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Chairman: Mr. Jorge Pablo FERNANDINI  
(Peru).

## AGENDA ITEM 41

United Nations Development Decade: report of the  
Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/6703 and Corr.1,  
chap. III; A/6824, A/C.2/235, A/C.2/241 and Corr.1,  
A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1, E/4362 and Corr.1, E/4376)

1. Mr. O'CONOR (United States of America), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1), thanked the delegations who had spoken on it for their constructive comments. He was gratified to announce that the delegations of Afghanistan, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Senegal and United Republic of Tanzania had become co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

2. The sponsors had decided to incorporate in operative paragraph 2 the substance of the amendment suggested by the delegation of Upper Volta at the 1170th meeting. They had, however, considered that it would be unwise to stress any specific level or type of education and they therefore wished to appeal to the representative of Jordan not to press the amendment he had suggested to the text which had become the fourth preambular paragraph of the revised version. The sponsors had decided to maintain the designation of 1970 as International Education Year, but had revised operative paragraph 3 in such a way as to allow the General Assembly the necessary flexibility to determine at its twenty-fourth session which year it would formally proclaim as International Education Year.

3. When the preparation of a draft resolution on the matter had first been discussed, his delegation had not been able, because of the short time available, to consult each delegation individually. It had consulted several representatives of each geographical group of countries in an effort to obtain the broadest support possible. He therefore regretted that a number of delegations had not been informed about the draft resolution in sufficient time to receive instructions from their Governments.

4. Mr. CHILESHE (Zambia) observed that prior to its independence, the education of his country's indigenous people had been almost entirely neglected by the former colonial Government. His Government

had been making and continued to make enormous efforts to expand educational facilities and education was now free at all levels up to university.

5. His delegation had a special reason for welcoming the United States initiative in sponsoring a very useful draft resolution. A religious sect known as "Jehovah's Witnesses" was operating in his country; that sect forbade the children of its members to sing the National Anthem or participate in flag-raising ceremonies at his country's schools. As his Government justifiably held that its schools were not open to persons who refused to respect the symbols of the nation, the parents of those children were, in effect, depriving them of the free educational facilities provided for them. The headquarters of the "Jehovah's Witnesses" were in the United States and he wished to appeal to that country's delegation to use its influence to end a situation in which one section of the population of his country was being excluded from education, against the wishes of his Government.

6. Mr. LAVALLE (Guatemala) said that his delegation had become a sponsor of the revised draft resolution as an expression of its firm conviction of the fundamental importance of education in the process of economic and social development. Human resources were the greatest asset of any society but could be utilized to the best effect only when educated and trained in a way which satisfied the real needs of the community and enabled it to take advantage of technological and scientific advance. His Government recognized those facts and hoped that the progress it had already achieved in that sphere would be consolidated and extended by the activities planned for International Education Year.

7. Mr. CHTOUROU (Tunisia) said that, in some respects, the dedication of 1970 to education would be particularly appropriate in his country. In that year his country's programme of universal primary education would come to an end and it was anticipated that by then all children in the relevant age-group would be attending school.

8. His delegation nevertheless had reservations about the choice of 1970. No provision for special educational efforts during that year had been made in the plans for the closing year of the first United Nations Development Decade and those concerned with the planning of the second decade should have the responsibility of determining which year was most suitable for designation as the International Education Year. Moreover, since a great deal of the burden of the Year's activities would inevitably be borne by national Ministers of Education, it might be advisable to have their advice on the subject, expressed at the General Conference of UNESCO, before making any decision.

9. He therefore wished to suggest that the sponsors might consider modifying the revised draft resolution so as to approve the principle of an international education year and to request UNESCO, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, to suggest the most appropriate year for its celebration. He also suggested that the Third Committee, with its special competence in social matters, might be consulted about the possibility of joint action.

10. Mr. MUZIK (Czechoslovakia) said that his and other socialist countries had valuable experience of educational programmes which they were glad to share with others. His delegation accordingly had no difficulty in approving the substance of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1) but, like a number of others, it had reservations about the manner and timing of its submission and its possible effect on relations between the United Nations and other international organizations.

11. The obvious organizational problem was that, while the Committee was broadly responsible for the global strategy for development envisaged in General Assembly resolution 2218 (XXI), some of the components of that strategy were within the competence of other organs: the Third Committee, for instance, should be consulted on all proposals concerned with education.

