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Chairman:

Mr. SOMAVIA

(Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (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 (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548; A/C.3/45/5)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to begin consideration of the third cluster of items.

2. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that in March 1990 the Commission on the Status of Women had carried out the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and had concluded that although there had been some progress, it had not been as great as expected. If the same pace continued in the future, the chances of achieving the goals set in Nairobi for the year 2000 were nil. The Commission had recommended different steps that could remove the obstacles to the effective implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. The Economic and Social Council had adopted those recommendations, which were contained in the annex to Council resolution 1990/15. The recommendations were practical and realistic, reflecting the diversity of different countries.

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a powerful instrument in the service of women's rights. There were currently 104 States parties to the Convention, an increase of six since 1989. The Division for the Advancement of Women sought to encourage more countries to ratify the Convention and had gone into the field to assist countries to examine the whole complex of questions in that regard. The recent commemorative seminar on the Convention held in September in the Soviet Union had made specific recommendations on the implementation of the Convention. A similar seminar would be organized in March 1991 for the countries of the South Pacific Forum most of which were not States parties.

4. The work with political and administrative authorities at the national level was an essential aspect of the Division's activities and enabled it to become acquainted with the practical problems arising in the implementation of the Convention. It also provided an opportunity for Member States to exchange information about their experience in specific areas and focus attention on the daily lives of the most disadvantaged groups of women. The work of promoting dialogue and the exchange of information was one of the most important aspects of co-operation between Governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

5. The tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention in September 1991 would be an excellent opportunity to bring together the States that had not yet ratified the Convention and the States parties. Ratification,

(Mrs. Sellami-Meslem)

however, was only the first step towards implementation of the Convention. For the Convention to become an effective instrument, women must become familiar with their legal rights and the ways to exercise them under their national legal systems. The promotion of equality was part of the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Through the Committee, the Division sought to provide the service of experts for seminars and advisory missions.

6. One of the major obstacles to the advancement of women was their low representation in public decision-making. The Economic and Social Council had recommended a number of steps to improve women's participation in decision-making at all levels. In the annex to resolution 1990/15, the Council had set a specific target: Governments, political parties, trade unions and other professional representative groups should aim at targets to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995. The task of the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life, to be held in September 1991 in Vienna, was to elaborate for the first half of the decade an agenda for political action that would mobilize all women to participate actively in the political process. To ensure success, the Consultation must have the full participation of Member States, receive adequate media attention and be carefully prepared. It would provide an opportunity for women political leaders from all over the world to discuss key issues and develop networks across traditional boundaries. The world conference on women to be held in 1995 should be used by women in all countries to promote national efforts for the advancement of women. The focus must be on the preparation process at the national level, self-diagnosis, and the identification of obstacles and steps to overcome them. Preparations for the conference would be one of the principal activities of the Division during the next four years. Together with WHO, the Division had just held in Vienna a seminar on the relationship between the status of women and AIDS. The social consequences of AIDS and the means to deal with them had been among the topics discussed. Expert meetings, the exchange of information and national experience, and institutionalizing legal progress through the Convention were ways in which the Division was developing its programmes and activities in favour of the advancement of women.

7. Ms. HABACHY (Focal Point for Women, Office of Human Resources Management) said that the report of the Secretary-General on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) described the work carried out between November 1989 and September 1990. The current operative target for the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution was 30 per cent by the end of December 1990. As of 30 June 1990, the figure of 28.3 per cent had been reached. Although short of the target, that figure represented a 1.5 per cent increase over the previous year. It was the highest increase in four years and was all the more significant since it followed closely on the retrenchment exercise, in which over 500 Professional and higher-level posts had been eliminated. In order to reach the target of 30 per cent, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) estimated that another 40 women were needed. Of those, 13 were already employed in the Secretariat and 14 more had received or were about to receive letters of appointment. The shortfall, therefore, amounted to only 13 women.

(Ms. Habachy)

8. Early in 1990, additional special measures had been instituted to reach the target of 30 per cent by the end of the year. The number of women recruited as well as the overall number of promotions of women had been higher in 1990. Those special measures were described in the report under consideration and were currently under review. Most of them would be continued in order to maintain momentum in that regard.

