

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Thursday, 25 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. SOMAVIA

(Chile)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/45/SR.19
2 November 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

90-56568 2844S (E)

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15p.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B; A/45/38, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225,
A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270, A/45/426; A/C.3/45/5)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE
YEAR 2000 (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B; A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548;
A/C.3/45/5)

1. Ms. LAURENT (Observer for the European Community) said that the Community's second action programme on equal opportunities for women had made considerable progress, particularly in the field of law. Five directives had been adopted on equal treatment, equal pay and social security in order to promote statutory rights and obligations in the member States. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was applied throughout the Community. As a result of a growing awareness of the need to combat sexual harassment, a code of good conduct was being drawn up to protect the dignity of women and men at work. A number of measures, including the holding of seminars, workshops and conferences, had been undertaken to raise awareness of equal opportunities.
2. Faced with the establishment of the Community's internal market and the need to improve the competitiveness of its economy, Europe required a qualified labour force and the contribution of women would be a decisive factor. There were still many barriers to women's participation on equal terms with men in work and society and women were still employed mainly in low-skilled and unstable jobs. Improving the integration of women into the labour market was an essential part of the strategy for Europe's economic and social cohesion. The Community's third action programme would mark a new stage in the policy to ensure equal opportunities by proposing a more comprehensive strategy aimed at promoting full participation by women in the labour market and the decision-making process.
3. The Committee had recently adopted an innovative programme to promote vocational training and employment for women to help them overcome the specific structural difficulties which they encountered in the labour market and share the benefits resulting from the establishment of the single market in 1992.
4. More deliberate and sustained efforts were needed to integrate women fully into development. Priority should be given to improving women's productivity and income-earning potential in order to enable them to improve their living standards and contribute more to economic performance. In its development co-operation, the Community, therefore, concentrated on assisting large numbers of low-income women at an affordable cost, thereby contributing to other development objectives. The focus was on integrating women into regular development programmes, rather than designing programmes for women only.
5. The extensive integration of women's different roles into development under the Fourth ACP-EEC Convention was an excellent point of departure for future action.

(Ms. Laurent)

Under the Convention, the Community supported the efforts of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to enhance the status of women, improve their living conditions, expand their economic and social role and promote their full participation in the production and development process on equal terms with men. Particular attention was also paid to the crucial role played by women in family health, nutrition and hygiene. The Convention identified areas in which gender-specific constraints hindered women's participation, particularly legal constraints and those resulting from a lack of information.

6. Mrs. McLENNAN (United States of America) said that her country had high regard for the work of the United Nations in the era of renewed promise for international co-operation and multilateral diplomacy. In July 1990, President Bush had signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. The Act provided basic guarantees for men and women with disabilities giving them the independence and freedom of choice necessary to control their lives. Her Government was concerned about the question of female-headed households, the number of which was increasing all over the world; it had instituted programmes to assist such households in meeting their economic, nutritional and social needs.

7. The Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor, established 70 years earlier, sought to meet the diverse needs of the rapidly growing female labour force in the United States, which contributed immensely to the health of the nation's economy. In 1973, the United States Foreign Assistance Act had been amended to ensure that bilateral development assistance programmes gave particular attention to activities that integrated women into the national economies of their countries, thus improving their status and assisting the overall development effort.

8. One of the primary goals of the Women in Development Offices of the United States Agency for International Development and the Peace Corps was to increase the benefits derived by women from participation in their countries' economic activities. Her Government sought to enable women to participate in their own economic development by ensuring that they had the necessary tools, skills and resources. Non-governmental organizations had been of immeasurable assistance in advancing the status of women. She commended the efforts of UNIFEM to promote environmentally sustainable development and its increased involvement in a comprehensive programme of support for women entrepreneurs. UNIFEM could play a unique role in showing how increased access by women to financing sources, technology and related services could promote private sector development.

9. Refugee women and children accounted for approximately 80 per cent of the 15 million refugees in the world. The international community must ensure not only their survival, but also their well-being. Her Government encouraged all relevant United Nations agencies to cover the entire range of refugee needs and urged implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council, calling for increased efforts to respond to the needs of refugee women. She supported the call for a system-wide review to assess the experience and capacity of various organizations in that regard.

