development, for development could not be achieved except with the participation of all social workers, among whom women had been, were and would be an important factor in the historical progress of mankind in general and of each people in particular.
2. Venezuela had already set up the machinery for that purpose at the highest level of the central administration. The Office of the Ministry of State for the Participation of Women in Development had established two sets of objectives; on the one hand: to obtain recognition of the dignity of women and their worth as human beings, to integrate them into the country's social life and to enable them to participate on a footing of equality in the decision-making process and in the national development effort; and, on the other hand: to formulate social development policies based on an integrated concept of development, to take an active part in national planning, and to encourage efforts to achieve equality and the integration of women into society at the subregional, regional, interregional and international levels. The Office provided guidance in matters of social development, initiated and co-ordinated policies and programmes relating to the integration of women in development, and proposed and supported plans and programmes fostering the participation of the various sectors of the population in national development. It was therefore apparent that Venezuelan democracy was incompatible with a pattern of development under which women would be relegated to a passive and secondary role.
3. The efforts of the Office of the Ministry of State had borne fruit: one of the great achievements of the Government's social policy had been a partial reform of the Civil Code. Operating on the basis of the same modern and progressive principles which underlay other reforms carried out elsewhere in the world, the Government had put forward a proposal for reform that guaranteed the equality of

(Mr. Chaderton Matos, Venezuela)

children, the equality of parents in the exercise of parental authority and the equality of husband and wife in relation to the rights and duties of marriage, the purpose of such equality being viewed as a means of strengthening the family. That proposal had been adopted by the National Congress.

4. One of the objectives of Venezuela's sixth development plan was to integrate women into the employment sector and facilitate their entry into technical and industrial occupations and the fields of education and health. At the political level, it was of interest to note that the Cabinet included five women at the ministerial level who headed the Ministries of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Urban Development, Planning, Parliamentary Relations and the Office of the Ministry of State for the Participation of Women in Development. Women also held important posts in both State and private enterprises, municipal councils, the judiciary, neighbourhood associations, farmers' organizations, trade unions and professional associations and at the higher levels of political parties. Also, 50 per cent of the university students were women. Such progress could only be the result of a policy of participation and not of a paternalistic policy. What was more, women were not being placed in honorary posts merely to give them visibility and create the illusion that women were participating in society; Venezuelan women were actually a part of and were active in the social dynamics of the country.

5. The 1985 World Conference should not only be concerned with evaluating the results of the United Nations Decade for Women but should also determine the guidelines for the implementation of the measures provided for in the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen. His delegation was determined to do its utmost to ensure the success of the Conference. It supported the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in its capacity as Preparatory Committee for the Conference, and, as a member of the Economic and Social Council, Venezuela would carefully consider the report to be submitted by the Commission to the Council at its first regular session.

6. Venezuela attached great importance to the continuation of the activities being conducted by the economic commissions of the various regions for the purpose of improving the status of women.

7. Venezuela had just completed the procedures for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the only remaining step was to publish the parliamentary decision. It was worth noting that 88 countries had signed the Convention and that, of them, 25 (or 30 per cent) were Latin American and Caribbean countries. That was the best response which Latin America could give to those who, because of invincible ignorance or baseless stereotypes, misjudged the mentality and social behaviour of the inhabitants of that region. By ratifying the Convention, his country was making its modest contribution, not to the progress of men or women, but to the progress of the human person, and was thus recognizing its dignity.

8. Mrs. MOHADEO (Guyana) said that the integration of women into the national development effort had been one of her country's objectives long before the role of women in society had become an item on the agenda of the United Nations General

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(Mr. Mohadeo, Guyana)

Assembly. Her country's commitment to that objective had its roots in Guyana's belief in human equality and its conviction that to bar women from full participation in development was to deprive that effort of the contributions of a substantial and vibrant sector of society, and thereby to undermine it. The president of Guyana, Mr. Forbes Burnham, had stated the very emphatically that failure to give women equality was to fail to establish belief in human worth.

9. In view of the difficult economic and social conditions in Guyana arising out of the depressed state of the international economy, it behooved the Government to ensure that all national resources, both human and material, were committed to development. That was why fresh impetus had been given to integrating women even more completely into the economic life of the country. Women were to be found in every sector of production, and more importantly in the agricultural sector, which played a crucial role in world production of foodstuffs.

10. His delegation was happy to note the progress made by Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women. While it recognized that the goals of the Decade might not all be met by 1985, it felt that there must be no relaxing of effort after that time but that, rather, the action embarked upon must be continued and the achievements consolidated.

11. His country was particularly grateful to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women for its assistance to a pilot scheme that had been initiated to help low-income women in Guyana improve their own standard of living and that of their communities.

12. In any consideration of the items relating to women, it was imperative not to forget the condition of the millions of women who, in South Africa and Namibia and in Palestine, were forced to participate in development, not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of their minority oppressors. For them, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women had not even begun to have a meaning. His delegation therefore reaffirmed its support for all measures aimed at ensuring full respect for the fundamental and inalienable rights of those women.

13. In closing, he wished to point out that his country was looking forward to participating in the preparations for the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, and also to its participation in the Conference itself.

14. Mr. GHAZALI (Malaysia), speaking on agenda item 91, referred to Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26, on the preparations for the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, and particularly operative paragraph 8 thereof, in which Member States were invited to submit their views on the proposed goals and specific themes of the Conference. His delegation considered that the Conference should search for new ideas and ways to achieve the objectives of peace, equality and development, and

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(Mr. Ghazali, Malaysia)

should focus on the role of rural women in development, particularly their employment in industry, and on the problems relating to the flight from the countryside. In addition, the mass media should be invited to highlight the main issues to be discussed at the Conference rather than sensational and sometimes undesirable incidents as had happened at the Mexico and Copenhagen Conferences.

15. The adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women constituted an important step towards the attainment of the goals of the Decade.

16. In its struggle for justice and peace, the international community should not forget the Palestinian women who were refugees or lived in the occupied Arab territories, nor the women struggling against apartheid in South Africa, all of whom were suffering at the hands of criminal régimes.

17. His Government recognized the aspirations of Malaysian women to social equality and their contribution to nation-building and the social and economic life of the country. It was seeking to remove traditional cultural prejudices against women and to provide guidelines aimed at encouraging the participation of women in all aspects of development. Women constituted one third of the Malaysian labour force. As a result of better education and training, women formed 35.4 per cent of the total university population. Many Malaysian women were engaged in professional activities, holding important positions as lawyers, bankers, entrepreneurs, accountants, physicists, teachers, nurses and so on. The 23-member Malaysian cabinet included two women ministers and four deputy ministers. Women were appointed to important professional and political posts because of their capabilities, not simply to create the illusion of equality between men and women. The National Council on Integration of Women in Development was responsible for liaison between the various women's organizations and the Government. The Council co-operated with international organizations with a view to promoting greater understanding among women. It had established the Women's Handicraft Sales Organization in order to assist rural women in marketing their products. The Council was currently headed by a woman deputy minister.

18. Mrs. OULD DADDAH (Mauritania) said she was gratified that the World Conference that would constitute the culmination of all the efforts made during the Decade for Women was to be held in Africa. The Conference should enable the international community to evaluate the results achieved and in the light of that evaluation to prepare a programme of action for the future.

