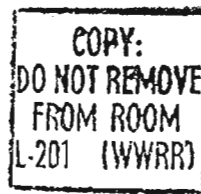




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THIRD COMMITTEE  
27th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 1 November 1985  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 92: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE  
(continued)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
- (c) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (d) PREVENTION OF PROSTITUTION

AGENDA ITEM 99: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 100: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (A/40/3; A/CONF.116/28 and Corr.1; A/40/188, A/40/239 and Add.1, A/40/365, A/40/703 and Corr.1, A/40/727) (continued)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
- (c) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (d) PREVENTION OF PROSTITUTION

AGENDA ITEM 99: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/40/3, A/40/707) (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 100: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (A/40/3, 45, 623) (continued)

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

1. Mrs. ANSELM (Italy) said that the Nairobi Conference had provided an opportunity to consider the many aspects of the status of women, as seen at national and international levels, to compare individual experiences, to identify the obstacles confronted during the Decade and, in particular, to determine the guidelines for enhancing the present and future status of women. Thanks to those guidelines, set forth in the document on forward-looking strategies, which had been adopted by consensus, the Nairobi Conference had paved the way for women to be more positive in affirming their right to an absolutely equal role in human society. It was henceforth incumbent on Governments to give some real substance to those future prospects, by promoting the effective participation of women at all levels, first and foremost at the decision-making level, and by upgrading the role of women in economic development, not only as recipients but also as protagonists and agents. It was from that perspective that Italy had participated in the Decade's programmes and had contributed to the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

2. Italy had decided to ensure very wide dissemination of the final document of the Nairobi Conference at all levels, and Italian women were in the process of identifying the areas requiring government action. Their efforts were focused especially on areas offering equal opportunity in professional life and on the enhancement of women's work. Special measures were needed to improve counselling

(Mr. Anselmi, Italy)

and vocational training for women and to increase their participation in decision-making and managerial posts in all sectors, all of which required great awareness on the part of women themselves. Education, training, culture and especially the mass media had thus a crucial role to play.

3. After Nairobi, women must establish new forms of solidarity and co-operation among themselves. Concerted action must be directed at giving specific meaning to the notion of the advancement of women and must be taken with full respect for their political, social and cultural identity, in accordance with democratic ideals.

4. Mrs. ZAFAR (Bangladesh) said that the role of women in her country had changed rapidly since its independence in 1971. Previously relegated to the confines of their homes, the women of Bangladesh, who numbered almost 50 million, now participated in all levels of professional life, even at the ministerial level.

5. From a world-wide point of view, the Nairobi Conference, in which 157 countries and more than 160 delegations from non-governmental agencies and other bodies had participated, must be recognized as a major international event. The genuine commitment of delegations to the cause of the advancement of women had led to the adoption of a document, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which took into account the needs of all women, including the most disadvantaged groups, among them, rural women in the developing countries. The momentum gained and the goodwill generated at Nairobi should be maintained and the Strategies should be implemented whole-heartedly. Governments and local communities should be supported in their efforts by all levels of international co-operation. The United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, particularly its branch for the advancement of women, should assume the important function of co-ordinating all international efforts.

6. It went without saying that the present economic crisis had an adverse effect on the availability of resources for new projects. In many developing countries, there was a tendency to cut back on investments in the social sectors, including that of the advancement of women, and it was therefore deplorable that progress had not been made in implementing the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which had, among other things, emphasized the need for the equal participation of women, as agents and beneficiaries, in the development process. Her delegation strongly urged the international community to implement fully the Substantial New Programme of Action, including the recommendations of the mid-term global review conducted at Geneva in early 1985 to enable the least developed countries to overcome their problems.

7. It was gratifying that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had become an autonomous institution within the United Nations system. She hoped that it would devote itself to its important task of research and of establishing training programmes to promote the integration of women in development. The Institute's work programme for 1984-1985 was wide-ranging and very impressive.

8. By the same token, she hoped that the United Nations Development Fund for Women, set up within UNDP pursuant to a decision of the General Assembly, would be

(Mrs. Zafar, Bangladesh)

in a position to expand its programmes benefiting women. It was gratifying that the Fund had already formulated action plans for Africa and for Latin America and the Caribbean region and to be hoped that the same would be done for the Asian and Pacific region.