9. Improving the status of women in the Secretariat did not depend on numbers and targets alone. OHRM was always mindful of the need to ensure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Furthermore, measures to redress the problem of the absence of women at the higher and decision-making levels were clearly needed. Table 3 in the report constituted a new monitoring device, providing information on four groups of departments and offices in the Secretariat according to sex distribution of staff. The Office planned to monitor very closely the departments and offices in group IV, where the percentage of women was below the 20 per cent mark. It expected the departments and offices in groups II, III and IV to move into the category above their current one during the next year.

10. Representation throughout regions was far from uniform. Table 2 of document A/45/548 provided figures on Professional staff by region and gender and gave the percentages of women in such posts. There was an urgent need for women candidates especially from those countries which did not have women in posts subject to geographical distribution. The Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat continued to make recommendations to the Secretary-General on ways to improve the status of women. The Steering Committee's annual report to the Secretary-General would focus on specific ways to advance the careers of women in the Secretariat and would be available shortly.

11. Career development for women in the General Service category had been the subject of several OHRM initiatives, including the Career Development Handbook for Headquarters General Service staff, designed to assist staff in evaluating and plotting their career paths. A similar handbook was planned for Professional staff. Women had played a prominent role in 1990 in peace-keeping and peace-making missions. About 45 per cent of the staff assigned to the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia had been women. Many of them had taken on functions traditionally thought to be reserved for men. They had showed that when given the chance, they excelled. Accordingly, steps must be taken to ensure that future such operations included a large number of women. In improving the status of women in the Secretariat, OHRM required the support of the Member States, many of which had already responded by nominating focal points in their missions. The continued help of Member States in proposing qualified women to fill vacancies and their support for the numerical targets were needed in order to achieve equality between women and men in the Secretariat.

12. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that the Fund had been established in 1976 to highlight women's contributions to national development and to mobilize new resources for women's development efforts. Nearly 14 years later, those efforts were beginning to pay off, transforming the way development issues were perceived.
13. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) essentially worked with and on behalf of women in developing countries. UNIFEM had concentrated on two areas of strategic importance: women's role in promoting food security and support for microenterprise activities. The Fund covered the entire food-cycle from production all the way through distribution and marketing of staple food crops, promoting women's involvement through such activities as training in new agricultural techniques, transfer of appropriate food technologies, and increasing women's access to credit.
14. Food-cycle activities had been concentrated in Africa owing to the acute food shortages in that region. The Fund was currently preparing a major new initiative in Africa and expected to increase its activity in other regions as well, in collaboration with national and international agencies.
15. While they had always been a part of food-security programmes, environmental issues would be receiving increasing attention. Sustainable development meant integrating women fully into the management of the world's natural resources. In that connection, the Fund would endeavour to make the issue of women and the environment a priority at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.
16. The second strategic area was the promotion of microenterprise activities, in particular the small-scale manufacturing and trading activities in which most poor women participated. The Fund concentrated on identifying the problems women faced in setting up and operating microenterprises; helping them develop creative approaches to overcoming any obstacles; and assisting them in gaining more access to credit, training marketing advice and improved technologies. It was currently developing a comprehensive programme to provide support for female entrepreneurs.
17. UNIFEM had long understood that women's ability to participate in production activities in general was greatly diminished by the enormous amount of time spent in gruelling domestic work. Thus it recognized that making time and labour-saving technologies widely available to women was crucial to the success of the Fund's programmes. While some progress had been achieved, greater attention should be focused on that issue in the current decade. More efforts were also needed at the planning level in order to create a solid framework within which direct support activities could flourish. Among the steps to be taken were implementation of measures to strengthen women's national machineries and to increase the participation of women in all levels of policy and planning.
18. UNIFEM had used the past 18 months to consolidate its growth; enhance its management capacity; and clarify its aims and strategies. To that end, it had redeployed and consolidated its staff, hired local personnel and developed and

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

implemented budget, programme and work management systems, so that the Fund could operate more efficiently.

