

from all over the world should meet at Bucharest during the week preceding the Conference in order to express their own views in advance, and then participate directly in the deliberations through the non-governmental organizations which would attend the Conference as observers. That would give young people in whose hands the future of the world lay, the opportunity to make a real contribution to the Conference.

32. Mr. IRARRAZAVAL (Chile), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the delegation of Yugoslavia had once again referred to Chile and its Government in the Committee, and had once more made a false and malicious accusation. In the first place, it was quite inadmissible that the representative of a Government which could hardly be characterized

as democratic in its origins should refer scornfully to the "soldieri" of military régimes, which existed in many respectable and respected countries. Secondly, what the Military Junta of Government in Chile had done in relation to the country's universities, was to make them non-political and ensure that they again became the centres of culture to which thousands of students from all over the Americas had flocked, which they had been until three years previously. The Chilean Government was making every effort to restore the prestige which had made the University of Chile, in particular, famous throughout the world, and the meddling of a representative of Yugoslavia would not make the Government of Chile change its course.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*

## 2028th meeting

Thursday, 15 November 1973, at 3.10 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yahya MAHMASSANI (Lebanon).

A/C.3/SR.2028

### AGENDA ITEM 62

**World social situation of youth: report of the Secretary-General (continued)** (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XXI, sect. A.8; A/9119 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2052, E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1)

1. Mr. THOMAS (Liberia) associated himself with the compliments expressed to the Director-General of UNESCO on his clear and lucid statement at the 2024th meeting, during consideration of agenda item 63.

2. The subject under discussion was of vital importance, because youth was the most valuable potential of any nation. His Government attached great importance to the youth of Liberia and believed that it was its responsibility to stimulate their latent promise for work for spiritual values and serving society creatively. It held that, if Liberia was to rise out of under-development, there would have to be a massive return to the land by young educated people, whose scientific skills could increase productivity and, accordingly, *per capita* income.

3. Since the family was the first unit of society, it was essential that parents should instil into their children the right principles, which would favourably influence their future. It was therefore important that children should be able to attend the best schools and be taught by the best teachers. Young people should be free to think and to develop their thought processes, but they should also be subjected to restraining influences and discipline; much of the current widespread juvenile delinquency was undoubtedly due to the fact that parents and teachers had neglected to perform that duty towards their children and pupils.

4. His delegation believed that the United Nations should devise some plan to assist Member States in implementing their educational programmes for developing young people into citizens who could make a worth-while contribution to their countries and the world in general.

5. Mr. BIRBAUM (Austria) observed that throughout history youth had been the hope of nations and the subject of special care. The situation of contemporary youth, however, had features which had never arisen in earlier generations. For instance, a substantial proportion of young people, when they took up a career, would no longer find their parents' professions available, simply because they had disappeared. During their working life many young people would have to change professions several times, because technological and economic progress would require the elimination of their jobs. Such mobility would inevitably lead to abandoning the emphasis on a single period of vocational training during one's lifetime; it demanded an open-mindedness and mental flexibility which would make young people capable of facing a variety of situations and adapting themselves to a variety of tasks. However, it was not merely a question of preparing young people for life, in the spheres of education, vocational training or health. Youth was not just a period of preparation; it was a period which had its own significance. Youth should be allowed—or given back—freedom of action; in the contemporary world, to educate was to confer responsibility. Young people were prepared to accept responsibility and, in so doing, they worked out ways of thinking and acting that were appropriate for them. In so doing, they would cease to be a mere reproduction of the previous generation, and therein lay society's best chance of self-renewal. It was for that reason that Austria had encouraged that transfer of responsibility by lowering the voting age and the legal age of majority from 21 to 19 years.

6. The situation of youth undoubtedly raised a great many problems, and since those problems generally transcended national boundaries, his delegation believed that the help of the United Nations and the specialized agencies was eminently desirable and, indeed, essential. His delegation, which had frequently been associated with proposals concerning youth within the United Nations, would welcome any measures to improve the world situation of youth.