9. Lastly, her delegation was very happy to learn that 80 States had either ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and hoped that the States which had not yet done so would urgently consider becoming parties to that important instrument.

10. Miss LEE (Singapore) noted that during the Decade for women progress in enhancing the status of women had been slow and had not met expectations. While the number of women in the labour force had grown, they tended to be employed in unskilled and poorly paid jobs. In all countries, they were excluded from decision-making. That conclusion, which had been reached at the World Conference at Nairobi, made it necessary to redouble efforts to eradicate injustices against women. The Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women was a key document, and it was particularly commendable because it focused attention on such vulnerable groups as minority women and young, old, disabled and refugee women. The document's analysis of the relationship between the international political and economic environment and the struggle to secure equality for women was also very enlightening. However, that analysis should not be carried too far. If stability, peace and prosperity were the only factors required to end injustice and discrimination against women, then women in the developed countries would not continue to be discriminated against with regard to pay, promotion and employment.

11. Actually the main obstacle to equality for women in all walks of life was attitudes and customs. For a mental revolution to take place, there must be political will and commitment on the part of leaders. Little such commitment had so far been forthcoming because Governments simply did not think that equality for women was an important issue. Women must not allow Governments to fob them off with the argument that conditions for women could not be improved because of political problems and economic difficulties. In reality, it was in the power of Governments to take concrete measures for the purpose: for a start, they could launch campaigns to eradicate prejudices against women, beginning in the schools, for it was at school that children were led to believe that women belonged at home and that some jobs should be given only to men.

12. A key target of efforts to eradicate prejudice must be women themselves. Some women, including the most highly educated, still believed in the myth that they were inferior to men and accepted discrimination as right and natural. That was not surprising when such ideas had been drummed into their heads since childhood.

13. Other measures that Governments could take without straining their financial resources would be to permit women to participate in the decision-making process in all spheres, especially in government.

14. In Singapore, equality for men and women was provided for by legislation enacted in 1961 and known as the Women's Charter. The Charter stipulated, among

(Miss Lee, Singapore)

other things, rights for wives, and penalties for the prostitution of women and girls, and encouraged women to work and thus participate in development. Her Government would continue to identify areas where women did not enjoy equality and take steps to correct the situation. The Forward-looking Strategies would be a useful guide for such efforts.

15. Her delegation hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the Forward-looking Strategies and fully supported the suggestion by Australia that adoption could take the form of an omnibus resolution that would also take note of the draft resolutions annexed to the report of the World Conference.

16. Mrs. KENYATTA (Kenya), referring to a major event for women, namely the Nairobi Conference, said that it was henceforth the responsibility of women themselves, Governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations to pursue the goals defined in the Forward-looking Strategies document adopted by the Conference. The Member States involved in preparing those strategies were called upon to play a major role in including them in their policies and plans.

17. Despite the legislation enacted by Governments and international bodies on the Decade's themes of equality, development and peace, total achievement of those objectives had not been ensured. However, it was encouraging to note that the Conference had proposed additional measures to eliminate the remaining forms of discrimination against women.

18. Full integration of women in overall development as agents and beneficiaries had been deliberated with much concern by the participants in the Nairobi Conference. For Kenyan women the recommendations of the Conference on the theme of development was very important because most of their basic human needs, particularly in rural areas, had not yet been met.

19. The Conference had defined peace in a very comprehensive manner, not only as the absence of war, violence and hostilities at the national and international levels, but also as the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality, and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society.

20. The international community should give special attention to the Conference's recommendations on strategies for women in areas of special concern since they suffered most, as victims of war, poor shelter, malnutrition, hunger, disasters and environmental hazards. The Commission on the Status of Women had a major role to play in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. Her delegation recommended that the Commission should be strengthened in every possible way in order to cope with the added responsibility.

21. At a time when many countries, especially third-world countries, were in a poor economic situation, women had to be encouraged to learn more practical skills in a wide range of areas in order to become more self-sufficient. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had usefully provided indicators and pointed out areas requiring immediate attention.