19. Contributions to UNIFEM were on the rise. In 1989, the Fund's total income had been almost \$12 million and it was predicting an increase of at least 15 per cent in core resources for 1990. Of particular note were significant increases by Finland, Canada, Sweden, Italy, the United Kingdom and Zaire. Besides their substantial core contributions, the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands and Italy had provided multi-year financing for special UNIFEM projects in Africa. In addition, Iceland and the former German Democratic Republic had become new donors in 1990.

20. By the end of 1990, there would be 10 UNIFEM national committees; in addition, six other countries were interested in forming committees. The active interest in the Fund shown by women's organizations and networks world wide was an indicator of the vital role that such groups could play in building a global constituency for UNIFEM.

21. The leadership of women had rarely been acknowledged. To fill that gap, UNIFEM had established the Noel Awards, an honour to be awarded every two years to distinguished women leaders. In October 1990, the first Noel Awards had been presented to Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Margaret Thatcher. It was to be hoped that the event would serve to increase public awareness of UNIFEM and to create and sustain new financial support for it from the independent sectors.

22. She wished to draw attention to a recent UNIFEM publication, "Women on the Agenda", which provided an assessment of the Fund's experience during the period 1985-1990. While there had been impressive successes in building gender awareness, establishing institutional mechanisms for drawing attention to women's issues and in mobilizing resources, UNIFEM was still far from achieving sustainable development or improving the living and working conditions of most women.

23. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria) said that, as stated in the letter of 11 October 1990 from his Government to the Secretary-General (A/C.3/45/5), Austria had extended an invitation to the United Nations to hold the world conference on women in 1995 at Vienna. In addition, his Government was also prepared to host a non-governmental organizations forum as an ancillary meeting to the conference. Austria would be glad to work closely with the United Nations in order to provide the best facilities for the event. His Government was certain that its invitation represented a major contribution to the cause of the advancement of women.

24. Ms. ANSELMINI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that, according to the Commission on the Status of Women, the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies over the last five years seemed to have lost momentum and even reached a point of stagnation in some countries. That phenomenon was linked to entrenched resistance to the advancement of women and a decrease in the resources available for social progress as a result of recent economic and political changes in certain countries.

(Ms. Anselmi, Italy)

25. It was clear that many of the objectives could not be attained by the year 2000. At the same time, the Twelve were firmly convinced that it was time to give priority to removing the major obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies. While the United Nations had an important role to play in setting standards and monitoring implementation, responsibility for corrective measures rested mainly with Governments. In that connection, the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council provided a number of relevant proposals for economic, legal and practical action at the national level. Implementation of such action was the objective of the European Community's Third Equality Action Programme, covering the period 1991 to 1995, which would include strategies related to the relationship between personal, family and professional life and women's participation in decision-making processes.

26. The Twelve reaffirmed their belief that the new working methods established two years ago by the Commission on the Status of Women was very useful: the restructured agenda and in-depth discussions of priority themes provided excellent guidance for policy-making in specific areas. It was very important for the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments, to review and find ways to improve the existing mechanisms for reporting on the status of women at the national level.

27. At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission on the Status of Women would concentrate on three priority themes: equality, development and peace. Those themes had been taken up in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/489), which was noteworthy for the breadth of its approach and its assessment of recent developments.

28. The Twelve agreed that special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups which required immediate action at the national and international level, in particular, women as heads of households, elderly women and disabled women. The Commission should identify specific measures for each group and, in that connection, the meeting of the expert group in Vienna scheduled for November 1990 should yield useful recommendations.

29. Priority should also be given to the situation of migrant women, particularly with respect to protection of family unity, employment opportunities and working conditions, and health care.

30. The Twelve were convinced that development could not take place without the effective participation of women. The emphasis should be on providing the infrastructure and machinery which would enable women to participate in economic growth; that meant increasing the involvement of women at the levels of decision-making and management. Such involvement implied in turn the need to enact the appropriate social measures, such as setting up child care facilities and granting parental leave, and to ensure women's legal rights.

(Ms. Anselmi, Italy)

31. It was important to ensure that women's concerns were incorporated in all relevant national policies and programmes. The participation of women in development should be part of sectoral policies and mainstream programmes. The Commission on the Status of Women should play a leading role in assisting Governments in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and in promoting exchanges between Governments at the regional and international levels. It was also necessary to involve non-governmental organizations in all those activities and to encourage dialogue at the grass-roots level.