(Mrs. McLennan, United States)

10. Human rights abuses against women were rampant, violent and dehumanizing. At the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United States had been pleased to support three resolutions aimed at encouraging Governments to establish and enforce penalties for violence and abuse against women. Her Government fully endorsed all measures, including those taken within the United Nations, to put an end to acts of physical violence and abuse against women.

11. Her delegation fully supported the holding of a world conference on women in 1995 and welcomed the generous offer of Austria to host the conference. General Assembly resolution 44/77 endorsed the convening of a high-level interregional consultation on women in public life. That consultation should be seen as part of the preparations for the 1995 conference and should include senior women in Government, political parties, unions, and non-governmental organizations.

12. Her Government reaffirmed its commitment to increasing the participation of women in the work of the United Nations. The report by the Secretary-General on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) indicated that, although there had been a slight overall increase in the number of women, there had been a decrease at the most senior levels. There did not seem to be a genuine high-level commitment to fulfilling the current five-year programme for improving the status of women in the Secretariat. Her Government supported the suggestion by New Zealand that a comprehensive, analytical study should be carried out to determine the barriers to equal participation by women at all levels of the Secretariat. The Secretariat must make a commitment at the highest level and within existing resources to institute practical measures to implement the principles and recommendations already approved. Those responsible for implementing such measures must have the authority and accountability to ensure their success. Her delegation planned to introduce a resolution on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat and urged Member States to support the Organization's efforts to increase the percentage of women in Professional and decision-making positions by nominating more women candidates, identifying and encouraging women to apply for vacant posts, and drawing up national rosters of women candidates to be shared with the Secretariat. Joint efforts were needed to create a framework for the advancement of women and bring about attitudinal changes to obtain the necessary commitment at a time when democratic values were becoming the common objective of all peoples.

13. Ms. COLLINS (Canada) said that 1990 marked the twentieth anniversary of the report of the Canadian Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a milestone on the path to equality for Canadian women. Canada accorded high priority to the advancement of women and earlier in the month had been honoured to host the third meeting of Commonwealth ministers responsible for women's affairs, attended by 47 countries. All participants had agreed that the equality of women was essential for the economic well-being of nations, and that to deny them equality was to waste opportunity, limit freedom and impair prospects for the future. The conference had considered progress made in implementing the Commonwealth plan of action on women and development adopted in Harare in 1987, had examined issues relating to women

(Ms. Collins, Canada)

and population, and had agreed to work towards integrating women's concerns in the preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

14. In conjunction with the Commonwealth meeting, a number of delegates had participated in a workshop on reporting requirements under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had now been ratified by 104 countries. Canada's second report under the Convention had been reviewed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) earlier in the year and preparation of the third report was well under way. Those events, together with the various communications activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, had increased awareness of the Convention among Governments and non-governmental organizations. The reporting process had provided a further opportunity to review the implementation measures taken and their effectiveness.

15. The Canadian delegation had welcomed the constructive nature of the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in Vienna earlier in the year. The agenda had included the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Commission had adopted a draft resolution containing a set of recommendations to guide implementation in the coming years. Canada strongly recommended that the carefully considered wording of the draft resolution, subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council as resolution 1990/15, should be adopted by the General Assembly.

16. Canada supported the Commission's recommendation that a fourth world conference on women should be held in 1995, which would help to renew the momentum of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, since progress towards women's advancement was slowing down and in some cases even showing signs of reversal. It was time now to begin looking at mechanisms to ensure that Member States had the ability to prepare comprehensive evaluation reports by 1995. Canada published regular fact sheets, which were useful in monitoring progress. That was no easy task, and consideration should already be being given to the kind of technical support needed to ensure a high rate of participation in the preparation of future implementation reports. It was important that preoccupation with the world conference should not overshadow substantive work on women's issues in the coming five years. Canada hoped that the costs of the conference would be reflected in the regular budgetary cycles of the agencies concerned.

