

recognition and meticulous treatment of the diseases he had mentioned earlier. Physicians and social scientists must participate in the development and continuation of that educational programme.

78. In conclusion, he stressed that the basic key to progress was research, not only in the diseases he had mentioned but also in the mechanisms of aging and methods of interrupting the process. Only by exploring that field would it be possible to make a more significant

contribution not only towards enhancing the quality of life in old age but also in extending the productive middle years in the life span. WHO would continue its commitments to the health needs of the older age groups and would co-operate with any other interested organizations and agencies, both within and without the United Nations system, to facilitate progress in that field of endeavour.

*The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.*

## 2024th meeting

Tuesday, 13 November 1973, at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yahya MAHMASSANI (Lebanon).

A/C.3/SR.2024

### AGENDA ITEM 63

#### Human rights and scientific and technological developments: report of the Secretary-General (A/9075, A/9227, A/C.3/L.2050)

1. Mr. MAHEU (Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization),\* introducing UNESCO's observations on the item under consideration (see A/9227), prepared in pursuance of paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 3026 A (XXVII), said that as far as he knew it was the first time that the Assembly was to give in-depth consideration to the important cultural questions of the preservation and further development of cultural values, and what could be done by the international community in that connexion. That was in fact one of UNESCO's major responsibilities under its mandate to ensure the preservation and expansion of culture; it should be stressed that in little more than a quarter of a century, UNESCO had expanded, deepened and diversified its activities and had obtained far-reaching and favourable results and responses. In contemporary society, cultural matters were assuming increasing importance; culture was no longer a luxury, a privilege of the *élite*; today it was part of a general and profound demand of society as a whole; young people, in particular, considered culture an essential. Culture was closely linked to the concept of the quality of life which increasingly dominated the problem of development and of the environment in the industrialized countries. For the developing countries, culture lay at the root of their distinctiveness and national identity, and was the best form of protection against the transfer of foreign life styles that could accompany the transfer of technology. In his view, the debate to be held in the Committee would be a landmark in the development of international co-operation, and for that reason he had particularly wanted to introduce the observations personally.

2. The document was in two parts, in accordance with resolution 3026 A (XXVII), in paragraph 2 of which the Assembly requested the Director-General of UNESCO to communicate to it, at its twenty-eighth session, his

views on the problem of the preservation and further development of cultural values—which was done in the first part of the document—and on the measures already taken by the international community and on further measures that should be taken—a subject covered in the second part in the form of a note by the secretariat of UNESCO. While within the United Nations system UNESCO was the organization competent to deal with cultural questions, many other intergovernmental and interregional organizations, and government agencies were playing an active role in the field of culture, in close co-operation with UNESCO; and in that sense the observations could not be regarded as complete, since they did not refer to the activities of such organizations and agencies. The information contained therein was of a factual nature and required no introductory comment; however, he would be at the disposal of the Committee for any clarifications which might be requested of him particularly since the first part of the document referred not to specific facts but to ideas and thoughts regarding problems of major importance; and they might be the subject of differing interpretations and criticisms.

3. Although resolution 3026 A (XXVII) was welcome in substance, the way in which the text was worded had unquestionably raised certain difficulties of interpretation, and for that reason he wished to make some preliminary comments in order to define UNESCO's viewpoint. With regard, first, to a basic problem posed by the resolution, while it was true that there was a growing uniformity in the world from the cultural point of view, there was, on the other hand, a marked tendency towards pluralism. It would be a mistake not to take account of the unquestionably increased intensity of cultural life, particularly in urban centres, and the multiplication of cultural centres, a trend accentuated by the growth of the information media. Those factors served to establish a balance between uniformity and diversity which perhaps was unrecognized.