(Mrs. Kenyatta, Kenya)

22. Improving the situation of women in rural areas was of great concern to Kenya, where research on various types of appropriate technologies for rural communities had been undertaken in the past few decades. Those technologies should be utilized to ease women's burden. Women should be involved in the planning, monitoring and co-ordination of such programmes. In that context, Kenya welcomed the support for its efforts provided by the United Nations Development Fund for Women. To date the Fund was supporting 400 projects in 91 countries, including Kenya. The majority of those projects had been successful. Kenya was also particularly pleased to note that under its new expanded mandate the Fund would try to provide financial and technical assistance directly to women, in line with national and regional development priorities. It was hoped that other agencies in the United Nations system would co-operate with the Fund as it continued its work in the future and that the Fund could also share its experiences.

23. In conclusion, she hoped that the goodwill achieved at the Nairobi Conference would be maintained up to the year 2000.

24. Mr. REZOTSE (Madagascar), speaking on agenda item 92, said that the Decade ending with the Nairobi Conference had helped to create international public awareness of the cause of women and the role they played in the development process. The adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies document showed that the international community had the will to continue the work begun in 1975. However, in a society that had inherited a patriarchal view of the world and an organizational system that confined women to the role of mother and housewife, much remained to be done to attain the goals of the Decade. The legal framework for ensuring equality between men and women had already been provided by many international instruments, but the principles laid down therein had to be applied in everyday life through concrete measures for ending discrimination and enabling women to exercise their acknowledged rights. It was, of course, for each Government to define the role and place of women in national development, but regional and international co-operation was also needed to overcome the obstacles that the world economic crisis, external debt and natural disasters placed in the way of effective participation by women.

25. Malagasy women were one of the mainstays of socialist revolution in Madagascar. The country's Constitution prohibited any discrimination on grounds of sex and guaranteed equality for all citizens with regard to access to education, vocational training, culture and all employment sectors and to the enjoyment of civil and political rights. Despite the Government's efforts, women in Madagascar still held minor jobs in administration and the private sector. There were fewer women than men wage-earners since house-work, which was considered unproductive, was not remunerated. Women entering the labour market either found only low-paid jobs because they had few skills or came up against competition with men. Under the circumstances, marriage often seemed the only solution offering some stability. The Government had therefore drawn up action programmes to improve the status of women and had established, in the Ministry of Population, Social Conditions, Youth and Sports, a directorate concerned with the status of women and children. Facilities such as creches, kindergartens and school canteens had been established to make it easier for women to work. Knowing that women would take no

(Mr. Rezotse, Madagascar)

interest in national or political issues unless they were fully integrated into national and international life, the Government had encouraged women in Madagascar to become involved in the work of the decentralized local communities and to join women's organizations.

26. Mrs. KAUR (India) said that legal and constitutional guarantees did not always prove effective in improving the status of women and that for that purpose deliberate and planned efforts were required. Her delegation therefore welcomed the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and was particularly pleased with the attention they paid to women in the most vulnerable groups.

27. In her country, development, modernization and urbanization tended to remove women from their traditional environment, even in the agricultural sector. The establishment of new employment possibilities for women in a changing situation was a very complex task, because women were not a homogeneous group, and their roles were not identical in the different strata of society. The effects of development varied according to the socio-economic environment. Despite the efforts by her Government to reinforce the role and improve the status of women, industrialization and urbanization had, in fact, accentuated the inequalities between men and women. One of the priorities of the Government currently was to ensure the financial independence of women by creating employment, facilitating their access to education and protecting their health. The Government also attempted to mobilize public opinion against social prejudices, to make women participate in decision-making and to improve social legislation.

28. It sometimes happened, however, that religious practices as well as traditional customs and beliefs were misinterpreted. Women were very often the victims of such situations. The United Nations organs which were concerned with women's matters should give attention to that question within the framework of a study that could be examined at a later date.