17. She had noted with satisfaction the attention given to women at the recent World Summit for Children. The Declaration and Plan of Action recognized that the improvement of all aspects of the well-being of children depended largely on women having control over their own lives, which was essential to the family planning and child-spacing so desperately needed to improve the health of children and to arrest unsustainable rates of population growth. Her Government urged all Member States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to implement the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

(Ms. Collins, Canada)

18. With regard to the priority themes to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session, Canada welcomed the emphasis on the "vulnerable" women, for whom equal opportunity was a means of advancement, and stressed the importance of the needs of single women who were heads of households. Canada welcomed particularly the recent seminar on disabled women in Vienna, the first United Nations meeting to consider specifically the problems of those women and their contribution to development.

19. She welcomed the emphasis that the Commission on the Status of Women had placed on the strengthening of national machinery as a major instrument in improving implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Canada had participated in a number of bilateral missions for strengthening national machinery in developing countries and the Canadian International Development Agency had recently organized a technical workshop attended by national machinery authorities from 47 Commonwealth countries.

20. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was playing an important part in strengthening the work of national machinery for women and placing women on the agenda of the mainstream development programmes and policies of Governments and private, public and international institutions. Its experience in recent years contributed to a growing body of evidence that expert resources earmarked for women made a significant difference. Canada strongly supported the Fund's work and looked forward to the mobilization of additional resources from new sources.

21. In connection with the peace theme for 1991, it was disturbing to see that on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the situation of women refugees remained critical. In 1988, Canada had pioneered the "women at risk" programme, which provided for the resettlement of refugee women in particularly difficult circumstances, whose lack of education and employment opportunities in their countries of origin prevented them from settling in Canada. A second programme, the language and orientation initiative, launched in the current year, helped to prepare immigrants and refugees, particularly women, to play a full part in Canadian society.

22. Canada attached great importance to the objectives of the International Literacy Year. The national literacy programme had funded numerous literacy initiatives across the country, several of which met the particular needs and interests of women, and the Canadian International Development Agency was funding a number of literacy projects in developing countries, many of them directed specifically towards women. Two-thirds of people unable to read and write were women. It was essential to maintain the momentum created by the International Literacy Year and to recognize the importance of women's literacy to international development. One year of education for a mother could be equated to a 9 per cent reduction in the mortality of children under five. Canada would be introducing a resolution on women and literacy based on resolution 34/8 of the Commission on the Status of Women and, among other things, requesting the Secretary-General to

(Ms. Collins, Canada)

prepare a report for submission to the 1995 conference, on progress towards increasing female literacy.

23. In connection with World AIDS Day to be held on 1 December 1990, her Government noted the importance of the recent expert meeting on women and AIDS organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in Vienna and its conclusion that it was only through a dynamic partnership between the United Nations system, national machinery and Governments, and non-governmental organizations that the status of women could be improved and the impact of AIDS reduced.

24. Her delegation noted with appreciation the Secretary-General's most recent report on the status of women in the Secretariat but regretted that the target for women to occupy 30 per cent of United Nations posts subject to geographical distribution by the end of the current year would not be met. She reaffirmed Canada's support for the target of 35 per cent of women in the Secretariat by 1995, and the maintenance of the special emergency measures recently adopted by the Secretariat to improve women's representation. The New Zealand representative, in a statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand the previous day, had noted that despite frequent statistical reports, there had as yet been no in-depth analysis of the barriers to women's advancement in the United Nations system. The time had come to take a close look at exactly what impediments existed to women's advancement in the international civil service.

25. A recent study by a special task force in her country, entitled "Beneath the Veneer" had identified attitudes perpetuating sexist stereotypes, a corporate culture that was unwelcoming to women, and the difficulty women had in balancing work and family responsibilities as major obstacles to women's advancement. Women in the United Nations Secretariat were not alone in the problems they faced: their situation was shared by women throughout the world in public services - including Canada - and in international organizations. It was time to move beyond mere numerical reporting towards a comprehensive, analytical study to determine exactly what barriers existed to the equal participation of women at all levels - especially the most senior levels - of the Secretariat. The results would enable the Secretariat to develop really viable strategies for achieving full equality for women throughout the United Nations system. The Canadian Government attached the greatest importance to a dynamic partnership between Governments and non-governmental organizations in the continuing quest for global equality for women.

26. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that his country firmly believed that women's advancement was a key element in its social development. The United Nations deserved high praise for its role in promoting the rights and the general advancement of women throughout the world. The Commission on the Status of Women was also to be specially commended. It had devoted much of its work to ensuring equality of rights for men and women alike. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to both of which Thailand was a State party, were milestones of which the Commission should be justifiably proud. At its thirty-fourth session

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

earlier in the year, the Commission had made a number of useful recommendations which gave further impetus to the full implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. His country whole-heartedly supported the Commission's call for the convening of a world conference on women in 1995 and was ready to take an active part in ensuring proper preparations for what would be a landmark international conference.

27. With regard to the question of the environment, its degradation, its future and how to save it, all people - and half of all people were women - were responsible for preserving the environment. His delegation was delighted that the role of women specifically in relation to the environment was currently on the agenda of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Thailand would support the Institute's examination of that issue, particularly since one of its nationals, the researcher and social scientist Dr. Amara Pongsapich, was serving on the Board of Trustees.

28. Thailand welcomed the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and particularly the extensive participation of women from all regions. The Fund had given generous support for more than 10 development projects in Thailand, which directly benefited women and their communities, and was helping the Thai Government to devise national development plans which would increasingly respond to women's needs. He wished to place on record his delegation's appreciation of the Fund's good work in Thailand and all over the world.

29. The advancement of women was not a new concept for Thailand, where women had always played an active role in social and economic development and were respected as leaders of the community in all areas of endeavour. Items relating to women were high on the list of priorities in the Thai National Economic and Social Development Plans. A long-term plan for women covering 20 years, from 1982 to 2001, was being actively implemented, many of its guidelines being adapted from those devised for the Nairobi Strategies.

30. The Thai National Commission on Women's Affairs, established in March 1989, was proving active. It had spearheaded efforts to revise the long-term women's development plan which placed emphasis on education and participation; it had helped to formulate provisions on women's development in the current Seventh National Development Plan; and it had been at the centre of efforts to strengthen laws and regulations concerning women. As a result of the Commission's work, he was pleased to state that some of Thailand's reservations in respect of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women were in the process of being lifted.

31. Activities relating to women were also being carried out elsewhere in South-East Asia. The six members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) worked closely together on women's development and other issues relating to the status and welfare of women in their respective countries. The ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organizations (ACWO), established in 1981, served as a focal point for developing and co-ordinating projects to promote the rights of

(Mr. Pibulajnggram, Thailand)

women in the entire ASEAN region. In February, the Fourth General Assembly of ACWO had produced several good initiatives for the promotion of women's rights, in particular a programme on vocational training for women proposed by Thailand.

32. Mrs. WIJENBORG-POT (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands would shortly be ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and was a member of the Commission on the Status of Women. In reviewing the impact of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the questions to be answered were whether activities were moving in the right direction and how efforts could be improved. Member States, the Secretariat, the various United Nations organizations and particularly the Commission on the Status of Women, had been working to implement the Forward-looking Strategies for five years, but it had to be said that the results were discouraging and the machinery of progress was not running smoothly. All the evidence showed that women were still in an inferior position throughout the world and their level of participation in all aspects of public life was disturbingly low. Without a change of policy, the goal set in Nairobi of achieving equality between men and women by the year 2000 would not be attained. The United Nations must take decisions to give fresh impetus to the advancement of women. In the light of experience at past conferences, it was clear that the knowledge and experience of women in all walks of life and from all parts of the world must be brought to bear in the preparations for the world conference on women to be held in 1995, and it was important to ensure that enough time and space were allowed at the conference for mutual contacts and the exchange of ideas. The participation of women from developing countries should be promoted by travel grants.

