



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAVANAVIRAJ (Thailand)

UN LIBRARY
FEB 2 1984
UN/SA COLLECTION

CONTENTS

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: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (b) PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN (continued)
- (c) INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (d) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued)
- (b) STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

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

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/38/SR.35
21 November 1983
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 91: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
(continued) (A/38/203):

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/146)
- (b) PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN (continued) (A/C.3/38/2 and Add.1)
- (c) INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/406)
- (d) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/530)

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/38/45, A/C.3/38/7)
- (b) STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/378)

1. Mr. LIGAIRI (Fiji) said that there could be no real development without active participation by women on an equal footing with men in development efforts. In recognizing the need to take steps for the advancement of women, however, one should not lose sight of the traditional and cultural values of the society in which they lived for any breakdown of those values might create serious social problems. Bearing that fact in mind, the Government of Fiji made every possible effort to give women equal opportunities in education, employment, leisure and economic, social and political responsibility. Nevertheless, as Fiji was a small country with limited resources, the Government, before taking steps on behalf of a particular segment of the population, had to provide all its inhabitants with essential services in the field of education, health and sanitation.

2. As several different cultures were represented in the population of Fiji, opinions on the role to be played by men and women respectively in society varied widely from one culture to another. However, thanks to recent legal and administrative measures, opinions on the matter were tending towards uniformity and the problem now was to ensure that men and women benefited equally from the progress and prosperity brought by social and economic development. However, legislative or administrative measures were not sufficient to achieve that goal; it had to be sought through education and persuasion.

(Mr. Ligairi, Fiji)

3. In Fiji, women had the same political rights as men and the Government of Fiji was aware that the only means of providing the women of Fiji with the education, health and nutrition and the social well-being to which they were entitled was through their participation in the decision-making process. That was why the Government had an educational policy enabling women to complete their primary, secondary and university education and to receive vocational training or specialized education in nutrition, family planning, health and hygiene and home economics. That demonstrated that even if Fiji had not been able to realize all the aims and objectives of the Mexico Plan of Action and the Copenhagen Programme of Action, it had made a major effort in that direction despite its meagre resources. The Government of Fiji reaffirmed in that connection that it was the active support of national and international non-governmental organizations that had made those advances possible.

4. The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to take place in 1985, provided an opportunity for the constructive consideration of the steps to be taken after 1985. A concerted effort by the whole international community would be needed to make the Conference a success. In that connection, he said that his delegation fully supported the representative of New Zealand who had said, at the previous meeting, that during the preparations for the Conference full account should be taken of regional factors and that the countries of the South Pacific region were on the whole favourable to establishing closer co-ordination in order to prepare for the Conference.

5. He expressed gratification that in five years, some positive results had been achieved in combating the inequality between the sexes, but he felt that more practical measures were still needed. On the other hand, he was pleased to note that the action taken thus far had created a greater awareness of the problem among Governments and peoples.

6. Mrs. ASHTON (Bolivia) said that her Government intended to do its utmost to improve the status of women in all fields and to promote their active participation in the life of the country. Bolivian women had established women's organizations to monitor compliance with the economic and social legislation benefiting women. They had also, more recently, participated in the struggle to restore democracy in Bolivia.

7. Her delegation found the progress made thus far in the preparations for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women very encouraging. It also noted with satisfaction the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, which had provided very valuable assistance to rural women and women working in the mines and factories in Bolivia. It was to be hoped that the international community would continue to support the Fund so that it could continue to carry out its very valuable task. With assistance from the Fund, the Bolivian Government had been able to launch a number of academic and practical education projects for mothers in rural areas in health and maternal and child nutrition, and to improve handicraft industries, where women played a major role, as well as milk production and to help rural women in purchasing cattle, seed and agricultural implements.

/...

(Mrs. Ashton, Bolivia)

8. The Bolivian Government was especially concerned with the lot of rural women and wanted to provide living conditions for them on a par with women in the cities, whether they were workers or employees. It also believed that a special effort should be made to enable young men and young women to develop fully and to have easier access to the job market. The international community should be induced to take the necessary steps to provide young women with the food, health facilities, job opportunities and vocational training to which they were entitled, to ease their access to social, political and cultural institutions and thus involve them more closely in the development process.