19. Contrary to the views held by some people in industrialized countries, the question of the advancement of women was definitely a political question which should be viewed against the background of the real world. ILO statistics gave an idea of the scope of the problem: women constituted 50 per cent of the population and one third of the salaried labour force but accounted for two thirds of the hours worked. However, they received only one tenth of world income and possessed only 1 per cent of property on a world-wide basis. It was therefore clear that traditional oppression of women throughout the world could not be ended without far-reaching changes in the organization and use of power at both the national and international levels, a political enterprise if ever there was one.

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(Mrs. Ould Daddah, Mauritania)

20. The Nairobi Conference must state that the oppression of women originated in under-development, colonialism and apartheid. Although inadequate national policies reinforced those trends, the main causes of that oppression were international in origin and that fact must shape the strategy to be implemented with a view to redressing the injustices of which women were the victims and modifying women's attitudes towards each other.

21. The economic crisis, which was affecting both the North and the South, was generally acknowledged to be caused by the faulty operation and inequitable nature of world economic structures. Price fluctuations and deterioration of the terms of trade, with all the disparities between North and South which they entailed, and which were reflected in the fact that 70 per cent of the population received only 30 per cent of world income, constituted the root cause of the oppression of women in the third world. Women were more seriously affected than men by the effects of the international crisis with regard to both wage levels and stability of employment. In the developing countries, the textile and clothing industries, which employed a large number of women, had suffered greatly as a result of the protectionist measures imposed by the developed countries. The current crisis, combined with rapid changes and a redistribution of economic activities, was having even more detrimental effects in the traditional and agricultural sectors. Lacking access to property ownership, credit and technical resources, women suffered more than men as a result of economic upheaval. Only the successful completion of the North-South dialogue and the establishment of the new international economic order would make it possible to remedy that injustice and, above all, to resolve the crisis. It should be noted in that connection that African women considered that although patriarchal structures and beliefs oppressed women throughout the world, there were also women who belonged to the classes and countries which dominated others and who enjoyed certain privileges with regard to access to resources; African women therefore felt that not all women had the same interests. They opposed the tendency to view men as the enemy who had failed to "integrate women in development", and, like third world women in general, they thought that the main reason for their oppression was the injustice of the current economic order and that they must fight side by side with the men of their countries to change that order. However, their ability to contribute to that economic and political struggle was limited by their inequality with regard to education, health and employment. A programme of action should therefore be adopted aimed at enabling women to contribute effectively to development and peace.

22. The Programme for the United Nations Decade for Women had remained a dead letter for the women of southern Africa and Palestine. It was true that in those regions both men and women were oppressed, but women were doubly oppressed by reason of their sex. Because families were dispersed, both groups of women were obliged to assume additional economic responsibilities and to work in extremely difficult conditions for very low wages. Furthermore, in both cases the struggle waged by women to obtain equality with men had always been subordinated to the wider struggle for national liberation, which constituted a prerequisite for any real change in the social status of women. Lastly, women in those two regions were playing an active part in the liberation struggle. The international community

(Mrs. Ould Daddan, Mauritania)

should therefore reaffirm the need to eliminate apartheid and to promote the national rights of the Palestinians. The international community should also adopt special assistance measures for women, to offset the effects of the additional discrimination to which they were subjected. The current economic crisis and political tensions constituted a historic challenge which must be taken up by all men and women.

23. Mrs. BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) said her delegation was glad to note that the number of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was increasing each year, a trend attributable to the fact that the United Nations Decade for Women had succeeded in increasing public awareness. Rwanda, which was determined to spare no effort to integrate women in national development and in all aspects of national life, was gratified that a Rwandese woman whose candidature it had submitted had been elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The National Revolutionary Movement for Development, a comprehensive political formation, supported the emancipation of women within the context of respect for family ties, an emancipation which involved the enhancement of a woman's personality and access to instruction and to professional, social, economic and political responsibilities. The Government had stepped up its efforts within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Women by adopting legislative, judicial, administrative and political measures to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. Thus, the Constitution of the Rwandese Republic protected women against all discrimination with regard with the right to vote (art. 9), civil liberties (art. 16), and employment (art. 30). As yet, relatively few women occupied positions of responsibility, but that was because few women had received the necessary education or acquired the necessary professional experience. Consequently, her Government stressed the access of women to primary, secondary, higher and university education. It had already established or was in the process of establishing secondary schools for girls. The number of women in the professions was increasing each year. Women occupied managerial posts in the executive branch and in the legislative branch, four women were members of the National Development Council. As to the judicial branch, a woman had been appointed a Vice-President of the Appeals Court in 1982. In addition, more and more women were becoming diplomats and many women had participated in various conferences. It remained to appoint more women to managerial and policy-making posts so that they could play a more important role in the economic, social and cultural development of the country.

24. The labour laws took account of the special situation of women, who received two months' paid maternity leave and were allowed one hour a day to breast-feed infants under 12 months. Article 82 of the Constitution affirmed the principle of equal pay for all workers. Judicial measures (Penal Code and Code Governing the Organization of the Judicial System) had been adopted in 1980 to protect women from discrimination. Thus, adultery, bigamy, publicizing abortion, deserting the family and infringing personal liberty were penalized without any distinction between the sexes.

(Mrs. Baziyaka, Rwanda)

25. A National Association of Rwandese Women for Development (URAMA), made up of women at all levels, had been established under the aegis of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development in 1982. URAMA, whose creation had been mooted in 1975, was to some extent the product of International Women's Year. A delegation representing the Movement had toured Rwanda to explain the Association's objectives, which were to integrate Rwandese women in every area of national life and to collect observations and suggestions from women and men concerning the Association, a political organization.

26. Mrs. TAN (Singapore) said that her delegation was heartened by the fact that since the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City in 1975, the international community, which had long remained passive, was taking an active interest in the question of inequality between men and women with respect to rights and opportunities. Since the first United Nations Decade for Women was drawing to an end, it would be timely to hold a second conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985 in order to review and appraise achievements.

27. Her delegation was pleased to note from the Secretary-General's report (A/37/458) that several Governments, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations had, in response to the Secretary-General's request, submitted information on the activities they had undertaken to implement the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

28. Her delegation had also noted, with some pride, that two members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia and the Philippines, had been elected to serve a four-year term as members of the Commission on the Status of Women.

29. She had read with interest the Secretary-General's report on the progress made in the preparation of a world survey on the role of women in development (A/37/381). Such a survey would be very useful to all States that wished to see women further integrated in development since it would provide them with basic information for use in mapping out their development strategies.

30. Singapore was fully aware that any developmental planning strategy must, to be effective, mobilize the vast female labour force. That consideration, together with the conviction that women and men should be afforded equal opportunities to work, had resulted in virtually full employment in Singapore, which had had an unemployment rate of 3 percent in 1980. There had been 1,120,000 persons in the labour force in 1980, or 54 per cent more than 10 years before, and the number of working women had more than doubled during the 1970s, so that they now constituted one third of the total labour force. Fifty per cent of the population (men and women) were receiving secondary education. Since the ratio of males to females was roughly equal, it was evident that there was very little discrimination as between men and women in the fields of education and employment.