12. The function of the General Assembly in relation to the specialized agencies was to provide guide-lines for them and request their assistance for joint undertakings. The order of events proposed in operative paragraphs 1 and 2, however, was equivalent to instructing UNESCO and other interested specialized agencies to participate in activities not initiated by them, a procedure which might, *inter alia*, have unfortunate results when the time came to consider the financial implications of those activities.

13. His delegation therefore suggested that the sponsors should consider revising the draft resolution so that it (a) recommended that an International Education Year should be designated; (b) requested the Secretary-General to consult the other international organizations concerned and invite them to study the possibility of designating such a year; (c) requested the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned—including the International Bureau of Education—to consider the possible content of the programme for the year; and (d) to request the Economic and Social Council, as soon as the results of those actions were known, to make a decision on the designation and transmit its recommendation to the General Assembly at its twenty-third or twenty-fourth session.

14. Mr. LEKONGA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that, with the help of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, his country had made enormous strides in education since achieving its independence. Education had, however, been almost totally neglected under the colonial administration and his country was still suffering from a shortage of trained people. His delegation accordingly supported the idea of proclaiming an international education year within the framework of the second development decade.

15. If education was to be one of the major components of the international development strategy for the nineteen-seventies, however, an intensive programme of activities to that end should not be confined to a single year. His delegation therefore urged the sponsors to consider adding a further operative paragraph to the draft resolution to indicate that the programme of activities initiated in the International Education Year was part of a continuing plan of development effort for the entire decade.

16. Mr. M'BAYO (Sierra Leone) welcomed the proposal that 1970 should be designated as International Education Year. His delegation fully supported the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1) and looked forward to the results of the consultations requested in its operative paragraph 2. Sierra Leone had consistently allocated in least 25 per cent of its national income to education during the six years since the attainment of its independence. It believed that illiteracy could only be eliminated through such an approach and that measures to attain economic development must include education of the human beings who constituted a country's most important resource. The relentless campaign against illiteracy in Sierra Leone had inevitably caused financial strains and his Government was grateful to those countries and international organizations, including UNESCO, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research which had provided assistance in the establishment of educational programmes.

17. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the assurances given at the 1170th meeting by the representative of UNESCO, and hoped that the designation of the year 1970 as International Education Year would be accompanied by the establishment of effective action programmes and the reaffirmation by the international community in a spirit of genuine goodwill, of its commitment to eradicate illiteracy and ignorance.

18. Mr. DELGADO (Senegal) stressed the paramount importance of human resources in economic and social development, and the need to accord priority to education in international co-operation. Senegal had made great sacrifices in order to improve education at all levels: under the current Four-Year Plan, illiteracy had been reduced from 79 per cent to 50 per cent, and the number of secondary schools and university places had been doubled. Nevertheless, still greater efforts were required, and the international community should therefore designate an international education year in order to mobilize all possible resources for the promotion of education in the developing countries. An international education year should entail commitment of financial resources and must be carefully prepared. However, there should be no delay in initiating preparations. Since there appeared to be general agreement in the United Nations and among the specialized agencies concerned that there should be an international year, and since no decision regarding its formal proclamation need yet be taken, it would be appropriate to decide on the year 1970.

19. Mr. DIALLO (Upper Volta) thanked the sponsors of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1) for incorporating the substance of its suggested amend-

ment in the revised text. However, the new wording of operative paragraph 2 did not seem adequately to reflect the idea that the International Education Year should mark a point of departure for national and international educational activities, and he therefore hoped that the sponsors would be able to accept his original suggestion (1170th meeting) that the words "which constitute the purpose of the International Education Year" should be replaced by the words "which are to be inaugurated by the International Education Year".

20. Mr. LEKONGA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) endorsed those remarks and said that his delegation would be able to withdraw its proposed amendment if the amendment suggested by the representative of Upper Volta was accepted.