4. Science was a cultural phenomenon, and nothing could be more erroneous than to regard scientific progress as being incompatible with cultural development. In the intellectual and ethical sense, science was perhaps the major cultural phenomenon in modern civilization, and hence there was no dichotomy between science and culture. What resolution 3026 A

\* The statement by the Director-General of UNESCO is reproduced *in extenso* in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee (see para. 34 of the present meeting).

(XXVII) actually pointed to was the consequence of the misuse of science on cultural values. As Director-General of UNESCO, an organization with a constitutional mandate for the development of both science and culture, he could not associate himself with any concept that drew a dividing line between science and culture. The utilization of science and technology was a cultural issue because use or misuse was determined by the values of a society; as culture was both a repository of values and a creative principle, every society had the type of science and technology which its culture had chosen.

5. With regard to the preservation of cultural values, which was dealt with in paragraph 9 of the text, it was necessary to determine the causes of the disturbance—which without doubt existed and whose scope, depth and suddenness were astounding—affecting cultural values and raising preservation problems. In that connexion, mention should be made of the population and information explosion particularly in the major urban centres. Another closely allied cause was the collapse of the traditional structure of spiritual values, with a resulting curtailment of “spiritual space” or room for reflection. The substantial increase in population, in urban population density, and the bombardment of men’s minds by numerous diverse fragments of information made it impossible to establish the perspective essential to culture. When there was no distance in time or feeling between the facts and the subject, the individual reacted by reflex, not by reflection. When man was constantly absorbed in action, when there was no detachment for contemplation, criticism and creation, cultural life must suffer. Still another factor, which was new, surprising and brutal, was the attitude of certain young people, particularly the cultured and educated, who not only challenged established culture, as young people had always tended to do, but who also rejected it altogether. Certainly a large percentage of young people who repudiated their heritage at the age of 20 were normally reconciled to it by the age of 25 or 30, but the challenge of youth today appeared to be unique to the times because of its anti-historical spirit.

6. At the same time, attention should be drawn to a positive and new factor in the newly independent countries: the return to the cultural fountainhead and to traditions threatened with extinction; in those countries, no contradiction was seen between the return to indigenous culture and the acquisition of the positive aspects of modern science and technology.

7. He emphasized that that cultural pluralism was a positive and welcome phenomenon which was helping to overcome the pressures towards uniformity exerted by technological civilization. The problem of the conservation of cultural values arose at the national as well as the international level, particularly in the case of indigenous minority cultures which colonial rule had relegated to inferior status. However, there were few instances of monolithic national cultures—in most countries culture had a multiplicity of sources, and when attempts were made to conserve national cultures with multiple origins, the various cultural sources should be expressly recognized. If the international community was interested in cultural problems, it should support the preservation of such minority cultures.

8. With regard to the further development of cultural values, which was dealt with in paragraph 25 of the document, he believed that any attempts at preservation that were limited to the application of static measures would be doomed to failure. Culture, which was life itself, was not static, but essentially dynamic; thus, preservation required an effort not to maintain the *status quo* but to ensure continuity of a heritage through the development of its powers of renewal and creation. Therefore, there could be no opposition between preservation and creation. Each measure for preservation was a reactivation; each act of development was creative. Development was preservation in the sense that it gave a continuity to the past, for it revised and reshaped the heritage received.

9. In the view of UNESCO, as expressed in paragraph 28, the way to achieve creative renewal was to consider cultural development as an essential dimension of the total development process. That idea had first emerged at the International Conference on Cultural Policies organized by UNESCO in Venice in 1970, which preceded a series of intergovernmental conferences, comprising the 1972 Regional Conference of European Ministers of Culture at Helsinki and the December 1973 Conference of Asian Ministers of Culture at Jogjakarta. UNESCO’s view was, basically, that the concepts of development and culture should be revised so as to introduce culture as an integral component of development; in other words, it was a question of adding another human dimension to economic growth of shifting emphasis from man’s having more to his being more. That concept had expanded during the 1960s, when the importance of factors such as education were recognized. Development was now conceived as a process in which man was both the agent and the ultimate goal and the Second United Nations Development Decade would be characterized by the introduction of the cultural dimension, since cultural development was a part of human development.