33. In discussing the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Commission on the Status of Women had made 24 recommendations, one of which proposed that more attention should be given to the problem of women and AIDS and that the theme should be embodied in the programmes of the World Health Organization. That recommendation was particularly important in view of the recently reported increase in the number of women and children contracting AIDS and the social isolation which often accompanied the disease. She urged the General Assembly to adopt those recommendations in order to determine the lines on which women's advancement should be promoted in the future.

34. Until enough women were involved in decision-making their interests would not be protected. Women must therefore be informed of their political rights, and structural changes should be made to encourage their participation. Data must be gathered to determine quota levels with a view to promoting the affirmative action that would ultimately increase the number of women in decision-making. Women in decision-making positions should also maintain contact with each other on an international level.

35. Women were taking a more active role in development despite the negative impact on them of structural adjustment in many countries. They must be encouraged to increase that role even further, and she welcomed the joint efforts of UNIFEM and UNDP in formulating innovative projects to promote that goal. On a critical

(Mrs. Wijenberg-Pot, Netherlands)

note, however, she said that the proportion of women employed by UNDP at the P-5 level and above was currently 15 per cent, and that was too small if the policy on women and development was to be properly implemented.

36. In connection with the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, she noted that democratization in Central and Eastern Europe had resulted in a reduced proportion of women in political office and in economic restructuring programmes in which women had no great role to play. That was a matter requiring special attention.

37. With women still often subjected to acts of violence, an improved and transparent communications procedure was required and her delegation was pleased that the present inadequate one was under review. Efforts must also be made to understand the special problems of the increasing number of impoverished women in order to devise better policy measures.

38. In accordance with the Forward-looking Strategies, the Secretary-General must make every effort to achieve the goal of 35 per cent women in the secretariat by 1995 and the chief executives and managing directors of the Organization must be encouraged to appoint more women to higher-level positions. The classification of secretarial personnel to give proper weight to the skills involved had still not been carried out and she urged that that be done.

39. Lastly, she said that women's networks had proved their value as new policy instruments, and that meant that the United Nations must further encourage women's co-operation at the international level so as to expedite the achievement of true equality between men and women throughout the world.

40. Ms. DU Yong (China) said that women had an important role to play in economic and social development and that the United Nations must make greater efforts to ensure implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, with particular emphasis on enhancing the status of women and promoting equality by increasing their participation in development, combating illiteracy and giving them a greater role in political decision-making.

41. The Chinese Government, as part of its recent policy of reform and greater openness, was increasing the role of women in economic and political life. Many professional women had emerged to contribute to the country's development and women were acquiring more knowledge and a greater sense of social responsibility. Still, equality with men had not been achieved. Feudal notions of male superiority persisted, and discrimination was not unknown in her country, where many women were still illiterate. Chinese women were none the less making every effort to remove those obstacles and achieve genuine equality.

42. Internationally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was an important instrument for promoting equality between men and women and she appealed to those countries that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible. Her country greatly appreciated the

(Ms. Du Yong, China)

seriousness and impartiality with which the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the supervisory organ of the Convention, considered reports submitted by States parties.

43. Lastly, UNIFEM was to be commended for focusing on the needs of developing countries and providing assistance to their women. It had achieved impressive results with meagre resources and China would continue to co-operate with it so that it could make further contributions to the cause of women in developing countries.

44. Mrs. DJENEROU-KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that among the benefits to be derived from improving the status of women and increasing their role in development was the attendant improvement in the welfare, survival and protection of the children of the world. The welfare of women and children required not only measures to improve the health of women but also to ensure their literacy. There was a direct correlation between illiteracy and infant mortality and the children of illiterate women were less likely to finish school. Illiterate women were also more likely to die in childbirth. Yet in many societies, girls suffered from educational neglect, undernourishment, overwork and forced marriages, and greater efforts were needed to correct those abuses and answer the needs of the vulnerable.

