

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

countries, despite the decrease in the illiteracy rate, and young people were naturally the immediate victims of that situation. Another problem of paramount importance was unemployment or underemployment, and in that connexion there should be a close relationship between education and employment policies. In the developing countries, unemployment was especially noticeable in the agricultural sector, a fact which created urbanization problems which sometimes resulted in a transfer of unemployment to the urban sectors of the economy. Mention should also be made of the brain-drain, resulting from the economic discontent of the young, which was detrimental to the developing countries.

8. Furthermore, in developing countries the possibility of making advantageous use of the leisure of young people through activities conducive to the development of their talents and to physical and psychological fitness were often very limited. In those countries the question of integrating young people into society was closely linked with the question of over-all economic and social development. For the majority of young people, who were deprived of even basic education, the concept of human rights meant very little in practical terms, and he stressed the need for more education and economic opportunities for young people.

9. Currently, about 1 million Turkish workers, many of them young, were employed abroad, and young people and adults alike benefited from the educational, health and social security facilities provided by the host countries. That was an example of the interdependence of countries and also emphasized the vitality of economic, social and cultural co-operation. Although the problems facing young people varied from country to country, and the approach and solutions to those problems might therefore be different, it was essential to stress the importance of co-operation among nations with a view to achieving the utmost in terms of peace, security and social well-being in the world.

10. At the international level, the United Nations and its specialized agencies had played a significant role, although closer contacts should be established with young people and their organizations. In that connexion, it should be noted that the publicity given by the United Nations to its activities, especially in the field of human rights, was inadequate. In his delegation's view, the establishment of the United Nations University would be a great contribution to the education of the young people of the world and to the realization of their human rights. The Turkish Government had volunteered to set up the Environmental Department of the United Nations University in Ankara, and hoped that Member States would grant their valuable support to that offer.

11. Miss PRODJOALITO (Indonesia) said that, in her delegation's view, young people represented a major world resource and if permitted genuine participation would prove to be a dynamic force for the realization of the aims of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently, in order to ensure the participation of future generations, the United Nations should establish better contacts with young people and youth organizations with regard to subjects of mutual interest. In that connexion, her delegation regretted that, thus far, only one youth organization had achieved consultative

status with the Economic and Social Council, and recommended that such organizations should be given higher status.

12. Throughout the world, young people were pressing for a new change. Her delegation felt that every effort should be made to understand the underlying causes of the activism of youth and its message, since it was the lack of opportunity to assume responsibility that determined the difference between the creative spirit and destructive action of youth. The proper response would be to give young people an opportunity to participate in the life of the nation. The question of training and education was likewise essential, and in that connexion emphasis should be placed on equality of opportunity for all young people, with no distinction as to sex and irrespective of whether they lived in rural or urban areas.

13. With regard to the young people of Indonesia, university students spent six months participating in extension programmes in which they provided technical guidance for local development efforts in the fields of education, engineering and agriculture. There was also a voluntary field service programme for university graduates, who worked for two years in self-help projects in villages. In all those efforts, the goal of the Indonesian Government was to engage the creative capacity of youth.

14. In conclusion, she stressed that it was in the vital interest of the United Nations to improve its communication with youth, since if it did not do so it would run the risk of losing the interest of future generations.

15. Mrs. DE GOMEZ (Colombia) said that the lack of educational facilities available to the majority had deprived many of the world's young people of access to culture and the possibility of becoming a driving force for progress. She stressed the importance of educating young people so that they could make a dynamic contribution to structural change and the elimination of social injustice throughout the world.

16. With regard to paragraph 7 of the conclusions of the Seminar on Youth and Human Rights (see A/C.3/L.2052), concerning compulsory education, she suggested that the words "as far as possible," should be inserted after the word "take". With regard to paragraph 19, concerning the unemployment problem, she said that full employment was a social obligation in the modern world because unemployment was one of the most critical social phenomena and a source of bitter frustration for young people.