10. Profound changes had occurred in the concept of culture. For a long time, culture had been regarded as the product of rare moments of leisure, an activity for a select minority. The concept of cultural development rejected that élitist idea. Culture was a necessity and an asset belonging to all men at all times. Consequently, the movement for the democratization of culture had nothing to do with the popularizing of *élite* culture. The right to culture, which stemmed from the concept of cultural development and which was recognized in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, entailed responsibilities for the public authorities in the form of an obligation to work out and implement a cultural policy. Public authorities must guarantee every citizen access to and active participation in the cultural life of the community as a whole. That was not to say that UNESCO favoured government direction of artistic creativity; on the contrary, it was opposed to such a policy, for culture could not truly develop under *dirigisme*.

11. Cultural problems were common to both the developed and the developing countries, but they had different features in each case. In the industrialized countries, science and technology were not sufficiently integrated into the culture: the acculturation of technology must be achieved by the development of a scientific humanism in education which would progressively

bring technology into the cultural domain. However, that would happen only if that education presented science less in terms of the power it conferred, than in terms of its essential intellectual and ethical aspects. Another basic problem in the industrialized countries was that of the disturbances of the cultural environment resulting from haphazard industrialization and urbanization. The damage wrought by industrialization on the cultural environment was no less serious than the damage done to the natural environment, as evident in the tensions and frustrations of urban life which affected personal relationships. Disturbances of the natural environment were reflected in the crisis of the arts, particularly music and painting and could not help having severe cultural effects, as man himself was a creature of nature. The cultural environment should be restored and harmonized with the natural environment and, to that end, as a beginning, more attention should be paid to town planning and architecture. One of the greatest tasks of cultural development was the reconciliation of nature and culture.

12. With respect to the developing countries, he pointed out a negative and a positive aspect. The negative aspect was that of the cultural repercussions of the importation of technology combined with the transfer of foreign socio-cultural models. The transfer of technology was vital for the developing countries, but that did not necessarily mean importing foreign life-styles, i.e. foreign socio-cultural models. Each technology was born within the framework of a specific socio-cultural model, but when it was transferred it should be separated from that framework. Developing countries should be careful not to imitate mechanically the industrialized countries as they borrowed their technologies. Each importation of technology called for courage and critical assessment in determining whether the technology was applicable to the developing country's needs and cultural characteristics. In most cases, profound changes and adjustments had to be made, and the success of such transfers would depend ultimately on the country's capacity to make the necessary adaptations. Developing countries were quite cognizant of that necessity; the agencies involved in the practical process of transfer of technology must become more so.

13. The positive aspect was that of the opportunities the third world had of contributing to cultural discovery. There was no reason why the developing countries should adopt a defensive or assimilationist attitude in cultural affairs; on the contrary, they had a rich cultural heritage and, more important, a capacity for cultural discovery and renewal which could benefit not only themselves, but the entire world. Culture was the best means for affirming their distinctiveness and for taking their proper place, in full confidence and freedom, in a system of fraternal co-operation.

14. In conclusion, he wished to stress four main points. First, there was no opposition between the preservation and the creation of values in the historical development of culture, since culture was an essentially dynamic phenomenon. Secondly, there was no opposition between science and culture; the real issue was the misuse of science and technology. Thirdly, there were both negative and positive factors in the situation; the world was in constant flux; man could not know what the future would bring; everything depended on man; nothing was predetermined. Finally,

the developmental struggle of mankind always took place on the field of culture. Culture was the hope of all nations, equally, though in different ways. But the time had come to rationalize efforts, because culture was necessary and beneficial to all. That was the core of the concept of cultural development and of the cultural policies to which UNESCO's work was devoted.