31. In 1961, a Women's Charter had been adopted in Singapore. The Charter provided, inter alia, for the rights of married women and stipulated penalties for

(Mrs. Tan, Singapore)

prostitution and trafficking of women and girls. Labour laws and legislation on abortion and family planning were relatively advanced in Singapore.

32. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had received 88 signatures and 44 ratifications or accessions. It should be borne in mind that the Convention was a compromise text whose weaknesses were due to the necessity of reflecting a variety of national interests. Some States had difficulty in reconciling the Convention's provisions with the tenets of Islamic law, while others could not accept the clause providing for arbitration by the International Court of Justice in the event of inter-State disputes. Some Western States whose national legislation provided for more extensive rights might consider the Convention a rather conservative or even regressive document, but for the countries of the third world it was a major breakthrough since it codified international norms which had not been implemented in many developing countries. The Government of Singapore was currently studying the text of the Convention. A preliminary analysis of articles 7 to 16 indicated that most of the rights provided for in the Convention were already embodied in the Singaporean Women's Charter.

33. Her delegation was heartened by the information that the Programme of Action for the Decade for Women was being vigorously implemented despite economic constraints. In that respect, she welcomed the fact that at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, held on 8 and 9 November 1982, financial aid had continued to be pledged for the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Although the amounts pledged fell far short of the targets, she hoped that they would assist Member States and United Nations organizations to complete a blueprint for specific action at the national, regional and international levels to further the cause of women throughout the world.

34. Mrs. SINGH (India) said that considerable progress had been made during the United Nations Decade for Women but observed that holding world conferences and adopting action programmes were only starting-points and that the action taken at the regional and international levels was merely a supplement to the efforts required at the national level.

35. No appraisal of women's roles and their opportunities for participation in economic activities could be performed in isolation of the country's state of development and the socio-cultural attitudes towards women's roles in the family and in society. Demographic trends and social changes (marriage at a later age or smaller families, for example, and urbanization, migration, rising cost of living and higher standard of living) had transformed women's role and responsibility. The transition from traditional agriculture and household industry to modern organized industry and services, together with the exodus from the countryside, had rendered obsolete the traditional division of labour, causing it to be replaced by competitive relationships between individuals as units of labour. Women, handicapped by a lack of opportunities to acquire new skills, found themselves relatively unwanted in the new economic order, although in the traditional village economy they still played a substantial role in production and marketing. The

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(Mrs. Singh, India)

Indian Government had already provided detailed information on its efforts to improve the status of women. Accordingly, she would merely reiterate that her Government was dedicated to ensuring equality of status and opportunity for women, their full integration in the development process and their full participation in all walks of life. India's independence struggle and its social reforms throughout history had emphasized women's progress. Men and women tended to view each other as allies and had fought shoulder to shoulder in India's freedom struggle. Since independence, constitutional guarantees and the enactment of a series of social laws, and also the adoption of special provisions for women, had facilitated the improvement of health standards, educational and employment opportunities and access to material and social resources. With regard to participation in the political and policy-making process, she stated that the number of women who voted in parliamentary elections had consistently increased. In the 1980 election for the House of People, the number of women voting had been 87,270,000 (51.22 per cent) as against 64,150,000 (49.12 per cent) in 1971. The number of women legislators at the central and state levels had increased from 100 in 1967 to 143 in 1982. There were currently 52 women in Parliament. A more significant indication of the extent of women's participation in the political life of the country was the fact that India had been led by a woman for a number of years.

36. The issue before India was therefore to ensure that rights and opportunities were actually enjoyed; it had to ensure that its economic and social development, progress and prosperity could be shared equally by men and women. To that end, her Government had included in the sixth five-year plan a separate chapter on women and development in which it spelled out its strategy. Economic emancipation of the family, with specific attention to women, would constitute one of the major operational aspects of that strategy for alleviating poverty.

37. Despite the Government's good will, certain economic, social and attitudinal constraints could not be overcome by legislative or administrative action alone; education and persuasion were required. It had to be realized that a national effort by itself could not be expected to achieve the goals set, since the improvement of the status of women was intrinsically linked with the development of society as a whole. The international community would therefore have to make a genuine effort in that area. The Commission on the Status of Women, as the preparatory body for the 1985 World Conference, had adopted practical decisions which reflected willingness to accommodate highly divergent points of view while ensuring that work was done efficiently. The Commission should therefore be given all necessary information and support, with due account being taken of the work being done by different United Nations bodies, particularly in research, studies and data collection. Such co-operation and co-ordination would undoubtedly be of benefit to the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development.

38. Her delegation regretted that the report on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women (A/37/421) had only just been issued, since it was difficult to have an informed discussion without being able to rely on such documentation. Her delegation had been very closely associated with the work of

(Mrs. Singh, India)

the Fund and was in a good position to commend its excellent work. The Fund was unique within the United Nations system; since coming into operation in 1978 it had financed approximately 300 projects in the sectors of employment, human development, planning, energy and information in 78 countries. Considering that the Fund's resources were so meagre, it had been remarkably successful in playing an innovative and catalytic role. It was clear, however, that its resources were grossly inadequate for meeting the needs of women around the world. Her delegation therefore hoped that countries having the means to do so would continue to support the Fund and increase its resources. It was also particularly pleased to see that NGO involvement in that effort was increasing. In view of the importance which it attached to the work of the Fund, her delegation had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/37/L.24 and hoped that it would be adopted without a vote.

39. Her delegation was pleased to note that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had already commenced its activities, since it could do much to attain the objectives of the Decade. Her delegation agreed with the emphasis placed by the Institute's Board of Trustees on training activities. In that context, due account should be taken of the research and training facilities available at the national level. Her delegation noted that the Institute had already established contacts with national organizations and institutions and hoped that that co-operation would continue to develop and would complement the increasing co-operation with various parts of the United Nations system.

40. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's satisfaction that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had been constituted in accordance with the Convention on that subject. She congratulated the 23 members of the Committee who had been elected in April 1982 and wished them all success in their work of considering the progress made in the implementation of the Convention.

41. Mr. RUBIN (International Labour Organisation) said that one of the key objectives of ILO was to eliminate the inequalities which affected many different groups within the work force, including discrimination against women. In fact, women formed such an important part of the working population that their needs could hardly be dealt with in isolation. At the same time, discrimination against women was so widespread and so deeply rooted in the socio-economic and cultural contexts that ILO was obliged to pay special attention to women's problems.

42. Women's average earnings throughout the world continued to lag well behind those of men. It was true that many of them had failed to obtain better-paying jobs, but they also did not have adequate access to those jobs or to opportunities to train for them. Moreover, the principle of equal pay for equal work was not always applied. In addition, the burden of family responsibilities which fell on women had not yet been reduced. In a time of economic crisis, problems of unemployment and underemployment affected women more severely.

43. In developed countries, women were frequently the first to be affected by rising unemployment. The reduction of unemployment opportunities in certain

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(Mr. Rubin, ILO)

economic sectors caused by the introduction of new technologies such as micro-electronics could also affect them more seriously. Similarly, an effort must be made to determine the effect on women workers of economic restructuring that involved the phasing out of outdated industries, including some that employed predominantly women. In developing countries, ways must be found to alleviate the very difficult working conditions of rural women, whose meagre income-earning opportunities were often seriously threatened by the process of technological change and rural modernization. Women engaged in a wide range of activities in the urban informal sector also constituted a highly vulnerable group. Women's role in the early, labour-intensive stages of industrialization, particularly in export industries, needed examination in order to establish whether they drew lasting benefits from their participation in such development activities.