17. An active literacy and education campaign was being carried out in Colombia so as to give young people the means to make a contribution to society. Forty per cent of the country's budget was allocated to education, and her delegation considered that everything that was done to promote the education of young people was constructive.

18. Mr. SORENSEN (Denmark) said that his delegation had studied with great interest the Secretary-General's report on youth, which gave a clear picture of the aspirations and needs of young people and their social problems. Those problems resulted not so much from youth itself as from social and technological change: the situation of youth was a part of the social and institutional situation characteristic of the age. Young people in Denmark felt concerned about

the inequalities of wealth and privilege within and between nations, questioned the system of values and norms on which society was based, and criticized the failure of adults to live up to the ideals which they themselves had set. Danish young people felt that it was of decisive importance to participate constructively in the life of society in order to become a part of society, a point which was stressed in paragraph 16 of the report.

19. Education should aid in the full development of the person, and that called for a flexible educational system offering equality of opportunity to all individuals and eliminating distinctions between formal and out-of-school education. In that connexion he mentioned the Danish Folk High School founded in his country more than 100 years earlier as an example of an institution providing all-round education, especially for farmers and workers, which had played an important part in the formation of the country's political and social system. With reference to measures to ensure equal access to educational and economic advancement and employment opportunities, he said that Danish youth organizations were particularly interested in securing access for all to education, equitable remuneration and job opportunities, satisfactory housing facilities and participation in the decision-making process in society.

20. He emphasized the importance of the application of effective family planning among youth, as also of the allocation of adequate resources for youth programmes. He also attached importance to the allocation of means for youth participation at the international level and mentioned the funds made available by the Scandinavian countries to enable national youth organizations to establish and maintain contact with each other in the European context. As to relations between youth and the United Nations, his delegation felt that the latter should act principally as a service organ and that it should be left to the international youth organizations and other non-governmental youth organizations to draw up guidelines for their relations with the Organization. To that end, there should be further co-ordination between the United Nations bodies in order to remove the difficulties confronted by youth organizations because of the compartmentalization of United Nations functions; it was to be hoped that closer consultation between those organizations and the United Nations would lead to increased awareness among young people at the national level of the implications for Governments of the various resolutions on youth adopted by the United Nations.

21. Mrs. MAIR (Jamaica) said that young people were rapidly becoming a majority in her country and throughout the world; therefore, if countries could adopt just provisions for their youth, they would have gone more than half way towards establishing a just society based on the full development of their human resources. To ensure young people the maximum participation in the political and planning process, the voting age in Jamaica had recently been lowered to 18 years, and education from primary school to the university level was free. The national services offered to young people in different spheres, including training for agriculture and industry, would, in turn, enable young people to make a useful contribution to society and become an integral part of the national development process.

22. The Secretary-General's report to the Commission for Social Development at its twenty-third session contained statistical evidence of the failure of the First United Nations Development Decade, particularly with respect to the integration of youth—representing approximately 50 per cent of the world's population—into the development process. A critical index of that problem was unemployment among youth, which reached 30 per cent for young men and more than 40 per cent of young women leaving school. The problem was aggravated in tropical regions by the effects of the thrust of modern economic development, because there the largest productive activities were highly capital-intensive and employed relatively little labour. One of the consequences of that circumstance was the exodus of youth from rural to urban areas.

23. The participation of youth in the promotion of human rights had been amply dealt with in the conclusions and recommendations of the San Remo Seminar, summarized in document A/C.3/L.2052. There was, however, one aspect of the question which was touched on only marginally in that text, in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the conclusions: the special role of youth in the fuller promotion of the human rights of women and the elimination of discrimination against women. Statistics on teen-aged girls in countries undergoing rapid industrialization and urbanization showed that such girls were the first to migrate from the countryside to the city in search of better economic opportunities. Young women had less access to training, employment opportunities and housing, and consequently received the lowest wages; similarly, it was among them that the incidence of unemployment and underemployment was greatest. National and international resources, including the resources of youth, must be mobilized to produce the kind of development which alone would provide a sound basis for the genuine implementation of human rights. The United Nations could give great momentum to that process, and in that connexion she welcomed the convening of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group on Youth in conformity with General Assembly resolution 3022 (XXVII). Her delegation was proud of the fact that Jamaica was represented in that Group by one of its youth leaders, and it was awaiting with interest the conclusions which the Group would reach.