9. In Bolivia, the Solidarity Council, responsible to the President of the Republic, had set in motion a detailed programme of activities to improve the status of women. The programme provided for vocational education and training centres and literacy training centres in disadvantaged regions and for public health and rural development programmes, with the valuable co-operation of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

10. Much, however, remained to be done to eliminate discrimination against women altogether. Her delegation therefore welcomed the encouraging results that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had achieved thus far, as described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/38/45). The Bolivian Government, a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, was planning to ratify it shortly.

11. Mrs. MIGNOTT (Jamaica) said that since the establishment of the United Nations Decade for Women eight years earlier, considerable progress had been made nationally, regionally and internationally in improving the status of women. In Jamaica, efforts continued to be made to realize the objectives of the Decade. The Women's Bureau of Jamaica, the body in charge of promoting policies and programmes benefiting women, was now under the political supervision of a Parliamentary Secretary with special responsibility for women's affairs.

12. The Women's Bureau had made a great effort to improve the educational opportunities for women so as to enable them to earn their own living and become self-sufficient. The Bureau had, for instance, set up a programme for adolescent mothers allowing them to complete their schooling after the children were born. This programme had had considerable success.

13. Taking into consideration the high joblessness rate among women (38.7 per cent), emphasis was being placed on training women for income-generating activities such as raising pigs and goats, making cassava products, and handicrafts. There was a handicraft programme in which young women were being trained by senior craftsmen in handicraft techniques that would eventually enable them to set up small businesses producing handicrafts for local and foreign markets. The project thus simultaneously involved young women and the elderly in useful development activities.

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

14. Women's participation in public life still had far to go. However, it should be noted that since 1980 six women had been elected to the House of Representatives, women were regularly appointed to high posts in the Government and the private sector, and women were becoming increasingly visible in previously male-dominated professions such as business, architecture, engineering, medicine and university teaching.

15. Jamaica had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1980 and was now considering the ratification of that very important instrument. The Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Affairs had appointed a legislative reform committee to study the laws in force and determine if any of them discriminated against women.

16. Despite the advances made thus far throughout the world, much remained to be done and her delegation shared the concern expressed by the Assistant-Secretary-General about what would happen once the Decade had drawn to a close in 1985. The Government of Jamaica had committed itself to continuing its efforts to extend women's participation and integration in all aspects of development beyond 1985. It therefore welcomed the recommendations adopted at the first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the preparatory body for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. Jamaica attached particular importance to the measures provided for under item 8 of the provisional agenda recommended for the Conference. Her delegation believed that the success of the Decade would, in fact, depend on the elaboration of practical measures to be applied until the year 2000, and on the political will, at national, regional and international levels, to put those measures into effect after 1985.

17. It believed that the preparatory regional meetings scheduled for 1984 were an important step in working out measures to be applied after 1985 in view of the diversity of the problems faced by women in different countries and regions. Jamaica had established a national committee with various sub-committees dealing with education, employment, health and legal affairs, which would assist the Government in preparing for its participation in the World Conference in 1985.

18. Jamaica hoped that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women would continue to support women's programmes, and recalled that the Jamaican delegation to the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean had submitted a resolution subsequently adopted by consensus which had recommended that ECLA member States should continue to support the Voluntary Fund, and to ensure its stability and continuity by making even token contributions. She hoped that the recommendation would be studied by the Governments of countries in other regions. The forward-looking assessment being undertaken by the Fund was also commendable, for its outcome could undoubtedly serve to improve the planning and implementation of women's programmes.

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

19. Her delegation noted with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Jamaica supported the Institute's goal of incorporating issues of relevance to women into development efforts at international, regional and national levels. It also believed that the relocation of the Institute in permanent headquarters at Santo Domingo was timely and would facilitate its work. The future would tell whether the efforts undertaken would succeed and whether the concept of equality for women at all levels would eventually become psychologically acceptable to all individuals, nations and institutions.

20. Mrs. WANDEKA (Kenya) said that, among the steps taken by Kenya to implement United Nations recommendations for the advancement of women, had been the establishment of a Women's Bureau as part of the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, whose responsibilities were to assess the situation and needs of Kenyan women, recommend means of increasing their involvement in the development of the country and do so by providing them with the necessary technical assistance and training at the local level.