15. Mr. NENEMAN (Poland) recalled that at the twenty-seventh session his delegation had been one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on the preservation and further development of cultural values which had subsequently been adopted unanimously both by the Committee and by the General Assembly as resolution 3026 A (XXVII). The Third Committee now had before it the observations of the Director-General of UNESCO (see A/9227) requested in paragraph 2 of that resolution, which had been introduced personally by the Director-General. Bearing in mind the observations and conclusions, he introduced draft resolution A/C.3/L.2050 on behalf of his delegation and those of Ethiopia, Finland, France, Indonesia, Iran and Trinidad and Tobago. Certain changes had been made in the text; thus, the beginning of the fifth preambular paragraph should read "*Convinced* that, on the one hand, intensified efforts must be made to abate those possible misuses of scientific and technological developments which endanger the distinctive character of all cultures and that . . .". Also, in operative paragraph 1 (d) (ii), the words "social and ideological values" should be replaced by "social and ideological significance".

16. As the great African leader Amílcar Cabral had said, culture was the very foundation of the liberation movement and was essential to the historical process. Every culture had its distinctive character and unique value. Theories about the superiority or inferiority of particular cultures were always connected with the tendency to dominate and, in their extreme forms, based on racist concepts, and they should therefore be rejected and condemned.

17. In stating, in the fifth preambular paragraph, that intensified efforts must be made to abate the possible misuses of scientific and technological developments, the sponsors had particularly borne in mind paragraph 24 in part A and paragraph 41 in part B of the observations submitted by the Director-General of UNESCO, which referred to the development of electronic telecommunications, including telecommunication by satellite, the use of which was of the utmost interest both for facilitating the free flow of information and for protecting national cultures against the one-way onslaught of broadcasts emanating from countries enjoying an overwhelming technological superiority. At the same time, however, they were not advocating cultural isolation. The mass media and space communications could add enormously to the spread of cultural values, provided they were used on the basis of partnership and with due regard for the principle of sovereignty and equality of States.

18. In the operative part of the draft, Governments were urged to make cultural values, both material and spiritual, an integral part of development efforts. The various subparagraphs of paragraph 1 enumerated those aspects which might be of particular importance for the cultural policies of Governments. In paragraph 2, the draft recommended that the

Director-General of UNESCO should initiate preparation of an interdisciplinary programme, the scope of which was described in the relevant subparagraphs. Since the Director-General would need considerable time to assemble information on the problems involved and to analyse the role of the mass media in the preservation and further development of cultural values, paragraph 3 requested him to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session on the progress made.

19. Draft resolution A/C.3/L.2050 was not a controversial one and was aimed at drawing the attention of Governments, the United Nations, and especially UNESCO, to a problem which was of increasing concern to mankind. He hoped the draft resolution could be voted on during the current meeting, while the Director-General of UNESCO was present, without prejudice to further discussion of the item later on.

20. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) said that Iran had a great interest in the item. Ten years before, it had initiated an economic and cultural revolution with a view to becoming an industrial nation, and since then it had recognized the importance of integrating culture into economic development.

21. He thanked the Director-General of UNESCO for introducing his observations, the conclusion of which, in general, he endorsed. With regard to the Director-General's statement that there was no opposition between science and culture, but rather between culture and the abuse of science, he pointed out that care must be exercised with regard to the abuse of culture. He was referring particularly to certain groups which used culture for inadmissible ends, such as spreading hatred, racism, colonialism and war.

22. The remarks of the Director-General had three main aspects: artistic manifestations, mass communication media, and the separation between the industrialized and the developing countries. With regard to the first aspect, the last sentence of paragraph 51 of the observations did not accurately reflect the current situation of the arts; contemporary theatre was not in a state of confusion, either in the developed or in the developing countries, and the same could be said of the cinema, literature and painting. His own personal conclusion was that all the arts showed a trend towards the visual, because the visual was not purely figurative; the fact that all arts were returning to their sources should be viewed with satisfaction.