44. Given those circumstances, the International Labour Organisation considered its first duty to be the promotion of a better appreciation of the nature, degree and cause of discrimination in the world of work and of the link between that particular form of discrimination and other forms. ILO sought to maximize equality of treatment for women and men and, while ensuring maternity protection, to avoid protective measures which were unrelated to the real needs of women and placed them at a disadvantage on the labour market. Many of the earliest international conventions and recommendations adopted by ILO had sought to give special protection to women in the work force without prejudice to the fundamental premise of equality of rights between men and women. Those standards (specifically, those dealing with equality of remuneration and the elimination of discrimination in employment, occupation and social security) had in many countries resulted in the enactment of legislation, often aimed exclusively at protecting women by, for example, prohibiting underground or night work by women or the employment of women in dangerous or harmful occupations. The need for maternity protection had also been widely recognized at the national level. However, the crux of the problem lay in determining where protection ended and discrimination began. It was increasingly being recognized that new economic and social norms which protected women without involving discrimination were needed; an example of such measures was the Convention concerning equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women workers: workers with family responsibilities (No. 156) and Recommendation No. 165 on the same subject.

45. Another key objective of ILO was to facilitate access by women to a wider variety of jobs, especially those requiring a skill or a high level of vocational training, through training and other means and through promoting greater awareness of the total contribution of women in the economic and social fields. The draft medium-term plan for the period 1982-1987 devoted much attention to practical activities designed to accomplish those objectives. Special importance would be given to integrating women as fully as possible into the development process, both as contributors to that process and as beneficiaries. Efforts would also be made to identify the specific impact of development on women workers, their incomes and their roles in society, and the changes which were taking place in the economy and the world of work. The specific activities provided for in the plan included case studies leading to the development of pilot projects for the employment and training of women in rural areas of developing countries, a study of the adaptation

(Mr. Rubin, ILO)

of technology to women's needs and the impact of the introduction of new technologies on the employment of women, arrangements for giving the wives of migrant workers the chance to participate in the economic and social life of the host country, the participation of women in trade unions and their employment in high-skilled occupations.

46. A great many technical co-operation programmes were already under way at the regional and national levels: one example was the multidisciplinary exercise undertaken in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa and funded by an extrabudgetary contribution from the Swedish International Development Authority, and which dealt, in particular, with income generation and distribution, rural development, co-operatives, the development of small enterprises, vocational training and the establishment of national associations of women which would enable women themselves to formulate projects for directly meeting needs perceived on the spot. A further example was the significant training programme aimed at priority groups such as women breadwinners or women in low-income groups, which was designed to expand facilities for acquiring non-traditional skills and to contribute thereby to progress and the strengthening of national training and employment policies.

47. The International Labour Organisation was therefore concerned both with enhancing opportunities for women in the field of employment and with eliminating discrimination against women in occupation and treatment. ILO thus hoped to enable women to benefit truly from their integration into the economy and the development process.

48. Mrs. UMAÑA (Colombia) regretted that the question of women, like all other questions relating to human rights, was becoming increasingly politicized and was the object of theoretical disquisitions, all too often smacking of ideology which obscured the original purpose, which was to help women to solve the problems inherent in their nature, which was to be, first and foremost, mothers, wives, sisters and companions. It was likewise regrettable that the conclusions concerning the role of women reached by the industrial societies after a long period of change should be extended to the developing countries without any appreciation of how little they had in common with the situation prevailing in those countries.

49. The subject was thus becoming a polemic tinged with the bitterness engendered by the isolation caused by the artificial confrontation between the two sexes and by losing sight of the prime object, which was to help couples. In countries such as hers women had always played a decisive role in building society; they had played that role silently, with no loud proclamations of feminism and with limited economic resources. The Colombian leaders had grasped how valuable their potential was for development and had recognized and encouraged it, not only by giving many women major political responsibilities but also by promoting voluntary organizations seeking to improve society. In Colombia, there was a co-ordinating agency for voluntary work which, with small resources, had endeavoured to enable as many people as possible to benefit from the experience gained from community development projects and anti-poverty campaigns carried out in very remote areas of

(Mrs. Umaña, Colombia)

the country. Colombia had been in the forefront of those activities and had therefore been selected as host country for the 1984 World Conference of LIVE (Learn through International Volunteer Efforts), to be attended by more than 200 voluntary organizations from all over the world.

50. Her delegation regretted that the Committee had not received more information on the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, which had proved to be extraordinarily efficient owing to being managed by people whose sole concern was to solve social problems with which they were directly acquainted and who were convinced that the only way of overcoming extreme poverty was by collaborating with UNDP and through technical co-operation activities. Colombia was one of the countries which had benefited from the Fund's activities. Inasmuch as the Fund was the instrument chosen by United Nations to tackle the problems which it was the aim of the Third Committee to solve, it was essential that it should be given the greatest possible assistance in its task.

51. Mrs. FRANCO (Portugal) said that, as the United Nations Decade for Women drew to an end, the emphasis was shifting from the activities being undertaken to an assessment of the progress made. That assessment could be made from two perspectives and consider, on the one hand, United Nations efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the status of women and, on the other, the measures taken by Governments to improve the actual situation of women. As far as the United Nations was concerned, it had endeavoured to further the process launched in 1975, in particular through the adoption and wide dissemination of policy documents; the World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, the Programme of Action approved at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had provided the international community with a broad policy and a legal framework and had suggested priorities for action. It might, therefore, have been expected that Governments, conscious of the importance of the role played by women and of the discrimination against them, would take measures to eliminate such inequality.

52. The goal of full equality between men and women was, however, still far from being achieved. There were those who were content to ascribe the slow progress made to the scale of the world economic crisis, among other things, and, therefore, to something which could not be controlled, but the balance was surely to be attributed chiefly to internal causes such as cultural factors, tradition and the division of labour, on which action could be taken more easily. It was her hope that the 1975 World Conference to Review and Appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women would provide the international community with an opportunity to devise such strategies and practical solutions in order to remedy that state of affairs.

53. Turning to the preparatory work for the Conference, she said that the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26 were appropriate. On the whole, she agreed that the Conference should, on the one hand, evaluate the results of the Decade, by determining the extent to which it had helped

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(Mrs. Franco, Portugal)

to improve the status of women, identifying the problems and drawing up methods to solve them, and, on the other hand, aim at establishing for the years ahead objectives which would open practical opportunities while consolidating the progress achieved. Given that the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade emphasized the interdependence between the achievement of major global and sectoral goals in the development process and the improvement of the status of women, the Conference should establish the extent to which the Programme of Action had contributed to the achievement of the goals of the Strategy, particularly those involving the employment, health and training of women, the participation of women in the decision-making process, the problems of migrant women, women refugees and rural women and the reallocation of the roles traditionally assigned to men and women.