7. Mr. NENEMAN (Poland) said that his delegation was gratified by the interest taken by the General Assembly in questions relating to the world social situation of youth. His delegation, while recognizing that it was no easy task to prepare an analytical study on so wide-ranging and complex a subject as the needs and aspirations of young people, felt compelled to state that the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1, Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1), although it contained a wealth of interesting data and some progressive suggestions, also had shortcomings. The questionnaire used to obtain information had been unsatisfactory and had affected the quality of the information supplied. In particular, the questions, in content and scope, were primarily related to young people from the sphere of European and American culture, rather than to those from Asian and African countries, whose culture was quite different. Moreover, it was almost impossible to compare the data supplied by different countries in response to the same questions, because the questions themselves had been understood and interpreted differently owing to dissimilar cultural patterns and economic processes. It was likewise almost impossible to compare the social processes of the countries concerned, and, because no indices of socio-economic development had been employed, no synthesis was possible. Moreover, the questionnaire had been addressed only to educated or semi-educated urban youth. He also regretted that so few countries had been surveyed for the report and that those chosen were representative of neither individual geographic regions nor of existing socio-economic systems.

8. He had reservations on another point: the universal tone of the report. Certain problems, such as planning and programming for youth or the participation of youth in national development and international life, were shared by all countries, but there were others which had long ceased to beset the socialist countries but continued to be most pressing in the developing countries, such as hunger, illiteracy, lack of medical care or unemployment. Similarly, there were other problems which were characteristic of advanced capitalist countries—educational crisis, lack of full employment, racial segregation, drug abuse. In addition, there were problems which had been entirely overlooked, such as those of young immigrants seeking employment, the exploitation of youth, refugee youth and young people in colonial territories struggling for independence.

9. Furthermore, his delegation did not agree with the view that the problems, aspirations and needs of young people were common to all youth and independent of national or class conditions. Youth was not a phenomenon which could be approached in the abstract: young people were always a component part of a definite community, which was conditioned by specific economic, social, political and cultural circumstances. It would therefore be more appropriate to survey the position of young people by separate categories of country—advanced capitalist countries, developing countries and socialist countries. Young people in many Western countries often revolted against the degeneration of their communities and struggled for progress and for their own rights, a development which made their elders fearful; in socialist countries, however, young people were a social force accelerating the

material and cultural advancement of their nations and participated in creating the conditions in which they lived.

10. Accordingly, his delegation considered the Secretary-General's report to be a brief description of the problem, rather than an attempt to delve into its real dimensions or seek solutions. The report would, nevertheless, provide a useful basis for discussion and inspire further and more detailed work; it might also induce UNESCO, UNICEF and other United Nations bodies to give more attention to the needs of youth in their programmes.

11. Young people accounted for two thirds of the world's population and the problems of youth were preoccupying every modern society mindful of its future. His country paid special attention to youth problems, both on account of the basic propositions of its social system and because of the national demographic situation. Poland was one of the youngest States in Europe: almost half of its citizens were under the age of 30. The younger generation, born after the war, formed a very dynamic segment of the society. It had not experienced national enslavement, social exploitation, unemployment, hunger or humiliation. It had had access to education and culture, and had enjoyed social protection from the State. His was one of the few countries in the world which had drawn up a comprehensive national programme for youth, in the implementation of which institutions, and social and State organizations would participate, forming a unified front to deal with the entire complex of youth affairs. That programme gave prominence to education, vocational training and, in particular, to leisure. Efforts were being made to develop active social, cultural and sports movements and to provide the necessary material facilities.

12. Generally speaking, employment raised no problems, and conditions were created to facilitate the transition from school to working life. Furthermore, family-oriented social benefits were to be increased in order to strengthen the educational functions of the family. Finally, the widest possible participation of young people in all the representative organs of society was being encouraged.