24. Mr. ACEVEDO MORGÁ (Mexico) said that the needs and aspirations of youth should be examined in the context of the realities of the world's social and economic situation: population increase, the imbalance in the distribution of wealth, the lack of opportunities to obtain education and employment, the food and health situation, and the difficulties encountered in making ideals a reality. So long as measures to promote development were not taken and the changes required for the more equitable distribution of wealth within and between countries were not made, there would be little hope of offering a better future to young people. In Mexico efforts were being made to enable the young generation to participate to a greater extent in political, economic, social and cultural life, and he wished to mention in that connexion the Instituto Nacional de la Juventud Mexicana, the purpose of which was to bring young people together and encourage them to study national problems and incorporate them into the process of development. The Institute granted scholarships to young people from rural areas who lacked financial means and it carried on its activities in rural

and urban areas by means of the youth houses established throughout the country, where out-of-school activities aimed at development, the restructuring of schools, literacy and reforestation campaigns and so forth were planned. In order to promote the physical and psychological fitness of the population, welfare institutions had been established in Mexico which provided services under a broad programme of social security, including the Instituto Mexicano de Asistencia a la Niñez, the Instituto Nacional de Nutrición and the Instituto Nacional de Protección a la Infancia, the purposes of which were to raise levels of living and of health. To solve housing problems the Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores had been established and was developing a plan for housing construction, renovation of existing housing and permanent improvements in the houses which were being constructed; it also provided for the improvement of urbanized areas and the development of others in the future. With respect to ecological problems, an Office of the Under-Secretary for the Environment had been established; and in order to give young people greater participation in political life, the minimum voting age had been reduced from 21 to 18 years. The current system in Mexico was characterized by the participation of young people in high cabinet posts, and various Mexican ambassadors were young professionals who had distinguished themselves in their country.

25. In the changing conditions of society, the school had ceased to be simply a place of learning and had become a centre for the dissemination of information, and it was urgently necessary to strengthen the family structure in order to prevent young people from adopting undesirable attitudes and to ensure that their anxieties would not be taken advantage of by outside interests which impaired the public's mental health and inculcated in many young people anti-social attitudes. The human person must be recognized as a unit of value and as an end in itself; and a permanent relationship should be established between centres of education and centres of production so that young people could maintain contact with realities. At the same time, it was essential to promote youth seminars, such as that held at San Remo, Italy, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 926 (X). He suggested that youth organizations should be urged to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

26. Mr. DOS SANTOS (Portugal) said that the Secretary-General's report put before the Committee a programme suggesting the organization of groups to study the problems of youth not only from the standpoint of individual development but also from the more complex standpoint of social integration. Thought should be given to the power of the communications and information media on young people of social groups at differing levels of development and from different cultures; similarly, it must be borne in mind that the communications media and the schools were not, for the most part, geared to the training of young people in both its intellectual aspect and the aspect relating to work, which was an essential element of development. In addition, in order to prepare young people to participate more extensively in national and international programmes serving the cause of human rights, as had been stated, according to the Secretary-General's note (A/C.3/L.2052), at the San Remo Seminar, ways must

be found of instilling in young people a desire to work to the fullest extent of their capacities for the cause of the progress of all. The essential thing would seem to be to establish structures within which young people would be able to direct their activities towards serving human society. While it was true that youth had problems which were common to everyone, it seemed equally true that they were problems which were naturally related to the basic structure of the family and of the fundamental community units which, by their very nature, participated in the creation of conditions which would be conducive to the development of the human faculties.