21. The Bureau also worked in close collaboration with national and international non-governmental organizations on programmes aimed at improving the condition of women in both rural and urban sectors, creating new income-earning opportunities for women and improving family and community welfare. The organizations had also assisted in some projects for the construction of schools, health centres and other public amenities. She expressed her Government's appreciation of the support that had come from those organizations, from United Nations bodies, especially UNDP, UNICEF and FAO, and from various bilateral donors, particularly the Nordic countries.

22. While some progress had been made towards creating the necessary infrastructure for improving the condition of women, some problems remained which had proved impossible to solve in a single decade. Their solution involved not only the redeployment of resources but also a change in attitudes towards women.

23. Referring to legal matters, she said that the status of women in Kenya would be studied by a commission which had been set up to rationalize the country's legal system. That commission was expected to propose changes to bring Kenyan legislation into line with the requirements of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which her Government had signed and planned to ratify shortly.

24. Like many other developing countries, Kenya was a country in which women constituted a substantial part of the labour force, and the Kenyan Government was becoming increasingly aware of the need for the full involvement of women in the country's development on an equal basis with men.

25. Through the Women's Bureau, her Government was participating at the national level in the preparations for the 1985 World Conference. It greatly appreciated the activities of the Volunteer Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and

(Mrs. Wandeka, Kenya)

the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Kenya had been helped by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women in the area of environmental rehabilitation (tree-planting) and of income-earning projects of selected women's groups.

26. She noted with concern that the Voluntary Fund could no longer finance certain posts for senior women programme officers for programmes concerning women in each of the regional commissions. In view of the importance of those programmes, it would be desirable for the Secretary-General and the executive secretaries of the regional commissions to take measures to ensure that those posts were henceforth financed by the regular budget of the United Nations.

27. It was important for INSTRAW to direct its work towards areas which were of key significance to national economies and in which women played a substantial role, especially in agriculture. In particular, INSTRAW should collaborate with such United Nations agencies as the World Food Council and FAO in addressing food and agrarian reform questions.

28. In February 1983, when the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory body for the 1985 World Conference had held its first preparatory meeting, her delegation, being a member of the Commission, had stressed the need to direct the Conference's attention to the question of how to implement the various recommendations on improving the situation of women. The provisional agenda agreed upon for the Conference met those concerns satisfactorily, and great care should be taken to avoid introducing controversial issues into the discussion which might endanger the consensus that had been achieved.

29. Her delegation urged all United Nations bodies to support the preparatory activities for the Conference. Since developing countries did not always have adequate resources to collect the data for the questionnaires received from the United Nations for Conference purposes, her delegation urged the regional commissions to seek ways and means of providing any support needed in that area.

30. Lastly, Kenya reaffirmed its intention to co-operate with all Member States to ensure the success of the 1985 World Conference, which it had offered to host.

31. Mrs. MANEIRO (Venezuela) said that she looked forward with optimism to the 1985 World Conference, whose task would be to assess the results of the Decade. Over the past 10 years, the international community had gradually come to accept the idea that social and economic development required the total and active participation of women. The work done by the United Nations had contributed a great deal to that awareness. The important instruments which had been adopted internationally, namely the Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action, the Copenhagen Programme of Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation constituted an extremely valuable legal foundation in that area. The effective realization of equal rights for women, however, still required a change of attitude towards them in today's society and genuine political will on the part of States.

/...

(Mrs. Maneiro, Venezuela)

32. In Venezuela, many steps had been taken to give effect to recommendations made at the international level. In the Government, the Office of the Minister of State for the Participation of Women in Development dealt with the full involvement of women in all activities of national life. In 1982, that Ministry had participated in the reform of the Civil Code and had obtained, inter alia, recognition of the equality of the rights and duties of the spouses in such matters as choice of conjugal domicile, family property and exercise of parental authority. On 18 August 1983, a new law on adoption had been promulgated under which any woman over the age of 25, whatever her marital status, could adopt a child.

33. Venezuelan women were participating actively in the economic life of the country thanks to the technical and industrial training they received. Many executive posts were held by women, and they were also active in trade union organizations and higher education. Five ministries were headed by women.