13. Mr. GAHUNGU (Burundi) said that the fact that in some parts of the world the infant mortality rate was high, that in others life expectancy did not exceed 30 years and that, on the other hand, in other better-off regions it was very high was the logical consequence of the way in which the problems of youth presented themselves to society and were resolved by it. In spite of the laudable efforts made by the specialized agencies of the United Nations and by voluntary organizations to combat poverty, disease and ignorance, the special problems presented by the world social situation of youth had not yet been properly explored. Youth was the dynamic element of society, and the problems of youth should be given special attention. In the "have not" countries, young people wished to have access to education and adequate material support. Inspired by an ideal of peace and security, young people were confused in the face of social injustices. He mentioned in particular the young people who were the victims of the policy of *apartheid*, racial discrimination or foreign occupation; for them, two worlds existed: that of the oppressed and that of the oppressor. Moreover, young people found it hard to tolerate the disdainful and ar-

rogant attitude of those who considered them irresponsible and did not allow them to co-operate and participate in active life. That was why throughout the world, and particularly in the developed countries, young people had become protestors.

14. His country associated youth in the life of the country by giving it active participation in community development activities in such fields as literacy and information campaigns, agricultural co-operatives and school construction.

15. His delegation had been gratified by the happy initiative of the Yugoslav Government, which, in 1970, had hosted a world youth seminar. It had also supported resolution 2633 (XXV) adopted by the General Assembly in 1970, wherein the specialized agencies concerned had been requested to continue to undertake, on a regional and on a world-wide basis, programmes and projects related to the problems and needs of youth. He also stressed that events such as the Tunis Pan-African Festival, the Tenth World Festival of Youth and Students, held at Berlin, and the Seminar on Youth and Human Rights, held at San Remo, had enabled young people to obtain an awareness of their common aspirations: unity and solidarity in the struggle against racism and *apartheid*, the promotion of culture, education and health and the elimination of unemployment and all forms of social injustice; only through sincerity and action could youth attain those objectives.

16. Mr. VAN OVEN (Netherlands) said that his delegation had read with appreciation the Secretary-General's report on youth. With regard to the aspirations of youth, the most striking point seemed to be the need to ensure the full participation of youth in all the activities of society, which meant that young people should have the same rights and the same responsibilities as other nationals. As the report indicated, there was still a lot to do in that field, both at the national and at the international levels. At the national level, it was necessary to ensure the participation of young people not only in the execution of decisions taken by others but also in the decision-making process. Accordingly, his Government had lowered the minimum voting age to 18; furthermore, measures had recently been adopted to ensure the participation of students in decision making on internal university affairs. Steps had been taken in other fields also.

17. At the international level, the situation seemed worse. Unquestionably, many young people were concerned with international affairs; in his country, for example, a boycott of coffee imported from Angola had been organized, and many shops were being opened drawing attention to the problems of the third world, *inter alia* by selling their products. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held at Stockholm in 1972, had also aroused a great deal of interest and had encouraged the adoption of many measures for the preservation of the environment. He mentioned also the initiative taken by some of his compatriots to start a self-tax movement in the late 1960s with the aim of making up, by voluntary contributions, the difference between the percentage of the national income which should be transferred to poor countries as development co-operation, following the targets set by the United Nations, and the percentage of the national

income actually spent under that head. Initiatives of that kind were, however, still too rare.

18. As the Secretary-General had said in his report, there were still many young people who had only a very vague and frequently inaccurate knowledge of the United Nations system. He recalled further that the previous year his delegation had proposed that a maximum age should be set for membership of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group on Youth. He could therefore only note with amazement that of the 10 members making up the Group, three were over 30 years of age—which itself seemed a rather high maximum—when the Secretary-General himself had stressed in his report that young people had a strong aspiration to participate in decision making, the composition of the World Youth Assembly held in 1970 had been the subject of heavy criticism because 35 per cent of its participants had been over 25 years of age, the official age limit, and the composition of the United Nations Secretariat had itself been the subject of criticism because 95 per cent of its professional staff were over 30 years of age. He noted further that the San Remo Seminar had recommended that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2633 (XXV) Governments should include young representatives in their delegations, and he could not but wonder how far that recommendation had been implemented.