27. The reforms in education desired by youth must be carried out in accordance with the various degrees of development of each society, taking into consideration the culture and tradition of each people which, in one aspect, were always the basis and point of departure of the national identity, inasmuch as the nation was one of the fundamental structures for the development and progress of individuals. There appeared to be two basic approaches to a study plan for the education of youth: education for a specific type of society or orientation towards the development of the individual. However that might be, a renovation of educational systems must be initiated so that the individual and his future would be the goal, superseding systems vitiated by social traditions in which the individual suffered from exploitation by individuals and groups or from lack of the material means to achieve the development and freedom which it was his mission to seek. It was also important to distinguish clearly between that which belonged to the individual with his own destiny in the world and what the individual was and signified in the family, including his place in what was called the national unit. As the report of the Secretary-General observed, with timely insistence, the true essence of man could not be left out of the educational process.

28. Co-operation with youth, in a generous spirit of willingness to place all human resources at the service of young people for the good of mankind, required, *inter alia*, constructive and sincere dialogue between nations, cultures and peoples. That programme must accompany the programme elaborated for the education of young people, many of whom were turning their backs on fundamental problems because they were in conflict with the society in which they lived and of which, against their human instincts, they felt that they were a result. That was, in part, an explanation of the anguish specifically affecting millions of young people today—the insecurity of the future. Therefore, his delegation believed that the suggested dialogue between peoples could not be separated from the problems of youth. A general plan of joint and varied efforts for the progress of youth and adults could be drawn up only when there was a complete understanding of young people in their various natural, cultural and social environments, and of the aspirations which motivated them.

29. Miss SHAHKAR (Iran) expressed the satisfaction of her delegation at the interest of the General Assembly in the problems of youth. The report of the Secretary-General was unquestionably interesting, but was not entirely satisfactory. For one thing, as the representative of Poland had observed (2028th meeting), the research concerning young people had been

carried out in too few countries and among too few people and did not have the feature of universality necessary to give a more precise idea of the point of view of young people themselves. In addition, the conclusions and recommendations, while interesting, were incomplete and very vague. It was true, as the Secretary-General had noted, that time and means had been limited; her delegation, however, would have preferred to see somewhat simpler and more specific proposals for action formulated.

30. At the same time, her delegation recognized that it was difficult to distinguish between the problems common to all mankind and the specific problems of youth: those problems were inextricably interrelated and profound changes on behalf of youth could not be conceived as long as the basic needs of all, such as food, literacy, health, housing and work, were not met. In any event, the proclamation in 1965 of the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (General Assembly resolution 2037 (XX)), the adoption of resolution XX of the International Conference on Human Rights,¹ held at Teheran in 1968, the various relevant resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the holding of the World Youth Assembly in July 1970 and the Seminars held at Belgrade and San Remo, had not been in vain. It was agreed that some problems were peculiar to young people and that they could and must be tackled as such. If the declarations and resolutions were to be anything more than a sheaf of papers, the question must be considered in the most practical manner possible, having due regard to the economic and cultural reality of each country.

31. The special problems of young people, once past childhood, could be reduced to two categories: the problems of education and the problems of participation. Resolution XX of the International Conference referred to education, and participation was what the youth of the world had been asking for at that same time. Education was one of the fundamental rights of young people, along with the right to food and housing, and encompassed not only school, but also information in all its forms, meetings, sports activities, and so forth. Education was a comprehensive activity whose purpose should be preparation for life in society and the development of the individual as a creative person. It was known that current education was far from being ideal. Its improvement required two types of action: the introduction of reforms and the implementation of measures designed to satisfy the requirements of an appropriate education. Therefore, all that was needed was to encourage the efforts aimed at revising the methods and objectives of education, which should be concentrated primarily in the following areas: the development of the imagination and creativity of young people, without limiting them to sterile conformity; the establishment of a dialogue with young people in order to learn to understand them, which did not mean, however, that all that they demanded must be accepted; and, finally, teaching geared more to the active life, in which young people would be treated as responsible human beings and not as machines.