54. She said that, in improving the status of women, the importance of enacting appropriate laws and adopting international instruments establishing legal equality between men and women could not be overstated. Portugal, whose legislation guaranteed such equality, had been one of the first States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. She was gratified to note that a Portuguese woman had been elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was responsible for assessing the progress made in implementing the Convention. With regard to the draft declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace (A/37/381), she said that she could not see what legal need the draft declaration was intended to meet with respect to the participation of women in political decision-making and, consequently, their contribution to the efforts of the international community to preserve peace. Nevertheless, she hoped that a text could be proposed at the current session which would reflect legitimate concerns and could be accepted by the majority of Member States.

55. She noted with satisfaction that the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, to which Portugal had just made its first contribution, more effectively promoting the achievement of the goals of the Decade and were in line with the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 31/133.

56. Mr. ODOCH-JATO (Uganda) said that the Government and the people of Uganda had a deep interest in the principles and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. That interest derived from the national commitment to work towards the emancipation of women. Since the United Nations Decade for Women was nearing its end, it seemed appropriate to make an assessment of efforts undertaken with regard to both the achievement of national goals and the implementation of the World Plan of Action and the Programme of Action.

57. At the national level, the Decade had begun inauspiciously for the women of Uganda in view of the prevailing fascist dictatorship which had threatened the lives of the country's citizens and its economy. The return to democracy and the gradual restoration of the rule of law had heralded new prospects for the women of Uganda. In the past two years, his Government had taken, in the context of the

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(Mr. Odoch-Jato, Uganda)

Development Plan for the period 1981-1991 measures to ensure the participation of all Ugandans in the quest for economic and social recovery and for national unity. The mobilization of women formed a vital component of that national strategy. The Government had implemented, through the various ministries and the National Council of Women, assistance programmes designed to ensure the full integration of women in development. In view of the predominant role of agriculture in the Ugandan economy, and the need to bridge the income gap between the rural and urban populations, the assistance programmes had accorded the highest priority to rural women engaged in agricultural production and had endeavoured to promote women's co-operatives, cottage industries and other income-generating projects in the rural areas.

58. Moreover, within the overall development strategy designed to eliminate ignorance, poverty and disease, emphasis had been placed on education, employment and health care for Ugandan women. As a result of the reopening of vocational training centres, women who were not gainfully employed would henceforth have the opportunity to learn trades that equipped them for self-employment.

59. The remarkable increase in the number of women engaged in productive activities was already a proof that the national strategy had been successful. However, in spite of that success, Ugandan women continued to confront the difficulties of underdevelopment, which could be solved only through international co-operation and the early establishment of the new international economic order.

60. His delegation considered that the integral implementation of the World Plan of Action and the Programme of Action was essential in order to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the efforts undertaken by the bodies and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and acknowledged, in particular, the important roles played by UNICEF and FAO in co-ordinating activities for the implementation of the World Plan of Action and the Programme of Action.

61. His delegation viewed with some concern, however, the divergent interpretations of the scope of the theme of the Decade. As stated at the Copenhagen Conference and in the Third Committee during the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the paramount objective of the decade was to secure the participation of women, on an equal footing with men, in all spheres of human endeavour. In that context, women should enjoy the right to play an active role in national and international affairs. It was thus most unfortunate that the World Plan of Action and the Programme of Action had been criticized for attributing a political role to women, although women were directly affected by all political decisions taken at the national and international levels and, in some regions of the world, they were the first victims of political systems and ideologies.

62. Uganda was particularly alert to the situation of women in South Africa and Namibia, who were suffering under the heinous yoke of apartheid and to that of Palestinian women, who were the victims of Israeli aggression and oppression.

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(Mr. Odoch-Jato, Uganda)

63. As Uganda was convinced that women had a right to their say in political decision-making at the national and international levels, it fully subscribed to the World Plan of Action and the Programme of Action. In keeping with that view, Uganda had welcomed the Declaration on Equality, National Independence and Peace adopted by the World Congress on Women held at Prague in October 1981 and it reiterated its support for 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.

64. Lastly, Uganda expressed the earnest hope that the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi, would make a new contribution to the cause of women and that the continuation of the activities of the Decade beyond 1985 would give the international community the opportunity to integrate women fully in the struggle for equality, development and peace.

65. Mrs. DAHAL (Nepal) said that her country warmly welcomed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and appreciated the fact that, within a period of one year, the Convention had received 88 signatures and 44 ratifications. Regarding 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, her delegation believed that women, as both mothers and citizens were directly affected by war and could contribute significantly to the maintenance and strengthening of international peace.

66. Although the situation of women throughout the world had evolved during the course of the Decade, there was still much to be done in that area. Her delegation therefore noted with satisfaction that the Commission on the Status of Women had already begun to think about action to be undertaken beyond the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985. In that connection, while it was desirable to define the priority issues and concerns for the world conference marking the end of the Decade, her delegation was of the view that each country must formulate its priorities and plans of action, since the situation of women varies according to national socio-economic contexts.

67. World public opinion had become aware of women's issues largely as a result of the efforts of the United Nations and other bodies of the United Nations system. In that regard, her delegation attached particular importance to the activities of FAO, which had direct relevance to the life of rural women in a country like Nepal, to UNESCO programmes devoted to improving the status of women and their contributions to society and to the radio series "Women", broadcast by the Department of Public Information, which her delegation would like to see adapted in the national language of Nepal. Her delegation also recognized the value of the work done by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and requested INSTRAW to give developing countries greater access to information and documentation concerning the Institute's activities. Nepal hoped that INSTRAW would multiply its services in Asia and the Pacific region.

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(Mrs. Dahal, Nepal)

68. Women in Nepal constituted more than 49 per cent of the total population of 15 million. Since the country's sixth five-year plan had recognized that development efforts could not be successful without the participation of women, six major policy guidelines had been adopted to involve women more closely in national life and enhance their status. In view of the fact that 98 per cent of the women of Nepal lived in remote rural areas, concrete action must be carried out at the village level itself if the situation of those women, who were victims of poverty, disease and illiteracy was to be improved.

69. The International Women's Year in 1975 had contributed significantly to promoting awareness of the problems of Nepalese women. On that occasion, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya of Nepal, a number of reforms had been introduced in law and education. An amendment to Nepal's civil code had granted women equal rights to their father's or husband's property, the right to child custody and the right to obtain a separation or divorce on grounds of the husband's adultery or misconduct. Polygamy had been prohibited in Nepal. Moreover, the sixth plan provided for the education of 900,000 adults, half of whom were women. Compulsory free primary education for girls and the free distribution of text books, which would mean budgetary rethinking, were a response to the desire to eradicate illiteracy, one of the major causes of the backwardness of Nepalese women.

70. As Chairman of the National Social Services Co-ordination Committee, the Queen had established a service entrusted with women's affairs which played an active role in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women and the preparation of the 1985 World Conference. Nepal was striving to give concrete effect to the subthemes of the Decade, namely education, health and employment by instituting legal reforms and by offering women equal opportunities for political participation, education and employment, by promoting income-generating activities and by establishing vocational training programmes. In addition, family planning and maternal and child welfare services had been established in the villages with a view to improving the quality of family life.

71. Obviously, those measures could not in the space of a year or even a decade, lead to profound social changes in a country like Nepal which was handicapped not only by its economic backwardness but also by the ethnic and linguistic diversity of its population and the multiplicity of its social and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, identification of needs and national problems constituted a first important step and should enable Nepal to face the future more confidently.