19. When the Committee had considered agenda item 58, several representatives had stressed the importance of the role of the aged in society. He fully shared that point of view but felt that the same was true for young people; society would benefit by utilizing the abilities of all age groups: together, the experience of the aged and the creative spirit of the young could help to form a society that would be more capable of facing the greatest problems of the time, namely, the gap between the developed and the developing countries, the problems of the environment and the question of disarmament.

20. With regard to the needs and social situation of young people, which were dealt with in part two of the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.5/486/Add.1 and Corr.1), his delegation endorsed the conclusions in the report. It would, however, like to stress one particular aspect of the question, namely, the need to eliminate all inequality between boys and girls in the field of education. Another problem to which it wished to draw attention was that of youth salary. At a time when it was generally recognized in principle that men and women were entitled to the same salary for the same work, young people too often received a lower salary merely because of their age. In his country, in order to remedy that state of affairs, the Minister for Social Affairs had recently announced that, starting in 1974, a minimum salary for young people would be established by law.

21. His delegation supported most of the measures proposed in part three of the report (E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1) and endorsed the statement in paragraph 40 of that document that planning for youth should be integrated into over-all development plans, because youth problems were facets of the over-all social and economic situation. His delegation would take up at greater length the question of measures to be adopted when the Committee had a draft resolution before it.

22. Mr. ABSOLUM (New Zealand) said that the first problem that arose, with regard to youth, was that of

definition. Precisely what was meant by the term "youth"? Did it mean children, teen-agers, people in their twenties? Even if it were possible to agree on a definition in terms of chronological age, that would be of very limited value, as the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report. Furthermore, the sheer breadth of the subject tended to encourage generalization and to inhibit the identification of specific projects. As the United Kingdom representative had pointed out at the previous meeting, the term "youth" could be interpreted as embracing half the world's population. Moreover, it seemed difficult to separate questions of special concern to youth from those of concern to society as a whole. In the case of drugs, for example, should that problem be viewed in the context of efforts to improve the situation of youth or should it be regarded as a problem facing society as a whole? The question of youth could itself be viewed from many angles: youth could be considered in the same way as other groups which were the subject of discrimination on grounds of race, religion or sex; following that approach, it would be necessary to examine all cases where youth was precluded, on grounds of age, from any participation in the various fields of activity, such as administration, education, development and employment. Another approach would be to examine problems which were peculiar to youth or which affected youth to a greater extent than they did the rest of society. A third approach would be to take as a basis the knowledge that youth would inevitably be called upon one day to assume the primary responsibility for the running of the world; it would then be necessary to examine ways of giving young people assistance, protection and encouragement.

23. In view of the magnitude of the question under consideration, it was essential to avoid over-generalized and unproductive discussions and to determine the way in which the question should be approached, by setting a specific goal. His delegation therefore hoped that the Committee would decide, at the current session, on a particular area for its further work. The area which his delegation had in mind was that relating to the situation of youth with regard to employment. As the Secretary-General said in his report, that problem was urgent because it was clear that in some countries there was discrimination against young people, on the pretext that they were lacking in experience. It was therefore necessary to find ways of facilitating access by young people to the labour market. Other countries had serious unemployment problems which resulted in the wastage of young people's skills and energies. Of course, employment problems affected society as a whole, but there could be no question that they hit youth harder than they did other segments of the economically active population. He emphasized that the Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Division was currently studying ways and means of providing employment for school leavers in the developing countries. That study might usefully be complemented by a similar study on non-Commonwealth countries by the United Nations.