32. With respect to the theme of refugees and displaced women and children, efforts should be concentrated on finding ways to eliminate the root causes of the flow of refugees. The Twelve agreed that the vulnerable situation of women and children required specific measures for immediate relief assistance, particularly in the countries of first asylum. Relief assistance should also continue to be provided to returnees and the Twelve supported the activities of UNHCR, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies in that field.

33. The European Community welcomed the convening of a world conference on women in 1995. The conference would provide a good opportunity to review the progress made in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies. It would give the international community the chance to demonstrate that it had the political will to implement the measures needed to equalize women's status.

34. The conference should be carefully prepared in advance, with due regard being given to keeping costs down. The United Nations and the Governments concerned should develop a co-ordinated information strategy, including adequate national and international media coverage. As part of the preparatory activity for the conference, an interregional consultation on women in public life was to be held in September 1991 at Vienna. With regard to the consultation, the Twelve wished to stress the following: its success would depend on wide participation at the national and international level; a specific topic should be chosen as a focus within the broader framework of women in public life; and the final agenda, to be adopted at the consultation, should be action-oriented.

35. The European Women's Lobby composed of national and regional NGOs, had recently been established to serve as a forum for informal exchanges of views on women's issues. The Twelve wished to stress that, among the women's issues to be considered in the coming years, priority attention should be paid to the topics of women and the environment and the representation of women in senior posts in the United Nations Secretariat.

36. The Twelve reaffirmed their political will to take the necessary measures for the advancement of women at the national, regional and international level.

37. Mrs. PETRITSCH-HOLADAY (Austria) said the year 1990 was very significant because it had witnessed the first five-year review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (FLS). On the basis of that review the international community would embark on the next five years of activity at the national, regional and international levels with the objective of implementing the demands of women in all parts of the world for a more equitable distribution of resources and power. As stated in the Note by the Secretary-General (A/45/347), the results of the review and appraisal had shown that progress in translating the Forward-looking Strategies into action had slowed down.

38. At the most recent sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Economic and Social Council, a strong spirit of consensus had emerged, which augured very well for an acceleration in the pace of progress in the advancement of women, despite the obstacles raised by economic recession and retrenchment and a resurgence of traditional attitudes towards women. The conclusions and recommendations emanating from the first review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies provided a sound basis for action to be taken by Governments to improve the status of women and the adoption of practical measures for implementation at national and international level. If national and international institutions and machineries for the advancement of women were to be able to fulfil their mandates, they would need political and hierarchical strength and adequate human and material resources. It was essential for all Governments to recognize that women's questions formed an indispensable component of all social, economic and political issues and should not be treated as isolated phenomena, but as integral parts of all political and economic strategies, including those relating to environmental protection, economic restructuring, support for refugees and migrants and all areas of human rights.

39. The gap between de jure and de facto equality between women and men made it necessary to implement short-term measures, especially in the field of employment. Such measures should be constantly revised and updated to take changing conditions into account. At the legal level, there was an urgent need to educate the entire population, both women and men, about women's rights and the possibilities for translating de jure equality into de facto equality. There was still a need to provide adequate legal and institutional facilities to enable women and men to combine working life with family and parental responsibilities. There was also a need for appropriate strategies in the field of communications media.

40. She reiterated Austria's satisfaction with the current practice of the Commission on the Status of Women, in which three priority themes were considered at each session on the basis of reports prepared by expert groups and the Secretariat, with a view to the preparation of action-oriented policies to deal with the problems identified. With regard to the first topic selected for consideration by the Commission in 1991 - "Equality: vulnerable women, including migrant women" - she said her Government agreed that immediate attention should be given to the formulation of measures to provide support for vulnerable women, including single heads of households, aging women and disabled women. As for migrant women, she noted the importance of ensuring that their rights were guaranteed and that they were fully informed about how to defend them.