72. Mrs. MIGNOTT (Jamaica) said that the deterioration of the world economic situation would no doubt have adverse effects on the integration of women in the process of development at the national and international levels. Nevertheless, it was essential to maintain an optimistic and positive attitude.

73. In Jamaica, women participated actively in the development of the country. They had persevered, in the most difficult situations, in playing a role at various levels of society. Women, who constituted a majority of the teachers in the

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

primary and secondary schools, were often the sole heads of families and it was they who had made the country's present leaders what they were.

74. Jamaica therefore recognized the need for the further integration of the potential of women in the overall decision-making process, and considerable progress had been made in that regard in recent years. An increasing number of women responsible positions in various economic sectors, and the law guaranteed them certain social and economic rights.

75. The problem of the integration of women in development had not, however, been entirely solved either at the national or the international level. Their situation depended not only on the political will of Governments but also on the economic resources available to countries to execute programmes on their behalf. It was for that reason that Jamaica attached great importance to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, which was assisting countries to achieve some of the goals they had set themselves. As a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/37/L.24, Jamaica hoped that the Fund would continue to operate effectively and it would therefore again participate in its financing during the current year.

76. Jamaica also welcomed the activities undertaken by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the practical orientation of those activities. It had pledged a contribution to the Institute's Trust Fund.

77. Confident that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would have positive effects, Jamaica would ratify that instrument in the near future.

77 (a). The situation of women must be viewed not only in the context of the Decade but also from a broader historical perspective and it was therefore necessary to make a frank assessment of the results obtained so far and ensure that the efforts which had been initiated would not be weakened.

77 (b). With respect to Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26, Jamaica had identified two issues which deserved special attention, namely, continued efforts to overcome traditional attitudes which had discouraged the integration of women in the process of national development and the need to establish co-operation among countries for the promotion of peace.

78. The task to be carried out was certainly difficult but the very fact that the needs of women had been addressed was reason to believe that there could be no turning back on the road to progress.

79. Mrs. LOPEZ de OLIVEIRA (Bolivia) said she wished to draw attention to the importance attached to the problems of women among Bolivia's economic, social and cultural concerns and the positive attitude of the authorities with respect to the elaboration and execution of national programmes based on the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women. She regretted, however, that her country, despite its egalitarian Constitution, had not been able

(Mrs. Lopez de Oliveira, Bolivia)

to devote to the welfare of women, particularly in rural areas, as much in the way of resources as was necessary, primarily because of the exploitation by others of its natural resources and the low price it obtained for its products on the international market.

80. Bolivia therefore emphasized the need to undertake as a matter of urgency large-scale actions aimed at ensuring the full and complete participation of women in development. In that connection, she welcomed the measures taken at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women with respect to education, health and employment and the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade, thanks to which there were new opportunities for co-operation on behalf of the most disadvantaged women.

81. She noted in that connection the health training programmes for women in remote rural areas and the mining sector and said that the experience acquired was to be incorporated into the policies and strategies for community participation which the Minister of Health proposed to execute during the period 1980-2000.

82. With respect to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which was expected to add new dimensions to the role of women in the process of development, she expressed the hope that the range of activities to be undertaken would be broadened through international technical assistance and that the industrialized countries would support it generously.

83. In conclusion, she appealed to the international community to give more resolute support to disadvantaged women, particularly those in rural areas of the third world, in their quest for a better future.

84. Mr. KHALIFA (Sudan) said that his country, which attached great importance to United Nations action aimed at the advancement of women, had participated in the conferences which had been held on that subject at Mexico City in 1975 and Copenhagen in 1980. That interest derived from the Sudan's faith in the lofty objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, the achievement of which would require an intensification of international co-operation because development and equality were indissociable from peace. Some progress had been made during the Decade in improving the status of women, but there was still much to be done. The Sudan therefore hoped that the Conference to be held at Nairobi in 1985 would be able to make a scientific evaluation of the task accomplished up to the present and adopt specific resolutions with a view to continuing the process which had been initiated.

85. His delegation was convinced that women were a vital factor in the development of a nation and that they must participate in national activities in all areas. They therefore played a strategic role in the Sudan.

86. The process of economic and social change which flowed from development had considerably improved the situation of women by providing them with new opportunities in all areas of social life. Thus, Sudanese women were participating in the Government of the country at the highest level. There were women ministers, women members of Parliament and women on municipal councils.

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(Mr. Khalifa, Sudan)

87. Many possibilities were now offered to women in the field of education and on the labour market. The number of students had increased greatly at all levels of education. In addition, the Sudan recognized the right of women to equal pay for equal work and various social rights such as the right to full retirement benefits and paid maternity leave.

88. The establishment of the Union des femmes du Soudan was a new step in the struggle of women against hidebound traditions. Sudanese women today played a leading role in the building of the country. They were responsible, as mothers, sisters and students, for the education of future generations.

89. In conclusion he announced that his country intended to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

90. Mr. RIACHE (Algeria) said that since the General Assembly had proclaimed International Women's Year in 1972, many steps had been taken to encourage the qualitative and quantitative participation of women in society and in the solution of international problems. Thus the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City in 1975, had resulted in the adoption of many documents and important measures and in particular had enabled the General Assembly at its thirtieth session to proclaim the period from 1976 to 1985 United Nations Decade for Women and to decide to convene another world conference on that question in 1980.

91. Those activities had started a process of mobilization and of realization of the role of women which must now be consolidated by adopting certain measures. 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 was one of those initiatives which had not yet succeeded. Yet, the draft text was based on the World Plan of Action adopted at Mexico and reflected the principal concerns of the international community in that respect. Algeria reaffirmed its support for that draft Declaration and hoped that it would be adopted during the current session.

92. Another commendable initiative was the preparation of a study on women and development. That document would certainly encourage better understanding and appreciation of the role which women should actually play in the development of their country. It would be most appropriate to complete that work before the end of the Decade. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was another important achievement of the Decade.

93. In Algeria, women enjoyed all the rights constitutionally accorded to men. They were also increasingly widely represented in all sectors of the national economy, were protected by an efficient social security system and possessed their own organization, the Union des femmes algériennes.

94. However, national efforts could not be completely independent of regional and international action. Algeria accordingly attached particular importance to the

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(Mr. Riache, Algeria)

work done within the framework of the United Nations system and in particular the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women. In that connection, the report of the Secretary-General was a cause for optimism although it was still necessary to make greater efforts to reach the target set. His delegation had also noted with satisfaction the state of progress of the preparations for the forthcoming World Conference on women. The various steps taken in that connection by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1982/26 augured well for its success.

95. Lastly, Algeria was pleased to learn of the projected opening at the beginning of 1983 of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which should make an appreciable contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the Decade.

96. Mr. TANDIA (Mali) said that the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women had stemmed from a realization of the need to improve the lot of women throughout the world, which had fortunately been expressed in action at the international and national levels. His delegation had therefore studied the Secretary-General's report on the status of women with great attention.

97. The UNICEF Executive Board had also clearly summarized in May 1980 the conclusions to which the different United Nations activities on the improvement of the status of women and their progressive integration in the development process had led, arguing in favour of a broader conception of their role in society and in development.

98. In Mali as everywhere else, women had for centuries been the victims of certain prejudices but, as soon as it achieved independence, his country had given them a privileged place in all sectors. Malian women had joined together in one organization, the Union nationale des femmes du Mali, the main aim of which was to provide women with every possible means to prepare themselves for the difficulties they could encounter throughout their lives. Education was one of those essential means.