34. Internationally, Venezuela had ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women and the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, and, on 2 May 1983, it had also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It should be noted that many of the provisions of those instruments had been a part of the country's legislation since 1942.

35. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the recent establishment in the Dominican Republic of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which was one of the great accomplishments of the Decade.

36. Mr. ARNOUSS (Syrian Arab Republic) noted that since 1963 his country had undertaken important projects for integrating women into all walks of life and had taken steps to ensure the full equality of women and men.

37. A decree of 1967 creating the Women's Union had become law in 1975. The Union organized training courses for women throughout the country, and its objective was to create services for women, to ensure their participation in development in their dual role as mothers and agents of production, and to establish links with similar organizations in other countries, especially with regard to the struggle of oppressed peoples for their liberation.

38. In Syria, there was hardly any area which was not open to women. Women were present in laboratories and universities as well as in the armed forces. They participated in elections and in trade-union and community activities and, for the first time in Syria, a ministry - that of agriculture - was headed by a woman. Women were also entitled to participate in referendums and to elect the President of the Republic. The Syrian Constitution stipulated that women should be able to participate fully and actively in all aspects of the country's economic, social and cultural life.

39. The Syrian Government had focused its efforts on school attendance, which was obligatory for girls as well as boys. The number of girls enrolled in schools and universities had increased considerably. The budget of the Ministry of Education,

(Mr. Arnouss, Syrian Arab Republic)

incidentally, accounted for 9.5 per cent of total public expenditures and there were currently more than 10,000 schools in Syria. Lastly, the number of women working in the public and private sectors had also increased considerably.

40. On the international level, there were grounds for optimism in view of the progress made since the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women. Of course, the progress still had to be evaluated and that would be the task of the 1985 Conference. Nor should it be forgotten that the question of the equality of rights and duties of women was closely linked to that of underdevelopment and oppression. The Conference would therefore have to take fully into account women's participation in all aspects of life, and more particularly in the struggle against foreign domination, zionism, racism and apartheid.

41. In South Africa and in the occupied Palestinian territories, women had been driven from their land and then obliged to work in the factories of the racist régimes of Pretoria and Tel Aviv. Palestinian women were paid a salary which was a third of that of Israeli workers and did not have the right to participate in trade-union activities. In view of that situation, his delegation would like to have two more items added to the provisional agenda of the 1985 World Conference, one concerning women living under the apartheid régime and the other concerning the situation of women in the occupied Arab territories. Background documents for those two items should also be prepared.

42. Mrs. TOBING-KLEIN (Suriname) observed that the proclamation of United Nations Decade for Women and the holding of conferences and meetings as part of that Decade had enabled women to reach a better understanding of their worth and of their problems. Nevertheless, despite the adoption of many action programmes, declarations and resolutions designed to do away with discrimination against women, there was still no de facto equality between men and women. It was also of course extremely difficult to change the age-old behaviour of peoples, and clearly individuals, both men and women, had still not acquired the inner conviction of the need for such equality or of the need to establish a true social consensus on the question. In the absence of individual and collective recognition of the equality of the sexes, there could be no expectation that women would demand in practice, or that society would grant them in fact, the right to education and work under the same conditions as men, which was, however, the prior condition for their full development; and without full self-realization as individuals, women would not be able genuinely to contribute to national development or to find that inner peace which would open them to the world, to other women and to their problems. One had to be aware of one's own value to be able to recognize the value of others, and thereby work for peace. It was clear that the equality of men and women was the cornerstone of women's participation in development and the maintenance of peace.

43. Her Government, which was perfectly aware of that, had set itself the general objective of establishing a new social order based above all on the equality of all citizens regardless of race, religion, sex or civil status, in which there would be harmonious co-operation between men and women on the basis of equality. To implement that objective it had established a national advisory council for women's

/...

(Mrs. Tobing-Klein, Suriname)

liberation, to advise the Government on the development and improvement of governmental policy concerning women's liberation, as well as on the legal measures to be taken to ensure equality of rights and opportunities in the fields of education, work and social welfare. The Government had repealed the law limiting the legal capacity of married women and had set up a committee to establish an inventory of the provisions of fiscal law, labour legislation and nationality law, which tended to perpetuate inequality between men and women, and to review agreements in connection with equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value, maternity protection and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, with a view to the drafting of new legislation. On the practical level, the Government had built day-care centres to enable mothers to work, an essential condition for their social liberation and for their participation in economic development. It also sought to eliminate inequality between urban and rural areas by improving the living conditions of isolated communities through the establishment of schools, the installation of health services and the construction of water supply systems.