24. In conclusion, he said that he would resist the temptation to recount in detail all the steps taken by his country to meet the health, educational and nutritional needs of young people and to encourage their participation in decision making and in every aspect of national life. He would refrain from doing so since he believed it

was more important for the Committee to focus its attention on ways of achieving a positive and concrete outcome to its deliberations than to congratulate itself on what had already been done.

25. Mr. ONISHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that there could be no doubt that youth was the hope of mankind. Consequently, every society wished to provide a better future for its young people.

26. As had been shown by various international youth meetings, particularly that held in 1973 at Berlin, young people were not indifferent to the problems of war, peace, *apartheid*, racism and social oppression. Youth could help to promote détente, to make it endure and to combat bellicose policies. Unfortunately, in the present-day world young people often found themselves in an ambivalent situation: although they wanted to live in peace, they were sometimes obliged to make war, whether participating in the struggle against colonial oppression or, instead, having to assist reactionary régimes.

27. The report of the Secretary-General analysed the needs of contemporary youth against the background of their living conditions. However, that document contained gaps, as it examined only a small number of problems affecting young people and made no mention of the economic and social factors which really prevented them from achieving their aspirations. He expressed the hope that those omissions would be remedied.

28. As had rightly been said, the problems of the young were influenced by the problems of the societies in which they lived. Those problems should therefore be considered in the context of social conditions. Thus, young people in the capitalist countries were constantly encountering difficulties stemming from the problems peculiar to bourgeois societies. Unemployment, the generation gap, the rebellion of young people against their elders and drug addiction were products of the social conditions obtaining in those countries, where young people met with discrimination and oppression. As the ILO representative had indicated, millions of young people in the capitalist countries were unemployed or earned wages that were only 40 to 50 per cent of those that would be paid to adults for similar work. In that connexion, reference should be made to the particularly difficult situation prevailing in rural areas, where education opportunities were very limited and working hours very long. Awareness of their desperate plight led young people to fight for their rights.

29. He had listened carefully to the representatives of the developing countries, some two thirds of whose population consisted of young people. Those young people had to confront the problems inherited from colonialism, oppression and exploitation and to fight to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism and the manifestations of neo-colonialism. The growing political activity of youth in those countries fostered progress and accelerated industrialization and the modernization of agriculture while bringing about a cultural revolution.

30. Socialist experience showed that the problem of young people could be resolved only by a thorough transformation, with the participation of youth, of social and economic structures.

31. In the Ukrainian SSR, young people fully enjoyed all civil and cultural rights because of the transforma-

tion of the economic and social structures of society—a process in which they had participated. Young people could make a valuable contribution to efforts to promote social progress. They were working in all sectors of the economy, contributing to the implementation of economic plans and taking an active part in political life. They were entitled to vote at the age of 18 and eligible for election at the age of 21: 27.8 per cent of the representatives in local soviets were less than 29 years of age and 10 per cent of the deputies in the Supreme Soviet were under 26. The major issues affecting youth were examined in collaboration with its representatives. In the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR there was a commission in which the Leninist Communist League of Ukrainian Youth—an organization with a membership of 5 million young people—was represented. The Commission met regularly to consider matters of interest to youth. Young people were entitled to free social security and medical care and received grants and access to transport facilities at reduced rates. The aim of education, which was free, was to provide young people with vocational training, to increase their culture and to give them a better knowledge and understanding of current world problems.

32. His delegation fully comprehended the hopes and aspirations of young people throughout the world and believed that the United Nations should endeavour, by all possible means, to help them to realize their wish to participate in creative work. However, his delegation was not convinced that the establishment within the United Nations of an *ad hoc* body to deal with the problems of youth was the appropriate procedure to follow; in its opinion, solutions to those problems could be found only within the framework of the various social systems in which they arose. The United Nations should confine itself to making general recommendations, for it could not take the place of national organs. Its principal purpose must be to promote the attainment of the objectives of the Charter; détente and peace would unquestionably help to resolve the problems of youth in the modern world.