99. It was to further that aim that the Mali Government had established a new type of training and education centre, which should enable women to have equal chances of access to employment and public responsibility. Contemporary Malian women were increasingly assuming important responsibilities at the political, legislative, executive and judicial levels.

100. Moreover, the Malian Government, like the Union Nationale des femmes du Mali, considered that a viable framework for development could be maintained only by the preservation of peace and the establishment of a new international economic order. In the dangerous modern world, Malian women, distressed by contemporary problems hoped that all States would work towards peace and progress.

101. Lastly, his delegation 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.

102. Mr. IBRAHIM (Maldives) said that despite the paucity of its resources Maldives was attempting, within its possibilities, to participate actively in the efforts of the international community to eliminate inequality between men and women in order to achieve development for all and to preserve world peace. In Maldivian society, men and women had always been associated on an equal footing in development activity of all kinds. He himself was a member of the National Women's Committee appointed by the President, which was directly responsible to the President's office.

103. Paying a tribute to the work done by the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, he said that their efforts basically depended on what was done, individually and collectively, in the different countries to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Maldives fully supported the efforts of the United Nations to promote participation by women at both the national and international levels in activities connected with development and peace. It therefore welcomed the decision to convene a World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the Decade. Such a conference should also be an incentive to greater efforts for the cause of women in the years to come.

104. For centuries, both the women and the men of Maldives had played their part in national life on an equal footing. The past 50 years had seen a gradual evolution of the constitutional system and in the past decade women had been active at decision-making levels. The Constitution of Maldives granted voting rights to men and women and stipulated the equality of all Maldivian citizens before the law. Women sat in the country's highest legislative bodies. They were also represented at various levels of government service and in the private sector. They comprised nearly one third of the work force.

105. Because it was convinced that human life would be meaningful to posterity only if the responsibilities it entailed were shared by men and women, without discrimination, the Government of Maldives was making every effort in accordance with the United Nations decision, to promote the progress of women in the development process. It had therefore established women's committees in each of the 202 inhabited islands in the Maldives archipelago, to operate in close association with the National Women's Committee, particularly in the education and health sectors.

106. The Maldives Government wished to express its gratitude to the United Nations development system in general, and UNDP and UNICEF in particular, for their co-operation when it had initiated the Pilot Project for Community Development. Despite its very limited resources, it had wished to show its appreciation of the valuable assistance given by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women by making a token contribution to that Fund. That same lack of resources was also impeding Maldives' earnest attempts to introduce more income-generating activities in the various isles of the archipelago.

(Mr. Ibrahim, Maldives)

107. Equality between men and women as members of the human community could not, of course, be called into question and the differences that might have arisen in the course of time were exclusively man-made. As a member of the Islamic community, his country was convinced that the resources available to mankind should be used in a rational and equitable manner on behalf of that material and spiritual development which alone could lead to peace.

108. Peace went beyond the establishment of friendly relations among States, and that was why the role of women was so important. Women were the ones who had the task of educating the rising generations in respect for human life so as to make them responsible members of the international community.

109. Mr. AL-KALBASH (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the best investment a society could make, regardless of its level of development, was in human resources; the pace of economic and social development depended on it. Women, therefore, constituted a full half of the resources on which States relied to carry out their economic and social development programmes. However, the contribution of women to the development process would be really effective only if training programmes were provided for them and if they themselves were ready to assume the responsibilities incumbent upon them. Hence, if they were to be able to play their role and exercise their rights, society must make the necessary social and educational services available to them.

110. Underdevelopment was as harmful to the development of women as it was to that of men and the new international economic order could only be established if women participated actively in progress throughout the world. There were still many obstacles to realizing that objective, including the consequences of the disputes which had arisen regarding the respective roles of men and women and the complications caused by the efforts of women to liberate themselves.

111. The International Women's Year and, after that, the United Nations Decade for Women had for the first time given millions of women reason for hope. The year 1975 had marked the beginning of the fight against discriminatory traditions and practices and had opened the way to giving women equality in all fields, economic, political and social. The Copenhagen Conference had been the starting point of the Decade and the Programme, and the recommendations and resolutions adopted there reflected the international community's determination to reaffirm the principle of the equality of men and women.

112. There was another form of equality that must be taken into account, however, namely, equality among women themselves. Thus, the situation of African women who had to fight incessantly for freedom and against apartheid, racism and underdevelopment, should find the response it deserved in other parts of the world. The situation of Palestinian women and their struggle against Zionism must also be an object of concern. The steps taken at the Copenhagen Conference to assist Palestinian women had expressed the solidarity of women throughout the world. It was to be hoped that that solidarity would continue and that the Nairobi Conference would make it possible to reaffirm the legitimacy of the struggle of African and Palestinian women to obtain the right to self-determination.

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(Mr. Al-Kalbash, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

113. His country supported the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. It hoped that those activities would be pursued and that the Fund would continue to finance the execution of projects in the developing countries.

114. It was also to be hoped 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 could be adopted at the current session, since its contents were compatible with the provisions of the Mexico and Copenhagen Declarations.

115. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the rights of women were guaranteed by law in many fields, including education, employment and social security. Women at present accounted for 41 per cent of the labour force and their participation in economic activity continued to grow: 50 per cent of women workers were in education, 23 per cent in medical services, 11 per cent in administration and 16 per cent in other sectors. Because of the important role of education in development, Libyan women were given many educational opportunities. The number of female students had risen from 382,000 in 1970 to 1,074,900 in 1982, an eloquent witness to the determination of Libyan women to obtain an education and to participate in the nation's life.

116. Libyan women now enjoyed the same political rights as men and worked side by side with them in political activities. As the status of women was currently recognized as a criterion of a society's level of development, the time had come for women to be regarded as a component in the decision-making process and in all aspects of national life.

117. Mr. MAHMOOD ALI (Bangladesh) said that his Government attached the greatest importance to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women at the national, regional and international levels.

118. The women of Bangladesh, who constituted half his country's population, were regarded not only as a factor in social development but as one of its essential elements. The Government had therefore taken specific measures to ensure that women, like men, took part in social and economic life at the national level. Nearly 10 per cent of the available posts were reserved for women having the necessary qualifications. A separate Ministry of Women's Affairs that had been set up to co-ordinate development activities affecting women and children had undertaken a number of development projects under the Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985) which coincided with the objectives of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Women. Those objectives included: the creation of a proper atmosphere to enable women to participate in economic and social activities; increased educational opportunities and opportunities for vocational and specialized training to promote their emancipation and their participation in activities at the managerial and administrative levels; and the establishment of *women's associations to formulate policies and carry out activities to improve the lot of women in general and their integration into society.*

(Mr. Mahmood Ali, Bangladesh)

119. A National Council for Women had been set up under the Ministry of Women's Affairs to monitor women's rights, particularly their economic and legal rights.