45. The education of women also had economic benefits because it enabled women to solve their own problems and contribute to the productive capacity of the country. Illiterate women had great potential that could be tapped only through education. She welcomed the efforts of UNIFEM to help the women of Western Africa. One of the main problems affecting African women, particularly in her own country, was access to credit and efforts must be made to provide it, particularly to rural women.

46. As long as women had no decision-making power, their interests would be neglected and she encouraged greater recruitment and promotion of women in the secretariats of international organizations. She deplored the fact that the number of African P-5s in the Secretariat was insignificant and that French-speaking Africans in particular were extremely rare at that level.

47. Lastly, each country must define its priorities in terms of its own particular situation and identify the needs of its women clearly so as to be able to remove the obstacles they encountered and deal with their problems patiently and thoroughly.

48. Ms. S'AAD (Egypt) said the current phase in history was so crucial that she felt compelled to refrain from addressing specific issues in order to deal with the general. While at the international level developments of both a positive and a negative nature had been taking place, within narrower boundaries, the international community had embarked on the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. She felt it would be opportune, while preparing for the world conference on women in 1995, to take stock of the significant changes occurring in the world. The most significant lesson to be drawn from recent events was the concept of

(Ms. S'aad, Egypt)

interdependence - between men and women, between nations, between issues and between the three priority themes used to approach the question of the advancement of women - peace, equality and development.

49. As the body designated to undertake the preparatory work in connection with the world conference, the Commission on the Status of Women could build on the consensus achieved in major United Nations exercises such as the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the World Summit for Children. Consistent with the position on women taken in the Second and Third Committees, which she believed should work in concert on women's issues, she stressed the important contribution the Commission could make to the International Conference on Population to be held in 1994. She noted that in the first review of the Forward looking Strategies, importance had been attached to the significance of technologies for development. The incorporation of appropriate technologies into the informal sector, where the majority of women in the developing countries were employed, was necessary for increasing production. Since technology was the determining factor in narrowing the gap between the developed and the developing countries, her delegation thought it would be appropriate to cover it under the priority theme relating to development. Finally, in response to recent integration initiatives throughout the world, her delegation felt that a regional dimension should be given to the development theme.

50. Mrs. ALVEAR (Chile) said that genuine democracy was inconceivable if half of a country's population - namely, women - did not participate fully in the democratic process. The themes identified as priorities by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women - equality, development and peace - made great sense to Chileans, all of whom, especially the women as the main transmitters of values within the family, were eager to play an active role in the development of their country.

51. Chile had ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and regarded its ratification as a commitment to adopt appropriate measures in all spheres relating to women. The recommendation to create national agencies to deal with issues relating to women had been favourably received by the countries of Latin America. In the case of Chile, the full incorporation of women into national life was a priority in President Aylwin's programme, which was guided by the principles of the equality of men and women, the autonomy of women, the dignity of women and the need to protect and strengthen the family. The programme of action of the soon-to-be established National Woman's Service (SERNAM), which she would have the honour of heading with the rank of Minister of State, covered an enormous variety of situations relating to the incorporation of women into the political and socio-economic life of the country. Some idea of the magnitude of the task might be gleaned from the fact that women constituted 31 per cent of the labour force and 57 per cent of the total population of Chile. Moreover, their participation was bought at a high price owing to the dual role working women played as both mothers and workers. In the twentieth century, women were plagued by problems and guilt feelings when they ventured forth into society, and that was something which had to change.

(Mrs. Alvear, Chile)

52. Everybody agreed as to the importance of the family, but the first step in protecting it was to raise the status of women, many of whom had not completed their education and had no legal status or custody over their children. The responsibilities of the National Women's Service included the study and promotion of legal and administrative reforms; the promotion of measures to strengthen the family; and the maintenance of co-operation with national and international agencies dealing with issues relating to women. The Service would give priority to programmes concerning women heading households, the elimination of violence in families, the establishment of information and training centres for women, the prevention of teenage pregnancies and the promotion of legal reforms and communications.