23. With regard to the communications media, the problem had been raised in other UNESCO reports, as well as in the United Nations in general, but it had been misstated. The fact that the information media reported on crimes and police news was not the main issue. The problem consisted of establishing whether the truly important information was reported or not. For example, in 1905, the newspapers had reported on political and other events that had since been completely forgotten; yet they had not reported the most significant event of the times: the publication of Einstein's article on relativity, which had only been noted by technical journals. The phenomenon had repeated itself throughout the centuries since Herodotus, whose history did not reflect the important events of his period. Therefore, the problem of the content of the information media should be the subject of specific studies.

24. The third aspect of the Director-General's observations was the separation between the industrialized and the developing countries. He considered that an erroneous approach. What took place in the modern world was of interest to all countries, regardless of their stage of development. The manifestations of science and technology after 1959 were new and disturbing to every nation. The mutation of the contemporary world affected everyone; the problem of adjustment to new cultures and modern technology was common to every country; and the problems of youth probably existed in the developing countries as well as in the developed countries.

25. Lastly, he read out an article by Gaetán Picón on contemporary style, in which it was stated that the current evolution affected all aspects of reality, and another article by Jacques Berque on decolonization, in order to show that there were new ways of considering those problems, which would have to be confronted if it was desired to achieve genuine co-operation within the United Nations.

26. Mrs. SAARINEN (Finland) said that there could be hardly any doubt that perception of the importance of the preservation and development of cultural values had substantially broadened and deepened. At the normative level, the unanimous view had been adopted in many international recommendations on specific aspects of that problem and of both the 1970 Venice Conference and the 1972 Helsinki Conference that culture and cultural values should not be considered as a luxury but, rather, as an essential part of social life. In accordance with that view, her Government fully supported all measures designed to preserve the national and international cultural heritage. Her delegation was sponsoring draft resolution A/C.3/L.2050 in order to emphasize the close link between the rapid pace of scientific and technological development and the preservation and development of cultural values. In her delegation's opinion, that link, and especially its implications, should be understood as broadly as possible, especially at the decision-making level. Her delegation would be reluctant to adopt the rather fatalistic view that technical progress in itself entailed the destruction of cultural values. Such a view would lead nowhere, since technological progress was both desirable and necessary from many other points of view. What was necessary, therefore, was to understand the existence of the link between technological progress and cultural values in order to draw the appropriate conclusions at the decision-making level and to adopt policies designed to avoid adverse effects. The Polish representative's oral revision of the fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2050 was based on that reasoning. At the same time, her Government was fully aware of the dangers of an orientation towards technological effectiveness, of the unifying effects of the integration process and of the extensive use of mass media to the survival of particular subcultures of various countries, regions or ethnic groups.

27. Those considerations led to another aspect of the problem, which was emphasized in the draft resolution and to which the Director-General of UNESCO had referred in his observations (see A/9227), namely, the necessity of considering the preservation and development of cultural values not as a separate question, but as part of the over-all development process. The International Development Strategy for the Second United

Nations Development Decade differed from the strategy for the previous Decade in that it approached the development process from the point of view of the individual. Among its goals was the need to guarantee every individual living conditions compatible with the dignity of man. In addition to quantitative elements, that concept implied a large number of qualitative considerations which might be grouped under the heading of the human environment, as had been done by the Director-General of UNESCO. That approach had the advantage of making it impossible not to be aware that individuals living in different conditions were bound to perceive their environment in different ways. Policy priorities must be judged accordingly. A successful policy for densely populated urban areas might stress town planning and architecture. In rural areas of developing countries, where people lived in absolute poverty, the most basic needs of the individual must be satisfied. Only a full understanding of the diversity of the cultural policies required in different conditions could lead to the practical conclusion that culture was not a luxury, but rather an essential part of the life of societies.