32. Naturally, the problems and the manner in which they were faced would differ as between industrialized and less developed countries and depending on the difference in culture and the material means available. The communications media also had great responsibility and could propose to Governments more suitable informational and educational programmes. In that connexion, in-depth studies should be carried out with a view to formulating specific proposals and appropriate measures. Although each Government must make its decisions according to the individual needs of the country, vigorous international co-operation in that sphere was necessary and was the duty of all.

33. Furthermore, education should be related to the purpose for which young people were being prepared, i.e. participation in the life of society, and, with that objective, theoretical teaching should parallel practical application. That would raise problems of organization, as the application of new ideas always did, but its accomplishment was not impossible and it was of concern to all. In that sense too, a study of the question would facilitate the formulation of practical and specific recommendations. Moreover, participation did not presuppose only political and civil rights, but also the right to take initiatives and to assume responsibilities, and the right to work.

34. The problem of unemployment was almost universal and would become worse, especially in the developing countries. Unemployment of youth, however, was particularly unfortunate, because that was the sector of the population most capable of displaying maximum energy and enthusiasm. The main concern should be the solution of the unemployment problem. At the same time, volunteer service by young people should be encouraged, for it would enable them to participate in development and to gain experience which would help them to secure employment. In that connexion, it was gratifying to note the continued progress of the United Nations Volunteers programme carried out within the framework of UNDP. In Iran, much had been done to encourage volunteer service in all its forms, and very positive results had been obtained. There were also other means of promoting the participation of youth in the life of society. In Iran there were the so-called education, health and development corps: after a few weeks of military training, young people of both sexes followed suitable courses in accordance with their aptitudes and served in one of the three corps mentioned, carrying out activities in the fields of literacy, health and development. The establishment and the activities of those three corps had had a very positive influence both on the population in general and on young people themselves, who had fulfilled their obligations with admirable vigour, integrity and enthusiasm.

35. Her delegation was convinced that the studies on the problems of youth were useful and could lead to specific proposals to be submitted to Governments; it felt that the conclusions of seminars, such as that held at San Remo, could contribute much along those lines. Obviously, economic development was neither possible nor justifiable without taking into consideration the cultural context and the basis of the traditional culture in question. Each Government must consider the problems of the youth of its country within its own economic and cultural framework. The Government of Iran was aware of the dangers of importing foreign technology

¹ See *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68. XIV.2), chap. III.

without careful consideration, which could cause serious disturbances, especially among young people, and for that reason imported techniques must be applied with prudence. It was also obvious that the activities carried out with respect to youth by the different regional and international bodies were most useful; it would be necessary to continue and co-ordinate them and to ensure international co-operation, an area in which the United Nations had a very important role to play. It was with that in mind that her delegation had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.3/L.2061.

36. Mrs. CHIMOMBE (Lesotho) said that the power of youth could no longer be ignored and that the Government of Lesotho was doing everything possible to promote the active participation of young people in the national development. Unfortunately, the country had to export a large part of its labour force to the mines, farms and factories of the neighbouring Republic of South Africa, where the policy of *apartheid* was applied, a policy to which Lesotho was strongly opposed. The number of young people who left to work in South Africa reached 125,000 per year; that was a substantial number considering that the total population of the country was a little more than 1 million. Lesotho could not absorb all those young people in the national development process, and felt that the problem, which was common to many countries, should be considered at the international level.