53. There could be no democracy without participation or participation without information. Women were often relegated to the margins of society because the information they needed to participate in it, to assert their rights and to gain access to benefits provided by the State was not available to them. SERNAM planned to set up a network of centres throughout the country which would provide orientation and training designed to help women solve their problems. As for teenage pregnancies, she said that one out of every seven babies in Chile was born to a teenage mother and that 58.2 per cent of such babies were illegitimate. SERNAM intended to develop an integrated plan in that respect, which would provide for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and for support for teenagers who were already pregnant.

54. She thanked the international community for its continuing support of Chile and stressed the importance of the integration of peoples and of world solidarity in the quest for peace, justice and development.

55. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said his delegation had noted with interest document A/45/347 on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). He commended the efforts made by the Fund in support of rural and poor women and said his Government would continue to contribute to it. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/489, he said that Turkey participated actively in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had found, at its thirty-fourth session, that obstacles still stood in the way of the advancement of women. As for the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548), he said that, although the proposal contained in the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 that the proportion of women in the Secretariat should be increased by 1 per cent each year after the target of 30 per cent had been reached might seem disappointing by comparison with what had been expected, it was nevertheless realistic.

56. Turkey was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which it regarded as one of the most important legal instruments in so far as true equality between the sexes was concerned. With regard to the Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), he noted that the first report submitted by Turkey had been

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

examined by the Committee during its ninth session held from 22 January to 2 February 1990, at which his delegation had entered into a constructive dialogue with the Committee with useful and instructive results.

57. The gap between theory and practice in legislation designed to ensure equality between the sexes was still present, and, in addition, economic and social crises had a greater impact on women than on men. Turkey was making continuous efforts to secure the advancement of women and improve their status. Programmes were under way in an effort to end illiteracy among women and to provide them with continuing education. The access of girls and women to all levels of education and vocational training and the overcoming of obstacles to the participation of women in all areas of development, both as beneficiaries and as active agents, were among the main principles underlying the country's sixth five-year plan for the period 1990-1994.

58. Mrs. ILIC (Yugoslavia) said her delegation shared the view expressed by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 were pillars of United Nations efforts to achieve equality between women and men. It was therefore concerned that the Commission on the Status of Women had reached the conclusion at its thirty-fourth session that, although some progress continued to be made, a combination of economic and political factors had slowed down the rate of progress sufficiently to place the achievement of the objectives agreed upon at Nairobi at risk.

59. Relaxation of political tension had not been matched at the economic and social levels in many developing countries plagued by a heavy debt burden, high interest rates, low commodity prices and other adverse factors. The primary victims of current reductions in social spending were women and children, and urgent measures were needed at national, regional and international levels to rectify that situation. Close attention should be paid to the recommendations and conclusions emanating from the first review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies, which had been conducted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fourth session. In connection with one of the priority themes of that session - the participation of women - she said that from 15 to 19 October 1990 a seminar had been organized in Yugoslavia by the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development to discuss major issues and policy options with regard to increased participation of women in public management. Her delegation welcomed the recommendation to hold a world conference in 1990 at which the second review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies would be conducted.

60. Speaking as the representative of a non-aligned and developing country, she said Yugoslavia found it gratifying that the non-aligned countries were continuing to devote due attention to the question of the advancement of women and their integration into the development efforts of their countries both as beneficiaries and as active agents. A ministerial conference of non-aligned countries on the role of women in development had been held at Havana from 29 January to

(Mrs. Ilic, Yugoslavia)

1 February 1990, and it was hoped that a similar conference could be held prior to the world conference in 1995. Her delegation hoped that, when the documents for the world conference were prepared, better use would be made of existing data, such as those contained in country reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and of information gathered by INSTRAW and similar agencies. She also expressed the hope that the Secretariat would come to the conference with more encouraging results on the employment of women in the Secretariat than those presented in document A/45/548.

61. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that the number of ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had risen to 104 and looked forward to other countries' becoming parties to it. Finally, she expressed regret that the General Assembly would not be considering the report of INSTRAW at its current session, particularly since 1990 was INSTRAW's tenth anniversary. The appreciation expressed by the Economic and Social Council for the work of INSTRAW in its resolution 1990/16 could hardly compensate for the absence of action on the part of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.