120. During the Second Five-Year Plan, training centres for women would be set up throughout the rural areas of the country. A crash programme for training women teachers had been set up to ensure that women would occupy at least 50 per cent of the vacancies for primary school teachers. In addition, specialized institutions would be set up during the period of the plan to conduct refresher courses, for example in handicrafts, and to create greater employment opportunities for women in various sectors of industry. There were two national women's organizations in Bangladesh. The first, the Bangladesh Women's Rehabilitation and Welfare Foundation, had been set up to assist women who had lost all family support as a result of the war of liberation. The second, the Bangladesh National Federation of Women, carried out various programmes of vocational training and research and evaluated development projects and their impact on social life. Despite what had been achieved, however, many women were still unable to exercise their rights because of the barriers set up by tradition, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance, factors which played a dominant role not only in Bangladesh but in all developing countries. The persistence of those problems showed that although much progress had been achieved since the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women, much more remained to be done to achieve the objectives of the Decade: equality, development and peace.

121. Since the World Plan of Action gave high priority to improving the conditions of the most disadvantaged groups of women - the rural and urban poor and women workers in the tertiary sector - the international community should direct its efforts to those groups, particularly in the developing countries.

122. The action undertaken during the Decade so far showed that the objectives of equality, development and peace could not be realized without an unequivocal commitment at the national, regional and global levels to the integration of women in all aspects of development. In Bangladesh, as in many other countries of the third world, the basic problem, for men and women alike, was poverty. The call for the elimination of discrimination against women was a call for the establishment of a new economic and social order based on equality, fair play and justice.

123. His delegation was convinced that the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women should continue to intensify its efforts to give support to the women most in need and to encourage activities that would accelerate the full participation of women in economic and social development at the national, regional and international levels. The role of the non-governmental organizations was also important in that regard. International and regional organizations should provide more assistance to the national machinery already in place so as to assist in the implementation of the various development programmes and projects concerning women.

124. Bangladesh believed that the United Nations should continue to carry out a comprehensive review and appraisal of the progress achieved in implementing the 1975 World Plan of Action and the 1980 Programme of Action, and that the

(Mr. Mahmood Ali, Bangladesh)

Commission on the Status of Women, the Centre for Social Development and the Advancement of Women Branch had an important role to play in that regard. It whole-heartedly supported the convening of another world conference on women in 1985 and believed that consideration should be given to the possibility of proclaiming the period 1985-1995 as the second United Nations Decade for Women.

125. Mrs. LOECKX (Belgium) said that Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26, which put the finishing touch to the preparations for the conference that was to take place at Nairobi in 1985, had already received a favourable response in Belgium and that three of the conference's themes had drawn particular attention, namely, employment, health and education. The preparations for the conference had also given new impetus to efforts in Belgium to carry out the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women. She cited in that connection some of the measures taken by the Belgian Government: the establishment of a Ministerial Committee on the Status of Women, which had had a decisive influence in many fields, in particular the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; the submission of bills to give effect to the obligations under the Convention; and the adoption of measures to promote equal treatment for men and women in the sectors of employment and social security. In addition, an information and consciousness-raising campaign directed to the public through radio and television broadcasts and the press had been launched in October by the Minister of the Interior, using the slogan "In your commune, put your trust in women too". That was an indication of how the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade had been widely publicized in Belgium.

126. The Belgian Government, which was very much interested in co-operation for development, was giving close attention to ways in which bilateral technical co-operation programmes could benefit the most disadvantaged population groups, particularly women. It was also keeping under review the action taken by the Administrator of UNDP to promote the role of women in technical co-operation. In that connection, she hoped that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women would be able to call directly upon the services of the technical adviser on women's problems currently helping UNDP.

127. Belgium endorsed the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on the Fund, which were given approval in draft resolution A/C.3/37/L.24. She noted that that Committee had expressed the hope that concrete measures would be undertaken by the Secretary-General to ensure that the Fund was administered efficiently and properly staffed. She wondered, in that connection, whether the posts at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna which were financed by UNDP might not usefully be reallocated to the Fund in New York. While her delegation considered it essential for the Fund to remain in New York, it also felt that adequate powers should be delegated to it. The small Fund staff had already done remarkable work, particularly in respect of the wood-fuel problem in the Sahel, and her country would continue to support it financially. The Fund's activities were currently receiving support from a Belgian National Committee which would seek to mobilize additional resources.

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(Mrs. Loeckx, Belgium)

128. Turning to the draft declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and for solution of other vital national and international problems, she recalled that her Government had made its views known in that connection in document A/37/144. She would merely repeat, therefore, that the draft was a step backwards in efforts to bring about full equality of the sexes and evinced a paternalistic attitude that was hard to accept.

129. Ms. MOUTOU DA GRACA (Gabon) said that in proclaiming 1975 as International Women's Year, the United Nations had merely been acting in accordance with its own principles, including that of the equality of the sexes, as set forth in the Charter and several major international instruments. Accordingly, Gabon, which was greatly concerned to improve the status of women, both at the national and at the international level, had actively followed the efforts in that direction at the Mexico City Conference - which had been an historic moment for women throughout the world - and at the Conference in Copenhagen. Positive results had been achieved that must be translated into basic changes in mental attitudes and, at the practical level, into the drafting of national legislation that would guarantee equality between men and women.

130. Her country had not waited for the mobilization of the international community before embarking on sustained political and social action to modify stereotyped attitudes and perceptions. It was called upon to do so, moreover, by its Constitution, which, in article 2 assured all citizens of equality before the law, and in article 1 guaranteed the right of all citizens to education, health and employment. Recognizing that education played a primary role, the Republic of Gabon sought to provide citizens of both sexes with the same opportunities for education and training, at all levels, as part of an ongoing educational process. Primary schooling was compulsory and free for all, and scholarships were automatically granted to any student, boy or girl, who was accepted for secondary, higher or vocational education. The literacy campaign launched immediately after independence was continuing. Women's Centres had been established in all the provinces. Also the provisions whereby underaged girls were expelled from school if they became pregnant had been abolished, so that their social and vocational rehabilitation was no longer in danger. It should also be noted that the literacy campaign at the adult level was being expanded.

131. In the field of health the Department of Health and the Department of Social Affairs and the Status of Women, directed by a woman, had established a broad programme providing for primary health care and the training of health workers of both sexes, in which the main stress was given to rural areas.

132. In the employment sector, special measures were being taken, both in private business and in State corporations, to improve the participation of women. A campaign to achieve that goal being carried on by the Democratic Party of Gabon and its Women's Union was meeting with success. There was undoubtedly a great deal still to be done to attain the objectives of the Mexico City Plan of Action, and the Copenhagen Programme of Action, but the women of Gabon were aware of what was being done on their behalf and thus had every reason to redouble their efforts.

(Ms. Moutou da Graça, Gabon)

133. After recalling her country's reservations at the Mexico City Conference to some features of the Plan of Action, she announced that her Government was currently examining, with a view to its ratification, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which Gabon had signed at Copenhagen on 17 July 1980. It was gratifying to note that countries which were not members of the Commission on the Status of Women would be able to take part in the preparatory work for the 1985 Conference. She drew attention in that regard to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 33/189 on the organization and conduct of the Conference, in particular its paragraph 9.

134. She stressed that if countries throughout the world wished to attain the objectives of the Decade, they must seek out what united them, and she recalled that, at the Copenhagen Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had said that men throughout the world were linked in a common enterprise, namely, to improve the quality of life and to free mankind from the burden of hunger and disease, hate and prejudice, hostility and injustice.

The meeting rose at 8.30 p.m.