37. Mr. PETROPOULOS (Greece) said that the Committee had been discussing the question of youth from various aspects which, in his delegation's opinion, tended to take it out of its social context, creating too artificial a climate for the proper consideration of the problems involved. His delegation likewise did not agree with the emphasis placed on the organization of youth. A third element of confusion was the tendency to discuss the matter in terms of assessments made in specific countries and to present those assessments as generally accepted standards. In his view, a proper approach to the question of the world social situation of youth should be based on the culture and civilization of the country concerned rather than on administrative decrees; it should be noted in that respect that one feature of classical Greek culture had been the absence of organizational structures for young people that could have fossilized and destroyed ideas. In his delegation's opinion, there was no reason to inflict the organizational habit upon youth and thus substitute the abstract and sterile for the personal and creative. Youth was synonymous with freedom, spontaneity and creative power, and it was necessary to listen to the genuine voice of youth rather than try to reduce it to a mere echo of the established voice.

38. His delegation agreed with those delegations which had observed that the youth of each society had its specific problems, but at the current stage of the Committee's work it would be advisable to establish some general principles and guidelines based on both the inherent characteristics of youth and the great cultures of humanity.

39. Mr. DE LIMA (Brazil) said that more than half of the population of Brazil was under 21 years of age, the age of majority, a fact of major economic, social and cultural significance, and his Government was trying to involve youth in the development process. At the pre-

vious session, his Government had submitted² its comments regarding the implementation of the Declaration adopted in 1965. It had detailed the plans and projects facilitating such participation, and he would not reiterate them now. He wished, however, to refer to some comments made in the Committee, during consideration of item 63, by the Director-General of UNESCO (2024th meeting) concerning a curtailment in the domain of the spirit, the challenge to established culture and the rejection of the heredity, which were the expression of the critical approach of one sector of the population that was beginning to participate in the processes of society and could not accept the reality of an imperfect world and the process of accelerated change. According to the report of the Secretary-General on youth, young people wished to be a part of the solution and not of the problem, and that was the meaning of their growing participation in the developing countries in the work of nation building. Youth must not be treated with antagonism or paternalism, or be granted special rights or entrusted with responsibilities divorced from those incumbent on the rest of the population.

40. His delegation had considered the constructive draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/L.2061 and supported the measures it provided for, feeling that it was the responsibility of Member States to involve youth in the activities of the United Nations and that the initiatives of the Organization for youth could be taken only through Member States.

41. Mr. SADO (Cameroon) said that the interest of the United Nations in the youth problem was a legitimate one because that sector of humanity was the hope of the future and the continuation of the activities currently in progress. The youth problem was of special importance for his delegation because 51 per cent of the total population of his country was under 20 years of age, 44 per cent was between 20 and 60 years of age and only 5 per cent was over 60. In the first age group, 21 per cent was accounted for by young people between 6 and 13 years of age. After the attainment of independence, the Government had noted that the education system established by the Administering Authority, although productive, was not entirely geared to the economic development of the country and that the young people completing their studies each school year could not be integrated into the economy, to say nothing of the drop-outs who swelled the ranks of the unemployed. Moreover, a large part of the adult population was illiterate, and in addition to those factors there was the disproportion between population growth and the increase in earnings in an essentially agricultural economy. In those circumstances, the Government had adopted measures to involve youth in national development, agriculture and handicrafts, and had taken steps to combat illiteracy, in particular through the reform of primary, secondary and higher education. The result had been a considerable increase in the number of school graduates, and a consequent increase in budgetary allocations for education. However, there were still short-comings in the yield of the education system and a large number of drop-outs, particularly in rural areas. A specialized rural pedagogical institute had been set up to cope with the problem as part of a movement towards the ruralization of education, the aim of which was the collective advancement of both

² See A/8782/Add.3.

young people and adults, offering the same possibilities to all, adapting the student to his environment and preparing him for a better life. In the same context, the previous March at Yaoundé an information seminar had been held for administrative and political staff in which 12 delegations from African countries had taken part, and he wished to thank UNESCO, UNICEF and the German Foundation for National Development for their valuable co-operation in organizing that meeting.