33. Mrs. MARICO (Mali) said that the general crisis afflicting post-war youth was a crisis not so much of growth as of civilization; it was not only the product of an imbalance between technological progress and social development but a reflection of youth's despair in a world which was becoming increasingly dehumanized.

34. The social balance sought by societies would be achieved only when they took account of the aspirations of youth and re-established a dialogue with young people on the basis of their moral and civic values. At the national level, countries should attempt to bring about a mental "depollution" of young people by increasing the volume of cultural activities, so that the ultimate goal of their efforts was man himself and not worship of the machine and the consumer society. That was what the Malian Government was trying to achieve through the Centres for Cultural and Outdoor Activities, which warranted encouragement from UNESCO. That "depollution" would be effective only if healthy rural youth managed to resist the deceptive lure of the town and escaped the degrading effects of certain pernicious forms of visual education.

35. At the international level, the United Nations should undertake in-depth research concerning the ultimate goal of development, which should be the satis-

faction of man's vital needs. It was true that the developed countries had succeeded in creating abundance—but only at the cost of turning man into a robot; moreover, no just solution had yet been found to the conditions of poverty in which the vast majority of the world's inhabitants lived. Such research, which should be carried out by specialized agencies such as UNESCO and the ILO, as well as UNICEF, might centre on surveys by a group of experts—dealing first with young people and then with parents and educators. The United Nations could then centralize the information derived from studies at the national level with a view to establishing the global objectives to be achieved.

36. Her delegation believed that the way to involve youth in socio-economic and cultural life was through child education—in other words, without prejudice to over-all culture, by including subjects of national concern in school curricula. The school should be a centre for training man the citizen. To that end, a prominent position was given in primary and secondary school curricula in Mali to "general, global and integrated training" aimed at providing the child with the knowledge essential for his future integration into a society in full evolution. As far as higher education was concerned, the Malian Government had elected to make institutions of higher education into centres in which students were able to acquire both general knowledge and the vocational training which would enable them to participate in national construction. Finally, the school should be a training centre for man the producer: there was nothing more lamentable than to turn out young people who were maladjusted because their training bore no relation to the specific realities of the country. Consequently, the Malian Government was giving preference to training at home rather than training abroad and, to that end, had established five institutions of higher education.

37. Mr. ALKHAJA (Bahrain) said that his delegation had read with interest the Secretary-General's report. Youth was a very interesting social and psychological phenomenon because it stood between the past and the future. It was difficult to define exactly when youth began and ended, but it might be said, roughly, to be the period of time between childhood and adulthood, in other words, between the ages of 16 and 25. For too long youth had been labelled immature by adults, and that had led most youth to turn away from the world of adults and all that it represented. The main problem, therefore, was to find a means of fulfilling the real aspirations of youth, who were in need of love, esteem and recognition of their true work. The goal should therefore be to make adults and society more aware of the importance of youth, and to promote such awareness in youth itself.

38. His Government had assigned to its Ministry of Social Affairs the task of developing plans for youth, and budgetary funds had been made available for the purpose of launching a programme in that field. The problems of youth were being followed very closely; special efforts were being made to develop sports activities; cultural and intellectual activities were being organized by young people themselves and a number of staff members of the Ministry of Education had been assigned to tasks relating to the organization of leisure time—including summer trips, camping, meetings and



scouting. Moreover, Bahrain had participated in a number of regional conferences and meetings on youth held in different Arab countries, as well as sports contests within the Asian region. Finally, it had participated in international conferences such as the seminar held at San Remo, and would continue to do so. Bahrain was a young nation, which intended to give the young generation a chance to participate in the administration of governmental affairs.

39. He recalled that his country had advanced a number of suggestions at the San Remo seminar. It had, in particular, suggested studying thoroughly the problems of youth and the means for their solution; teaching youth about different civilizations and cultures in an objective and egalitarian spirit; ensuring the acceptance of youth's participation in decisions which concerned them; expanding female education, since women played an extremely important role in the education of youth; encouraging the exchange of youth delegations among different nations and increasing the number of scholarships given by each country to students of other nations. Developed countries as well as United Nations bodies should be able to meet those suggestions, which related to problems of equal importance to all countries.