28. Mr. BOURGOIN (France) said that the item the Committee was dealing with related to one of the most important problems facing the current generation. Culture in the broadest sense continued to be the basic criterion for consideration of the problem of the protection of human rights in the context of scientific and technological progress, not only in relation to economic, social and cultural rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but also in relation to civil and political rights. That had been demonstrated by recent events, of which all were aware and which it was not necessary to recall. The quality of life—a basic aspect of the study which was being carried out—was a just and essential corollary of economic growth. "Being more" was, actually, the purpose of the Committee. In that connexion, culture was fully meaningful in so far as it enabled man to preserve his identity and integrity when faced with staggering technological developments. That was, in fact, the essence of the problem of the moral value of science. He wondered whether the debate, which had been continuing for so long a time, would ever be brought to a conclusion.

29. There was, however, one point which should be discussed. The observations of the Director-General of UNESCO referred to the revival and increased intensity of cultural life, which were a result of creativity focusing on the search for and recovery of national identity in the context of the reality of modern problems. There was no doubt that that was true, but now, in a time characterized by the ever greater speed of travel and the even more amazing rapidity of individual communications and communications via the information media, some questions should be asked about the real scope and meaning of that affirmation. At a time when the concept of human rights tended to be universal and the interpretation of civilizations and cultures were promoting both mutual understanding and uniformity in modes of life and thinking, it should be asked whether that "return to the fountainhead" was the result of a phenomenon of withdrawal and even of negation or whether, on the contrary, it was a necessary stage in the establishment of a universal cultural balance. Whether

it was temporary or irreversible, that phenomenon could be interpreted as a legitimate defence reaction caused by man's concern about scientific and technological progress, which was exciting at first, but, then, terrifying. Expressing its support for the conclusions of the Director-General of UNESCO, his delegation, which was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2050, considered that the highest objective should be cultural pluralism within the framework of harmonious co-operation, although it did not deny that that would be a difficult balance to strike.

30. Referring to the specific question of the protection of human rights in the context of scientific and technological progress, he said that many people were asking whether it would not be advisable, if not to halt progress, at least to contain it and control it strictly, since the time of blind faith in progress was past. Like all things, progress had two aspects: positive and negative. As a result of recent scientific and technological discoveries, new dangers had emerged which threatened human rights and fundamental freedoms. The problem was not to halt the irresistible march of progress, but to resolve, as harmoniously as possible, the conflicts it inevitably created. All countries and social *milieux* were more or less deeply concerned about scientific and technological progress. That concern was being expressed increasingly clearly at the international level. All countries, regardless of their level of development, were united in the search for the difficult balance between the beneficial and adverse effects of scientific and technological progress. In that connexion, respect for the concept of universality was imperative. The best example was the pollution and protection of the environment, which clearly showed the need to find solutions at both the national and international levels.

31. In his delegation's opinion, the problem of the distinction between the protection of individual freedoms and private life, on the one hand, and the power of the State and the preservation of public order, on the other, was particularly important. Without underestimating the disparity of existing conditions in various countries and the diversity of norms which should be adopted at the national level, his delegation considered that international standards and rules of conduct could and should be worked out, since the rapid development of science and technology made consideration of its impact on fundamental civil liberties and human rights as a whole urgently necessary, not only in developed countries, but in the international community as a whole. The broad scope of the question made it necessary to carry out interdisciplinary technical and legal studies, which could be done only under the auspices of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, in particular, WHO, the ILO and UNESCO. In so far as possible, such studies should be of a universal nature and non-governmental organizations should take part in them.

32. In France, legislative and regulatory provisions had already been adopted with regard to the protection of civil and political rights in the context of scientific and technological progress and, more particularly, with regard to computer science. Such legislation was still inadequate and imperfect, but it was a first step. Each country should independently prepare its own legislation in that field, in accordance with its particular condi-



tions. Respect for the principle of national sovereignty did not seem incompatible with the preparation of international standards because, in that sphere as in others, such respect should, in his delegation's opinion, be the ultimate objective and *raison d'être* of the United Nations.