44. Despite the difficulties it encountered in fully realizing the principle of equality between men and women, her Government was making every effort to implement systematically the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

45. It was closely following the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women because it was convinced that education played a vital role in the development of the individual, particularly women, and in the development of peoples.

46. Since 1981, her Government had been making every effort to implement, in the economic, legal and labour fields, reforms which would enable it to become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and believed that it would be able to accede to it in the near future. In 1982, Suriname had become a party to the inter-American conventions on the civil and political rights of women.

47. Ms. O'FLAHERTY (Ireland) noted that the United Nations Decade for Women now drawing to a close had had a considerable effect in Ireland. The preparations for the 1975 World Conference of the International Women's Year had coincided with the publication in 1973 of a report of an Irish commission on the status of women. Many of the reforms suggested by that commission to ensure the full participation of women in the economic, social and cultural life of the country had since then been implemented. In the area of legislation, laws prohibiting pay discrimination, guaranteeing employment equality, protecting motherhood and the family and regarding rape had been adopted. In terms of institutions, a Council on the Status of Women had been established which represented 40 women's organizations and provided a link between them and the departments of State. The preparation of the 1985 World Conference to examine and evaluate the results of the Decade coincided with the establishment by the Irish Government in December 1982 of a Ministry of State for Women's Affairs with responsibility for identifying the remaining areas

(Ms. O'Flaherty, Ireland)

of disadvantage or discrimination applying to women and for proposing legislative measures to eliminate them. The Ministry in turn had established, as a support, a parliamentary committee on women's rights with the specific task of proposing legislative measures in behalf of women, considering means of eliminating discrimination against them as well as the obstacles which prevented them from participating fully in the political, social and economic life of the community, and recommending administrative and political reforms which would permit elimination of the economic and social disadvantages applying to women in the home without undermining their very special contribution to the life of the community. The establishment of such a ministry and the tasks which had been conferred upon it showed that much remained to be done to eliminate discrimination against women and that the very concept of discrimination had expanded and become more complex in recent years.

48. Obviously, it was not enough to establish committees and to promulgate laws to enable women to become full-fledged members of the community. A concerted effort was still needed to change social behaviour profoundly so that women would be encouraged to take advantage of all types of education provided by training institutions and higher educational establishments and to engage in all occupations.

49. She hoped that the 1985 World Conference would provide the necessary impetus for such an effort. As to the preparations for that Conference, she noted with satisfaction that the provisional agenda adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women and approved by the Economic and Social Council emphasized questions which were of special importance to women and which were not within the competence of any other body. She was certain that the Conference would thus achieve its dual objective, which was to renew the achievements of the Decade and to identify the problems which remained to be resolved.

50. Mr. FAROUQUE (Sri Lanka) said that his delegation supported the constructive approach suggested by Mrs. Shahani, the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and that his Government was prepared to co-operate in the implementation of the recommendations and guidelines contained in the report of the preparatory body for the World Conference, as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. He agreed with Mrs. Shahani that the preparatory activities at national, regional and international levels would result in a broad-based dialogue at every stage. His delegation would do its utmost to furnish the necessary information in time to the preparatory body.

51. The Sri Lankan Government had already embarked on the process of integrating women into national development programmes in conformity with the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. Women in Sri Lanka, who accounted for almost half of the population, had since 1931 enjoyed the same civil and political rights as men. The Women's Bureau, which was responsible for identifying and co-ordinating all projects and institutions relating to women, also continuously evaluated the progress achieved in the integration of women into economic and social life on a basis of equality with men. It also advised the Government on the formulation of policies and the implementation of programmes for the increased participation of

(Mr. Farouque, Sri Lanka)

women in national development. It channelled all foreign assistance granted to Sri Lanka for the promotion of projects and programmes related to the welfare of women and monitored locally financed projects in that area. Lastly, it was also responsible for enhancing the status of women, in particular that of poor urban and rural women. More than the lack of resources, it was the lack of opportunities to participate in the development process that had hindered the progress of those women. Women from low-income groups were therefore selected from sectors such as plantations and fisheries and given leadership training so that they could play a leading role in the community development. The Women's Bureau also attached great importance to eliminating disparity in status between men and women as well as to ending exploitation of and discrimination against women. In that aspect, considerable progress had been made.