40. Mrs. RAKOTOFIRINGA (Madagascar) said that her delegation felt some apprehension about a possible conflict between measures for the benefit of the elderly, which had been recommended at the national and international levels, and those contemplated for the benefit of youth. On the one hand family planning was advocated in order to avoid the consequences of overpopulation, and on the other hand attempts were being made to prolong human life; efforts were being made to solve the problem of unemployment among youth, while at the same time the creation of jobs for the elderly was being encouraged. It seemed that the generation conflict was deeper than was generally realized.

41. With regard to the Secretary-General's report, she noted that young people defined youth as "a state of mind, an attitude towards life", a state of mind which adapted to circumstances and events and was therefore dynamic and consequently characterized by confrontation, a refusal to inherit legacies from the past, and a tendency to question existing structures. Those characteristics manifested themselves in different ways according to the social structure to which young people belonged or their degree of awareness of the situation in which they found themselves. The results of such manifestations of dynamism varied according to whether they were motivated by a genuine desire for change or were inspired by what happened elsewhere or simply by a negative feeling of dissatisfaction. In any case, it was necessary for young people themselves to make known their aspirations and needs, and it was perhaps because an attempt had been made to anticipate them that, as the Secretary-General's report concluded, "most present arrangements for dealing with the needs and aspirations of young people are inadequate, in some cases seriously so". It was of course difficult to define and assess the general aspirations and needs of young people, given the diversity of viewpoints, and the Secretary-General's report itself recognized that. Indeed, the delegation of Madagascar believed that the attitudes of young people in a number of countries described in the report were not necessarily shared by

young people in all countries of the world or even those of a single region.

42. With regard to Madagascar, in 1972, at a national congress of students, pupils, teachers, workers, peasants and disadvantaged youth, all categories of citizens had considered their aspirations and needs, freely expressed them and discussed their promotion with Government authorities. To make young people aware of the possibilities at the level of practical application, the Government had created territorial administrative structures and institutions, such as the People's National Development Council and the National Education and Youth Council, which young people would be invited to attend in order to participate in the preparation and implementation of national development programmes. Her delegation was convinced that young people must first become aware of the role which they had to play at the national level before they could participate more effectively in the solution of international problems. In that spirit it would support any proposal designed to make young people better prepared for the struggle against obstacles standing in the way of their fulfilment and their active participation in national and international life.

43. Dr. MALAFATOPOULOS (World Health Organization), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that the policy of WHO was to approach public health problems in terms of the family as a basic unit of society, and as part of the community health services. It was within that context that WHO attempted to deal with the problems of young people and adolescents.

44. The Division of Family Health at WHO headquarters was the focal point for youth questions, and WHO was providing technical advice whenever that might contribute to the effectiveness of activities undertaken as a result of joint consultations with the United Nations Secretariat, other United Nations agencies and the Ministries of Health of various countries. WHO gave priority assistance to Member States in the strengthening of their health services through the training of medical staff at all levels; it also assisted the health administrations of various countries in the development of their national health systems, so that all citizens of the community, including young people, could have ready access to preventive and curative services, particularly in neglected rural areas.

45. Turning to some of the particular problems of youth, he noted that, in the case of smoking, health education had not been as successful as had been hoped, either with the young or their elders. In the case of drugs, WHO and its expert committees were doing much technical work on drug dependence, a problem directly related to young people. In that connexion, it should be noted that drug addiction, which was often considered a disease, was in reality a symptom of a disease rooted in social and economic conditions which tended to create dissatisfaction, unhappiness, tension and strife among youth. Education on the subject should be provided at all levels, without excluding adults, so that parents with authoritative information could give advice to their children.