21. Mr. BOIKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation supported the idea of a world-wide campaign for the broadest possible expansion of education as part of the second development decade. However, there were a number of shortcomings in the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1). Insufficient emphasis was laid on the fact that a world-wide educational campaign must form an integral part of over-all activities for development. That wider context of development should be reflected, in particular, in the fourth preambular paragraph, where the words "the fundamental importance of education as a means of" might be replaced by some such wording as "the importance of education as one of the fundamental elements in". Moreover, since the United Nations Development Decade had been proclaimed in 1961, the year 1970 would in fact mark the end of the first, rather than the beginning of the second, development decade. The consultations referred to in operative paragraph 2, which would have to cover the financial implications involved, must precede any decision to designate an international education year. The cost of the world campaign for universal literacy, which would presumably be part of the International Education Year, alone amounted to \$20,000 million. The task entrusted to the Secretary-General in operative paragraph 2 was too vague, and there was no indication of the specific areas in which international efforts to promote education should be mobilized. Such efforts might be aimed, for example, at the attainment of compulsory universal primary education, but it was doubtful whether such a goal could be achieved in a single year.

22. Pains-taking efforts would be needed if the International Education Year was to be more than a mere propaganda campaign, and a clearer indication was needed of the goals to be attained and the resources that would be required. The views of the Third Committee would also have to be obtained and studied before a final decision in the matter could be taken.

23. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian delegation supported the general aims of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1), and he therefore hoped that the sponsors would take his remarks into consideration.

24. Mr. OLUMIDE (Nigeria) said that his Government, which spent a very high proportion of its income on education, was fully aware of the importance of education in economic and social advance-

ment. The process of economic growth required both formal training in new skills and the development of new ideas through education, and it was an accepted fact that there was an inverse relationship between illiteracy and economic growth rates. However, modern education should not represent a total transplantation of foreign values and culture into the society of developing countries, but should be related to the specific requirements and cultural traditions of the people. The medium of instruction should be the national language of the country concerned, although widely used foreign languages could also be taught; in that way, education would help to preserve national cultures. His delegation had greatly appreciated the work being done on African linguistics and the transcription of vernacular languages.

25. Education was also one of the basic social services necessary for over-all development, and educational programmes should therefore include preventive health measures such as education in health, food and environmental sanitation so as to improve public health conditions. If the designation of 1970 as International Education Year was to be more than merely an expression of intent, more funds should be made available for specific action by the United Nations and its specialized agencies to eradicate ignorance and spread the benefits of education as widely as possible. It was not surprising that adequate resources were being devoted to such spheres as adult education, since many developing countries had little choice in deciding the priority to be given to education and special services as against revenue-producing investment. That problem was further complicated by the fact that the productive resources of the national economy might prove impossible to exploit without important social services in such spheres as education and public health.

26. Mr. GUIAGOUSSOU (Chad) said that his Government, which attached great importance to education, appreciated the efforts being made by the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme, to combat illiteracy and ignorance, which constituted one of the main obstacles to economic and social progress and hence represented a permanent threat to world peace. The will to help the poorer nations to combat ignorance, poverty, disease and hunger existed, but means must be found to give it practical expression. His delegation believed that the proclamation of an international education year at the beginning of the second development decade would contribute greatly to the decade's success, and therefore supported the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1), although it hoped that the sponsors would accept the amendment to operative paragraph 2 proposed by the representative of Upper Volta.

27. Mr. M'BAYE (Guinea) said that his country accorded high priority to education; since its accession to independence, it had allocated 30 per cent of its national budget to education, and education at all levels was free. His delegation therefore welcomed the proposal to designate an international education year, but considered that a specific programme of action must be undertaken if the proposal were to produce tangible results. Member States should play

the leading role in drawing up that programme, for they should retain the initiative in all action designed to further economic and social development. In preparing the programme, due account should be taken of the valuable experience acquired by Member States such as Cuba, which had reduced its illiteracy rate from 90 per cent to zero since the present Government came to power. Within the framework of an international education year, the developed countries should help to establish educational institutions in the developing countries, in order to help stem the brain drain. The organizations of the United Nations system, particularly UNESCO, the ILO and IBRD, could make a useful and indeed necessary contribution in the sphere of education, but basically that contribution could only supplement the efforts of the developing countries themselves. The latter countries must mobilize all the energy of their peoples in the cause of education, but that could only be done if all of them realized the important part which education played in the economic development process.

28. Mr. CASTAÑEDA (Spain) said that his country, which had a long history of educational and cultural achievement, continued to make progress in the sphere of education. His Government had undertaken a literacy campaign which had already produced remarkable results, and hoped to eliminate illiteracy entirely by 1970. A substantial portion of the national budget was devoted to education, and many new educational institutions of all types had been established in recent years. His delegation therefore welcomed the proposal to designate 1970 as International Education Year, and would support the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1).