42. At the same time, his Government was organizing the social reintegration of those who had not had the opportunity to complete their studies. In pioneer villages established in various provinces, young peasants, after a one- or two-year course, received a diploma and a large parcel of land together with money and modern tools supplied by the State. All of that was, of course, without prejudice to the offer to successful secondary-school graduates of a broad range of possibilities in higher education within an appropriate university framework. The National Assembly had established compulsory national civil service involving participation in development, making youth a determining factor in development at the decisive stage of nation building. Youth exchange programmes with other countries, particularly with Canada, should also be mentioned. They stimulated imagination and creativity and opened new horizons for education.

43. Lastly, he referred to the oppression of millions of young Africans in southern Africa, and called on all Governments to insist that the racist régimes of Pretoria, Lisbon and Salisbury should put an end to their policy of genocide.

44. Mr. SIAGE (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had given special attention to paragraph 3 of the report of the Secretary-General appearing in document A/9119 and Corr.1, containing the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council—supporting those put forward in the Secretary-General's report in document E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1—referring to the need to ensure that education was more relevant to the preparation of youth for full participation in all aspects of life and development and to increase youth's opportunities for employment and for full participation in all aspects of national and international life.

45. In Socialist Syria, youth participated fully in all aspects of national and international life, and the great majority of the leaders were young. Young Syrians were grouped into two popular organizations: the National Union of Students of Syria and the Union of Youth for the Revolution. The activities of those two organizations included participation in various regional and international meetings and the organization each year of a work camp enabling thousands of young people in various countries to become acquainted and further their ideal of peace based on justice and the right of all people to self-determination.

46. Concerning the establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group on Youth to advise the Secretary-General regarding activities to be carried out by the United Nations to meet the needs and aspirations of youth, he said that his delegation had proposed to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session that, to strengthen communications between the United Nations and youth, the message addressed to the General

Assembly by the World Youth Assembly,³ held at Headquarters from 9 to 17 July 1970, should be acted on, in other words, that such an assembly should be held every two years on a democratic basis. He asked what had happened with respect to the application of that resolution and why the Organization had deviated from the express will of young people and sought other means. His delegation stressed yet again the need to convene a new international youth assembly, preferably in a third-world country.

47. Mr. TAKAGI (Japan) said that the item under discussion was of great importance to all countries at a time when social, economic and cultural values were changing. Recognizing the importance of the problem of youth, the Japanese Government had decided to assign to the Prime Minister's office the role of planning and co-ordinating government action in that field. The government programme was intended to enable young people to enjoy more advantages in every sector of life, including education, culture, employment, health and cultural and social activities. For example, his Government had put into effect in 1970 the Working Youth Welfare Law, which was designed to increase the opportunities of young people for vocational training and which also provided cultural activity centres for boys and girls who had left home and taken jobs in other cities. In the field of education, over 99 per cent of Japanese boys and girls finished nine years of compulsory schooling, over 80 per cent attended junior high schools and over 20 per cent entered a college or university. As to the employment of youth in Japan, there was no serious unemployment among the younger generations. Rather, there was a serious shortage of young workers: since Japan lacked almost every kind of natural resource, it necessarily made the maximum use of its human resources.

48. Another activity in that field which his country was emphasizing was the development of international co-operation among young people. It was important for the Japanese people to be well educated and internationally minded, so that they could contribute further to the peace and prosperity of the world; that was a very significant development because, until about a century ago, Japan had been almost completely isolated from the rest of the world for more than 300 years. Hence the Government of Japan had initiated a programme for sending abroad groups of young people selected from various social strata, including students, workers, farmers and representatives of youth organizations, to enable them to have the widest contact with foreign cultures and peoples. His Government had also inaugurated in 1965 the overseas technical co-operation volunteers programme in order to send young technicians to developing countries upon the request of the latter, and to enable them to co-operate in the social and economic development of the host countries. It was gratifying that the programme had proved useful as a means not only of advancing economic and social progress in the host countries but also of promoting better understanding and international friendship in general. In his delegation's view, co-operation between peoples and the promotion of international friendship could best be begun with youth, and that kind of youth exchange might pave the way for increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world.