29. Her delegation was pleased that the United Nations Development Fund for Women had been established in autonomous association with UNDP. India had always supported the Fund and had made a contribution of \$20,000 to its activities in 1985. It would be desirable for initiatives like the Africa Investment Plan, the "Women and Food Cycle Technologies" project and the Participatory Action Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, to find their counterparts in the Asia and Pacific region, where assistance from the Fund had recently declined. The Fund was the only mechanism to serve the specific needs of women, and its resources and its areas of activity should continue to grow.

30. Her delegation also commended the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women for its research work. That work, as well as the training programmes of the Institute, contributed to the integration of women in development. It would be desirable for the Institute, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNDP and the regional commissions to co-operate closely in order to better serve the growing needs of women.

31. Miss GEBRE-EGZIABHER (Ethiopia) said that, as a result of the United Nations Decade for Women, the gravity and scope of the oppression of women and the various forms of discrimination against them, had been recognized by the international community. But, as the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies showed, there were still many obstacles on the road to the advancement of women. However, the implementation of the recommendations contained in that document would no doubt contribute to the struggle to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Her country had therefore whole-heartedly welcomed that document and had taken part in its adoption by consensus.

32. The question raised in the Forward-looking Strategies concerning the situation of women in Namibia and in South Africa and of Palestinian women demanded particular attention. It was absurd to speak of eliminating discrimination against those women while the peoples to which they belonged could not exercise their rights to freedom, equality and independence.

33. Ethiopia had spared no effort to achieve the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. In 1981, her country had become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Her country had attempted, as far as it was able, to apply both the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women. It also contributed to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

34. One of the priorities of her Government was to free Ethiopian women from several centuries of oppression and discrimination by establishing the necessary political, economic, cultural and psychological conditions to ensure their active participation in the progress of the nation. Legal and administrative measures had been taken to guarantee equality for men and women.

35. Women must be both agents and beneficiaries of development. The participation of women in development efforts and in decision-making was progressively increasing, and particular importance was accorded to them in the areas of employment, health and education. Since Ethiopia was primarily agricultural, efforts were mainly directed towards the welfare of women in the rural areas.

36. Cultural prejudices and deep-rooted discriminatory practices made the task of integrating women in the political, economic and social life of the country, on an equal footing with men, very difficult. The Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association, a national organization, played a major role in that regard. The Association, which mobilized women and co-ordinated their activities at all levels, was attempting to change the nation's attitudes.

37. Despite the many difficulties facing Ethiopia (the deterioration of the international economic situation, the catastrophic consequences of the drought, the war of aggression, acts of subversion and interference in its internal affairs), which had aggravated the situation of women in her country, the Government intended to emancipate Ethiopian women in the shortest possible time.



38. Mr. MADAR (Somalia) said that his Government had very much welcomed the text of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. For his country the promotion of women was an essential condition for social progress. The extremely detailed nature of the document was, moreover, to be commended.
39. Since the country's accession to independence in 1960 and especially since the 1969 revolution, women's rights in his country had been considerably strengthened. When the Party currently in power in his country had been created, 63 per cent of its members had been women. The Somalian Constitution expressly recognized the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and contained provisions prohibiting discrimination in any form.
40. As in other developing countries, the great majority of women in Somalia were located in rural areas, where they carried out more than 60 per cent of the agricultural work. Family planning was furthering their emancipation. Programmes and activities conceived by, and where possible, implemented by the women themselves, also contributed in the areas of health and sanitation. Despite those efforts, the participation of women in development was still limited.
41. As was well known, Somalia hosted a substantial refugee community, composed predominantly of women and young children. It was also a country afflicted by drought and desertification. It was the women who had to dig deeper into the dry river bed, who walked even further to collect wood for fuel and who went short so that the children and the elderly might survive. To address the basic causes of disasters, natural or man-made, and of the flows of refugees was a duty which had long been shirked by largely male-dominated deliberative bodies, commissions and assemblies. That was one concrete example of the need to ensure greater participation by women in the discussion and implementation of basic strategies.
42. Lastly, it was right that particular attention should also be paid to the problems of women in Territories under racist and colonial rule and under foreign occupation, as the General Assembly had recognized in 1983 in adopting resolution 38/108.
43. Miss TERUEL (Honduras), speaking on agenda item 92, said that the Honduran Government had intensified efforts, in its social programmes to ensure the dignity of women and equal rights for them. That task had also been facilitated by the sensitization which the United Nations Decade for Women had made possible. The measures taken under the national development plan had concentrated, in the initial stage, on integrating peasant women, single mothers and young women into the production process. The point was not only to turn to advantage a precious human resource but also to enable women who were the sole bread-winners in their families, and there were many such in the Honduran population, to benefit from development by providing them with the training, technical assistance and credit required to undertake income-producing activities. It was hoped that the participation of women in productive activities would change people's attitude towards them.