29. Mrs. TAVARES LIZ DE GROSSMAN (Dominican Republic) said that her delegation had become a sponsor of the revised draft resolution because it believed that education was essential for economic and social progress and for the development of the individual. It therefore supported the proposal to designate 1970 as International Education Year, particularly because 1970 would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. She hoped that the developed countries would co-operate fully with the United Nations family in carrying out the programme of action for International Education Year, so that 1970 would constitute a milestone in education progress.

30. Mr. GEORGE (France) said that in the past his delegation had been somewhat sceptical about the utility of proclaiming "international years", mainly because it considered that the activities to be undertaken during those years were not prepared with sufficient thoroughness. It nevertheless agreed that education was a worthy theme for an international year and noted that the sponsors of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1) had provided for adequate preliminary work by the organizations concerned. It would, however, be more logical to await the outcome of the consultations mentioned in operative paragraph 2 between the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies before taking any specific action regarding an international education year. The United States representative had contended that the wording of operative paragraph 3 would allow the

General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session to determine which year it would formally proclaim as International Education Year, but he himself did not see how the General Assembly could retain any flexibility in that respect if at its current session it designated 1970 as International Education Year in accordance with operative paragraph 1 of the revised draft resolution.

31. His delegation supported the basic principle of the draft resolution and hoped that the sponsors would be able to prepare a generally acceptable text.

32. Mr. OULD SIDI (Mauritania) said that it would be inadvisable to designate a specific year as International Education Year until the Secretary-General had consulted Governments and the specialized agencies concerned on that subject. He therefore proposed that operative paragraph 1 should be revised to read: "Decides to designate an International Education Year". As some previous speakers had stated, International Education Year should be a beginning, not an end in itself, and consequently in operative paragraph 2 the words "which constitute the purpose of the International Education Year" should be replaced by the words "for which the International Education Year would be the point of departure". Lastly, the order of operative paragraphs 1 and 2 should be reversed.

33. Mr. FARHANG (Afghanistan) said that his country attached great importance to education, which was not only essential for economic and social development but also promoted international understanding and world peace. Primary education was compulsory in Afghanistan, and education was free at all levels. His country had concluded education and training agreements with a number of countries, including France, the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom, and was grateful for their help and for that accorded by international organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF. His delegation had become a sponsor of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1) because it believed that the proclamation of an international education year would do much to further the cause of education.

34. Mr. SAHLOUL (Sudan) said that he shared the views expressed by the representatives of Czechoslovakia, France and Mauritania. It would be premature for the General Assembly to designate a specific year as International Education Year at its current session: first, because Governments had not yet had time to study the proposal thoroughly and second, because the consultations referred to in operative paragraph 2 must logically precede any further action. His delegation therefore supported the proposal of the representative of Mauritania to reverse the order of operative paragraphs 1 and 2, and wished to propose that the present operative paragraph 1 should be amended to read: "Decides to designate, in the light of the consultations mentioned above, an International Education Year at the beginning of the second development decade".

35. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) said that he shared the views expressed by the French representative. Since the sponsors wished to retain a reference to 1970, it might be possible to reach a compromise solution by

deleting operative paragraph 1 and adding a sixth preambular paragraph, worded as follows: "Con-sidering that 1970 might be designated as International Education Year".

36. Mr. TSERENCHOODOL (Mongolia) said that his country had always accorded high priority to education and, in the years following its accession to independence, had waged a successful campaign against illiteracy. The proclamation of an international education year could do much to further the developing countries' efforts in the sphere of education, provided that it was backed up by a specific programme of practical action. His delegation therefore endorsed the basic ideas set forth in the revised draft reso-

lution (A/C.2/L.992/Rev.1), but supported the proposals of the representative of Mauritania.

37. Mr. CHTOUROU (Tunisia) proposed that operative paragraph 1 should be revised to read "Decides to proclaim an International Education Year". In operative paragraph 2, the words "in order to initiate those world-wide activities in education which constitute the purpose of the International Education Year" should be replaced by the words "in order to designate an International Education Year, and to initiate those world-wide activities in education to which that year should give rise".

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*