33. Mr. PAPADEMAS (Cyprus) supported by Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), requested that the statement by the Director-General of UNESCO should be

reproduced *in extenso* in the summary record of the meeting.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections, the statement by the Director-General of UNESCO would be reproduced *in extenso* in the summary record of the meeting.

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*

## 2025th meeting

Tuesday, 13 November 1973, at 3.10 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yahya MAHMASSANI (Lebanon).

A/C.3/SR.2025

### AGENDA ITEM 58

**Question of the elderly and the aged: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*)\* (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XXI, sect. A.7; A/9126 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2051, A/C.3/L.2053, A/C.3/L.2054, A/C.3/L.2056)**

1. Mrs. WATANABE (Japan) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/9126 and Corr.1), which was excellent, raised some fundamental questions concerning the very concept and definition of aging. In view of the task which the General Assembly had entrusted to the Secretary-General in its resolution 2842 (XXVI), her delegation would limit its remarks to the manner in which the situation of the aged in Japan should be assessed in the light of recent changes in national and international socio-economic and cultural conditions and to determining the seriousness of the socio-economic problems of the aged in Japan.

2. To assess the development of the situation of the aged, the first factor to be examined was life expectancy. In Japan, life expectancy had increased by 15 years since 1947 and now stood at nearly 76 years for women and between 70 and 71 for men. That phenomenon was due to the decline of the death and birth rates since the Second World War. Japan was not only one of the countries with the highest life expectancy, but was also among those in which virtually all the people were covered by one or another of various retirement pension schemes; pensions were paid to all insured persons, including the self-employed. There were also social insurance schemes under which the insured were provided with medical care free of charge and at half-cost for their dependants. Those facilities were to be further improved in the near future.

3. Emphasizing that the progress of medical science, both curative and preventive, had contributed greatly to those developments, as had voluntary and public social welfare programmes, she said that her country owed much of its progress to the specialized agencies, especially to WHO and other commissions and non-governmental organizations. Japan's participation in international activities therefore supplemented its national and regional efforts.

\* Resumed from the 2023rd meeting.

4. Despite those achievements, the gravity of the socio-economic problems of the aged in Japan should not be underestimated. The growth of the *per capita* income as a whole fell considerably short of the growth of the gross national product, and many problems needed to be solved in the near future to meet the needs of the aged; although those people still represented only 7 per cent of the population, that figure was expected to reach 8.5 per cent in a decade or so. The problem was becoming serious because life expectancy had increased too rapidly and because that increase had coincided with the initial period of the enforcement of the revised family code authorized by the new Constitution. The old system, based primarily on inheritance by the eldest son, had been abolished and replaced by a concept which took into account the rights of all the members of the family. That change had seriously affected certain elderly men, who had had little time to adjust to their new status in the family and in employment. Under the old system, they could take it for granted that someone in the family would look after them in their old age, whereas now they practically had to fend for themselves; the rapidity of the changes had made it impossible for them to foresee the problems with which they would be faced and to take steps to supplement their inadequate pensions from other sources. They found it very difficult to obtain new employment. Also hard-hit were the aged engaged in farming in remote areas and the aged who were mentally disturbed. As the result of a recent survey which had shown that only 58.4 per cent of people over 65 years old were in good health, the Japanese Government had urgently introduced a series of measures to improve services for the aged; at the same time, the social welfare organizations and the trade unions were trying to take similar action.

5. She drew attention to a characteristic feature of Japan which might prove to be an asset in the development of the situation of the aged: that was the traditional habit of the Japanese to continue to take lessons in everything that interested them, regardless of age. Those activities had the advantage of enabling the elderly to keep in contact with younger people and, in some cases, to earn a little money. A recent survey had shown that the participation of people aged 60 and over in cultural and sports activities was equal to that of