(Miss Teruel, Honduras)

44. In October 1984, the Honduran Government had promulgated a family code to supplement existing legislation by defining precisely the legal relations between persons related by ties of kinship. The State also provided legal and other assistance to indigent persons.

45. Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/19 concerning physical violence against detained women that was specific to their sex, she said that Honduras, with the help of technicians working within the United Nations system, had established a women's rehabilitation centre which was a model institution in the area of treatment of female delinquents. That measure was in accordance with the Honduran Constitution, which prohibited any discrimination based on sex, race or social class or any other breach of human dignity. In actual fact, no complaint had ever been brought before the courts and no case of acts violating the dignity or rights of women been reported in the press.

46. Thanks to the changes which they had succeeded in introducing in society, Honduran women today played an active role in the public and private sectors at all levels. They headed ministries; one woman was the vice-chancellor of a university; there were women judges and deputies; women had even run for the presidency of the Republic.

47. Thousands of persons from Central America had taken refuge in Honduras, fleeing from the armed conflicts and political and social troubles in their countries. Most of them were women. Uprooted from their homes and deprived of the support of the extended family, they needed the material protection and aid of the international community. In the refugee camps receiving aid from UNHCR, programmes had been set up to provide medical care for the refugees and to promote their social integration, through cultural activities and a literacy programme. Since 1983 a project for female refugees of Miskito Indian origin, many of whom were heads of families, was being implemented. The purpose was to teach those women horticulture, handicrafts and stock-raising, in order to enable them to meet their needs. In fact, those women played an essential role. They made the refugees self-sufficient by expanding their income-producing activities; they preserved cultural traditions; they facilitated adjustment to new living conditions; and they cared for the children and the elderly. That was why UNHCR, Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations must expand and improve their programmes under the United Nations Decade for Women.

48. Her delegation had fully supported the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. It was particularly grateful to the Fund for the programmes which it had executed in Honduras in order to integrate women more closely in productive and income-producing activities. It had generally supported resolution 39/125 concerning the Fund, particularly the provisions stressing the need for close working relationships between the Fund and the United Nations bodies concerned with women's issues, and for Governments to continue and even to increase their contributions to the Fund. Honduras itself had made such a contribution despite its economic difficulties. As for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, it deserved the many tributes paid to it, with which her delegation wished to associate itself.

(Miss Teruel, Honduras)

49. Lastly, the efforts on behalf of women made by the African countries, despite their difficult economic situation, deserved the unqualified support of the international community.

50. Mrs. LACHAPHAN (Thailand) said that throughout history women all over the world had been deprived of their rights by social customs and traditions. However, after the proclamation of the International Women's Year, there had been a growing awareness that no society could afford to waste half of its human resources. A number of countries had come to the conclusion that tradition should not prevent women from sharing the benefits of political, economic and social progress, particularly in the fields of education, health and employment. Moreover, the international community, by adopting programmes of action and proclaiming the United Nations Decade for Women, had successfully contributed to improving the status of women, ensuring their equality and increasing their participation in the development process. Although much still remained to be done, the Decade had nevertheless resulted in the adoption and ratification by an increasing number of States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women at the Nairobi Conference. The participation at that Conference of many representatives of Governments and of international and non-governmental organizations and their frank and constructive exchanges of views had made possible a better understanding of the problem and the preparation of a document which reflected their determination to continue to work together to improve the status of women and to ensure peace. It was now for each country and the international community to adopt the specific measures recommended in that document.