³ See *World Youth Assembly*, document 56/WYA/P/10.

49. Mr. OLIPHANT (Botswana) said that the environmental and sociological factors entering into the problem of youth should be examined against the background of that section of the community, which felt ostracized because of the inability of adults to understand its problems and aspirations. The greatest endowment that youth could hope for was a sense of genuine identification with their community, as might be deduced from part one of the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1).

50. As to the problem of unemployment among youth and, in the light of two conferences on youth held respectively in Kenya two years earlier and in Zambia in April 1973, that problem would appear to be universal, and common to both developed and developing countries. The difference, however, as rightly shown in the Secretary-General's report, was that the conditions prevailing in the developed countries rendered a solution possible, whereas in the developing countries such conditions were only just becoming discernible. In his country, 300 in every 1,000 children who sat for the final examination in primary school either went on to secondary education or were absorbed by the labour market. The remainder were doomed to a life of idleness, mainly because the school curricula were too academic. Those children, added to the thousands who dropped out during the primary school years, invaded urban areas, swelling the number of vagrants and ending up with the usual feeling of frustration. Botswana had had to resort to the informal training of artisans, who were needed in the country's developing economy. The brigades responsible for such training were organized by communities offering three-year in-service training courses. In order to meet the need to improve conditions in the rural areas, a National Youth Council had been established, in which voluntary organizations participated, for the purpose of co-ordinating the activities in question. Attention was focused on village youth committees in which both adults and young people participated. Youth rallies were organized throughout the year as a preliminary to an annual rally which was held in the capital and which featured cultural and sports activities and craft exhibitions; in addition, the committees encouraged the formation of youth clubs whose programmes were designed to boost the image of youth, to help them acquire an identity and achieve a measure of economic independence, and to promote the dignity of rural life.

51. The future of school drop-outs lay in vocational training. In the area of technical training, the developing countries could benefit from training programmes undertaken in the countries themselves instead of abroad. He hoped that the United Nations would help with organizing training programmes intended for the

developing countries, backed by teams of technical personnel and carried out in those countries wishing to take advantage of the scheme. Such a programme would greatly contribute to solving the problem of youth.

52. Mr. ALI (International Labour Organisation), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that youth employment was a major preoccupation in most developing countries. The comprehensive employment strategy missions, under the World Employment Programme that had been carried out in countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia, had devoted special attention to that problem.

53. Another important problem was that of the minimum age for admission to employment. During the period 1919-1965, 10 ILO conventions relating to that question had been adopted. At its fifty-eighth session, the International Labour Conference had considered that the time had come to establish a general instrument with a view to abolishing child labour. The new Convention (Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment⁴) stipulated that the minimum age for admission to employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, should not be less than 15 years.

54. With regard to vocational guidance and vocational training, a group of UNESCO and ILO experts had met in October 1973 at Geneva for the purpose of reviewing the recommendations of the ILO and UNESCO in that area in the light of recent changes in law and practice. The experts' report stressed that the objectives of guidance and training should not be defined too narrowly in terms of the economy, and that, in connexion with technical and vocational education, too much emphasis should not be placed on the activities of the school system, with neglect of preparation for work as well as training outside the system of formal education, especially organized learning in employment. Priority should also be given to the introduction of technical and vocational aspects into general education. The experts had further taken the view that the new ILO instruments should cover training programmes for rural areas and for those branches of the economy in which there had been little systematic training.

55. At its 1974 session, the International Labour Conference would consider new standards for human resources development, vocational guidance and vocational training.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

⁴ See International Labour Office *Official Bulletin*, vol. LVI, 1973, No. 1.