46. The annual report of the Director-General of WHO drew attention to a recrudescence of venereal disease—syphilis and gonorrhoea. In almost all countries there had been an annual increase of 8 to 10 per cent in cases of gonorrhoea, a disease which primarily

affected the 15 to 25 year age group. The syphilis situation was only slightly less alarming. WHO was convinced that the spread of venereal disease was mainly due to insufficient health education. The health authorities of various countries should endeavour to gain the confidence of young people, persuade them that venereal diseases were not shameful and encourage them to seek medical treatment as soon as possible.

47. Traffic accidents were among the most serious hazards to the young. There also, emphasis should be placed on preventive education and on the establishment of specialized treatment facilities, including rehabilitation centres, for accident victims.

48. He drew the Committee's attention to the underprivileged position of rural populations as compared to

urban populations, which enjoyed far greater advantages in health matters. It was essential for the authorities to organize health services which could cover the entire population of a country, and to train staff—particularly auxiliaries—capable of providing minimum services to those sections of the population that were completely destitute of them.

49. The CHAIRMAN requested members of the Committee wishing to speak on the item to limit their statements to 10 minutes, and said that he hoped, with their co-operation, to be able to avoid having to apply rule 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.*

## 2029th meeting

Friday, 16 November 1973, at 10.45 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yahya MAHMASSANI (Lebanon).

A/C.3/SR.2029

### AGENDA ITEM 62

**World social situation of youth: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*)** (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XXI, sect. A.8; A/9119 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2052, A/C.3/L.2061-2063, E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1)

1. Mrs. BAZARKHAND (Mongolia) said that, in her delegation's view, young people should play a fundamental role in the struggle for peace, the elimination of colonialism and racism, and social progress.

2. The People's Republic of Mongolia had sought to establish the necessary conditions for the development of the young generation, which in that country was provided with free education and medical care. Mongolia was particularly interested in educating young people so that they would have a communist attitude to work and be fully aware of their civic duties and their obligations as members of society. The young people of Mongolia played a fundamental role in the building of socialism and participated actively in the affairs of the Party, the State and society in general. The Government also devoted particular attention to the establishment of universities and educational institutions so that the young generation could improve its qualifications and acquire the necessary ability to govern the country and manage industry.

3. Youth organizations in Mongolia likewise contributed to international peace, solidarity and co-operation; in that connexion, it was noteworthy that the Revolutionary Union of Mongolian Youth maintained relations with 200 organizations in 100 countries throughout the world. Among other activities, the Union had participated in a movement to provide assistance to the Viet-Nameese people and had recently taken part in a congress against imperialism held in Berlin.

4. She was gratified that the United Nations was paying attention to the problems of young people; her delegation supported the goals set out in the report on the world social situation of youth (E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1), although in describing the evolution of that situation insufficient account had been taken of the different approaches and trends in the various social systems with regard to the opportunities offered to young people. Her delegation was ready to support all efforts to solve the problems of young people and to strengthen international peace and security.

5. Mr. PARIS (Costa Rica) said that, since the question under discussion was non-controversial, his delegation would make no statement in the general debate on the item, but reserved the right to speak at a later stage.

6. Mr. SENSOY (Turkey) said that his country based its hopes on young people, who made up more than 60 per cent of its population. The problems of the young were not identical throughout the world and it had been emphasized that the young generation of the developing countries faced more difficulties than young people in developed countries. In the developing countries, where capital was scarce, the efficient use of manpower resources was of the highest priority and constituted the most important element in the development strategy. However, it was difficult to determine priorities in view of the limited resources allocated to education and training. Although the funds allocated for those purposes had increased considerably in all developing countries, they still did not meet current needs. Moreover, teachers were insufficient in number and unequally distributed, since most were concentrated in urban areas. That limited the literacy rate and adversely affected the quality of education.

7. The rapid increase of population in most of the developing countries was another serious problem which must be solved as a matter of urgency since the absolute number of illiterates was increasing in many