51. In Thailand, the Decade had been marked, inter alia, by the establishment of a foundation to provide assistance to women in rural areas, the appointment of women to ministerial and diplomatic posts, the drafting of long-term policies to assist women, the amendment of national law to ensure that a woman enjoys equal rights with her husband, the creation of a National Committee for Women's Development and the accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Thailand was grateful to United Nations agencies for extending economic and technical assistance to it in the fields of education, health, family planning and the eradication of illiteracy, thus contributing to the elimination of prejudices and discriminatory practices against women. If optimum development of human and material resources was to be achieved, the contribution of women to the welfare of their families and to the development of society had to be acknowledged and valued. The task of attaining the objectives of the Decade was to be shared by both men and women. To that end, women would have to play a central role in the cultural, political, economic and social life of their country.

52. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Development Fund for women as a separate entity in autonomous association with UNDP, and fully supported the activities of the Fund. It noted with satisfaction the Secretary-General's report on the Fund (A/40/727). Her delegation was of the view that an effective working relationship permitting a systematic exchange of information should be established between the Fund, the Centre for Social

(Mrs. Lachaphan, Thailand)

Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Having benefited from the assistance provided by the Fund, Thailand recommended that the Fund should give serious consideration to extending its ongoing projects. The projects had benefited a large number of women who had not yet become self-sufficient. Her delegation also expressed satisfaction with the work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, described in document A/40/707. In particular, it hoped that the activities of the Institute in collecting and processing statistics, indicators and data relevant to women at the national and regional levels would be intensified.

53. All the documents and instruments adopted during the Decade were still valid. In fact, as clearly shown by the Forward-looking Strategies adopted in Nairobi, the goals of the Decade had not yet been attained and greater political will was needed to change the structures that discriminated against women. In particular the institutions dealing with the promotion of women should be strengthened. The participation of men in women's development programmes should be promoted, and sexual stereotypes and traditional prejudices should be eliminated. Women should be allowed equal access to education and vocational training and programmes aimed at promoting the health and well-being of women should be implemented, particularly in co-operation with WHO and UNICEF. Efforts should be made to ensure that all States ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as soon as possible, and a system of data and information networks on women should be established. Her delegation appealed not only to Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations but also to all men and women in a position to influence policy-making, development priorities and public opinion to strive to change the current inferior and exploited situation of the majority of women.

54. Mr. AKPO (Benin) said that women were still suffering discrimination and exploitation, a backward situation which needed to be remedied. However, he welcomed the fact that the international community had become increasingly sensitive to the problem.

55. In Benin, since the start of the revolutionary process, all the vital forces of the nation, including of course the women, had been invited to make their contribution to the building of society. The women had very quickly asserted their ability to play the same roles as the men, and they demanded to be recognized as men's equals and to be associated with development and the quest for peace. To meet those demands, Benin had established the Organization of Revolutionary Women of Benin, in which women expressed and asserted themselves and took action.

56. Article 124 of the Constitution of Benin stated that women and men had equal rights and duties. Beninese women were assuming ever-increasing responsibilities in all sectors of the life of the country. While everything was not perfect for women living in rural areas, the State was doing everything possible within its means to liberate them progressively from the exploitation that they had always suffered.

(Mr. Akpo, Benin)

57. The Nairobi Conference was part of the evolution of modern civilization, which was characterized by an awareness and a demand for justice by all oppressed people. The Conference had shown that, today, women throughout the world were aware that they had many problems and aspirations in common which transcended national borders, traditional cultures and political systems. In order to secure peace, economic and social development and universal respect for human rights, the international community must act in concert. In particular, it should act so that men and women worked on an equal footing, that the achievements of the Decade were not called into question and that international co-operation in that area was enhanced. The international community should also show the determination necessary to attain the objectives of the Decade and of the United Nations Charter. Only thus, would it follow the course of history.

58. During the Nairobi Conference, lack of time had prevented discussion of a number of draft resolutions in plenary meetings. Those draft resolutions concerned the drought in Africa, food security, apartheid, Palestine, refugees, the external debt, disarmament and women in rural areas. In view of their importance, his delegation proposed that those drafts should be referred to the Commission on the Status of Women for consideration during its forthcoming sessions, and that they should be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on the basis of a report by the Secretary-General. It therefore proposed that the Third Committee should adopt a draft resolution to that effect.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.