52. In his country, all professions were open to women, who also enjoyed considerable advantages such as paid maternity leave, health-care benefits and facilities for training in non-traditional professions such as carpentry, printing, motor repairs, etc.

53. In November 1982, a national women's symposium had been held for the first time; it had been attended by nearly 12,000 women and had been designed to identify all areas of discrimination against women. The participants had submitted to the Government a series of recommendations concerning, in particular, the establishment of a separate ministry for women's affairs and the development of procedures for achieving increased participation by women in the electoral process at the national and local levels.

54. In conclusion, he said that, in a spirit of co-operation, his country had undertaken to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. Thanks to the generous assistance of the Fund, the Sri Lanka Women's Bureau had been able to carry out its leadership training programme for rural women.

55. Mr. ZADOR (Hungary) said that his Government had devoted close attention to the Decade, to its objectives and to the practical means of attaining them. The 1985 World Conference would be required to review the results of the Decade. Some might be disappointed by those results, but it should not be forgotten that the main purpose of the decades designated in relation to a specific question was to draw the attention of the international community to that question. It was quite clear that the efforts made should not be limited to the Decade, particularly when the problems to be solved were as complex as those confronting women. For that reason, item 8 of the agenda proposed for the Conference was important, because it should result in the formulation of strategies providing concrete measures for the advancement of women up to the year 2000.

56. Generally speaking, the provisional agenda of the Conference echoed the themes of the Decade: equality, development and peace. Of those three themes, he considered that the last one was the most important: without peace, the notion of equality between men and women or the realization of women's full social and economic potential would not even exist. That was why Hungary had co-sponsored a

(Mr. Zador, Hungary)

draft resolution on the elaboration of a declaration on the participation of women in the promotion of peace and co-operation; it hoped that the draft resolution would receive wide support in the Third Committee.

57. Some had voiced apprehension over the prospect of sharp differences at the Conference. He felt sure, however, that in an atmosphere of understanding and mutual readiness the participants would succeed in overcoming their differences of opinion and finding a common ground, in the interests of women. Some delegations were afraid, for example, that the discussions at the 1985 Conference would be politicized. But refusal to mention certain current political problems in such a context also constituted a political choice. Nobody believed that the 1985 Conference would solve problems such as the Middle East conflict or the problem of chemical weapons, for instance. But it was impossible to behave as if those problems in no way affected women in their daily lives.

58. Hungary had been one of the first States to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and in 1982, the Hungarian Government had submitted a detailed report on its implementation of the Convention.

59. Some delegations had rightly pointed out that there were no perfect societies. Nevertheless, the problems facing one country in a particular sphere were not the same as those encountered by other countries: in some parts of the world, women faced mass unemployment; in Hungary, it was rather the shortage of female workers that caused difficulties, since at any given time about 250,000 women were on maternity leave, which lasted for three years. The Hungarian economy could not function for a moment without women, 70 per cent of whom were active earners. In certain sectors, such as elementary teaching, the proportion of women was as high as 87 per cent. It was thus clear that the solution of problems confronting women led inevitably to the emergence of other problems. But that was no reason for not tackling the problems. Since in general they performed lower paid work and had an educational level slightly lower than that of men, Hungarian women earned less than men. Although they accounted for half of the population, women accounted for only 27 per cent of the deputies in the National Assembly. On the other hand, a mother or a father raising a child alone was entitled to supplementary annual leave, which could be as much as nine days for three or more children under the age of 14; when the child was under three years of age, a working mother was entitled to 60 days' leave a year to look after a sick child, during which period she received between 65 and 75 per cent of her wages. Those examples showed that, despite the difficulties facing Hungary because of the unfavourable international economic situation, the Hungarian Government was determined to take the necessary measures to solve the country's problems and to honour its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.