(Mrs. Petritsch-Holaday, Austria)

41. Regarding the second topic - "Development: national, regional and international machinery for the effective integration of women in the development process, including non-governmental organizations" - she said her Government wished to reaffirm its position that the full and effective participation of women, including their participation in the decision-making process at all levels, was a sine qua non for development and that the United Nations should take a leading role in strengthening national machineries to enable women to participate in the mainstream of development.
42. With regard to the third item - "Peace: refugee and displaced women and children" - she said her Government took the view that solutions should be sought in two directions: first, the provision of immediate relief to refugees and displaced women and their families at the international level, and, at national and international levels, the adoption of measures in support of those women. Secondly, a longer-term solution to the problem should be sought in the identification of ways to enable women and their families to remain in or return to their country of origin and to live there safely. That solution included the continuation of support programmes even after the return of the women to their countries.
43. The scope for co-operation between the United Nations and its Member States in connection with each of those topics was broad, and there was still a great need for assistance in such areas as information, training and advisory services. Close co-operation between Governments and international bodies and between non-governmental organizations and international bodies was essential for the successful implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. The model of co-operation practised in Austria involved three levels of exchange, including exchange between the national machinery for the advancement of women and representatives of the United Nations system, then the inclusion of politicians in the exchange process in order to ensure political support and finally the creation of a broad base for implementation by involving non-governmental organizations.
44. With regard to the interaction between national and international institutions in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, she said that the programmes of work of all international institutions and bodies should reflect commitment to full inclusion of women's issues in all the activities undertaken. She strongly reiterated her Government's view that all programmes and activities planned for the United Nations Year of the Family should be in accordance with the concept of equality between women and men as defined in the Forward-looking Strategies and in the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
45. With regard to women employed in the United Nations system, she said the principle of temporary positive discrimination in favour of women, particularly at decision-making levels, should be applied throughout the system. Regarding the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, she said that if it was to carry out its mandate effectively, it would be advisable for its members to be independent experts rather than holders of government offices. Her Government

(Mrs. Petritsch-Holaday, Austria)

welcomed the activities carried out by the Secretariat to support Member States in applying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and felt that the importance of the Convention justified the granting of highest priority to measures to strengthen the Committee's capacity to carry out its work and that a comprehensive review should be conducted of the resources available. In the light of the importance of co-operation to the international community, she called for the formulation of a broadly based, co-ordinated information strategy within the United Nations system to give wider circulation to issues relating to international co-operation, especially with regard to the advancement of women.

46. In view of the importance of increasing the participation of women in the political decision-making process, her delegation welcomed the convening of an interregional consultation on women in public life in September 1991. Its purpose should be to examine ways of encouraging women to translate their concern for issues at local and global level into effective political participation. The Government of Austria had made a special financial allocation to ensure that women from least developed countries participated in the consultation. It also welcomed the recommendation contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 with regard to the convening in 1995 of a world conference for the advancement of women, which it had offered to host at Vienna.

47. Mr. KONKOBO (Burkina Faso) said that in the 10 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the international community had become increasingly aware of the vital role of women in society. Although great progress had been made in terms of the recognition of the equality of women under law, certain attitudes still existed which kept women from realizing their full potential. As of 2 February 1990, only 100 States had become a party to the Convention and adherence to it needed to be reflected in deeds. Often, women were left behind by progress and their access to modern technological know-how was limited. It was still not a rarity to hear the view that only the training of men paid off. In addition, women were still subjected to mutilation and disfigurement. If that was true in free societies, the situation was still worse in areas where genocide or extreme violence was a way of life.

48. Under apartheid, black women had to be separated from their spouses and children in order to find employment in jobs of the meanest sort; nevertheless, women had played a significant role in the struggle to liberate Namibia and were in the forefront of the struggle still being waged in South Africa. He reiterated his country's support of all women who were fighting against the socio-cultural values of domination, exploitation and obscurantism. The Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 provided a basis for all action to further the advancement of women. His country was committed to the abolition of all practices which relegated individuals or social categories - and women in particular - to the margins of society. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it had taken measures to restore to women their political, legal, social, educational, labour and other rights. In Burkina Faso, economic emancipation was regarded as essential for the

(Mr. Konkobo, Burkina Faso)

liberation of women, and it had therefore been decided to create a bank to ensure their economic advancement and to give them access to credit.

49. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), his delegation welcomed General Recommendations Nos. 14 and 15, which dealt, respectively, with female circumcision and the avoidance of discrimination against women in national strategies for the prevention and control of AIDS. His Government had established a national committee to pursue the struggle to eliminate female circumcision. In order to achieve the true liberation of women, his Government believed that it was necessary to create in them the will to work alongside men in ensuring their country's future, the final objective being to build a society in which men and women were free of any form of domination or exploitation.

50. Mrs. EKONG (Nigeria) said Nigeria attached great importance to questions relating to the elimination of discrimination against women and the enhancement of women's status. It had participated at the third Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs, held at Ottawa, Canada, for the purpose of considering strategies for the advancement of women. It had been obvious to all the participants at that meeting that, although much had been achieved, problems and obstacles still abounded and threatened to outweigh the progress made.

51. The 1980s had been a "lost" decade in the developing countries, in which women and children, in particular, had been the victims of difficult economic and social conditions as reflected in higher maternal mortality rates and shorter life expectancy. The 1990 World Development Report noted that in many developing countries pregnancy and childbirth accounted for over 25 per cent of all deaths of women of child-bearing age. Every year 50,000 women died in childbirth, and 99 per cent of those deaths occurred in the developing world. Other statistics indicated that, five years after the adoption of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, women, who constituted half of the world's population and contributed two thirds of the hours worked, were inadequately and unequally rewarded by comparison with their male counterparts. Although as mothers, women were the primary agents of socialization, they constituted the most illiterate segment of the world's population. Such lack of progress had been underscored by the Commission on the Status of Women in its five-year review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies.

52. Her delegation had read with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies (A/45/489) and agreed with the priority themes to be discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session in 1991. It was glad to note that strengthening national machinery was among those priorities and that the most recent Directory of National Machinery published by the Division for the Advancement of Women at Vienna included information on 91 countries and annexed data on another 37 countries. That represented a marked improvement over the 1988 Directory. Her delegation commended the division on the work it had done and urged it to continue to update the Directory periodically.

(Mrs. Ekong, Nigeria)

53. In Nigeria, the institutionalization and strengthening of national machinery for the advancement of women and the creation of new machinery was a priority. In addition to its Unit for Women's Affairs, the Government had recently established a National Commission on Women, which in 1989 had inaugurated the Better Life Programme for the Rural Population now institutionalized in the Women's Resource Centre. Those activities were intended to boost the quality of life of women in general and rural women in particular, consistent with the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies. Another activity which her Government had engaged in in connection with the advancement of women was the sponsoring of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in Development, held in conjunction with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

54. The objective of national machineries was to promote the advancement of women by ensuring that information was mobilized, channelled to decision makers and incorporated into national policies and programmes. Recent seminars on the roles, objectives and functions of national machineries had been held at the headquarters of the United Nations Office at Vienna, but her delegation felt that the subject was so crucial that meetings should not be restricted to Vienna and should be regionalized for greater positive effect. Nigeria had been party to the recommendations and conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women following its first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. The recommendations had been adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15, and her delegation wished to reaffirm its commitment to them.

55. With regard to the theme of women and development to be considered by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session, she said that economic development and progress would be limited or impossible unless the female labour force was mobilized and used. Women in developing countries had been adversely affected by the debt crisis and the negative transfer of resources which resulted from it; inequitable terms of trade; falling commodity prices; and unequal patterns of income distribution. If the status of women was to be significantly enhanced, the debt crisis and the structural inequities of the international system would have to be resolved.

56. Her delegation supported and welcomed the recommendation for the convening of a world conference of women in 1995 to conduct the second review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and to ensure that their objectives were achieved at the international, regional and national levels.

57. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/45/38), she expressed satisfaction at the way in which the members of the Committee had pursued their tasks and delight that 103 Member States had ratified or acceded to the Convention. Her delegation endorsed the two general recommendations contained in paragraph 438 of the report and pledged its continuing support for the work of the Committee. It also commended the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for their hard work

(Mrs. Ekong, Nigeria)

aimed at improving the lives of women in the developing countries. She called for a more rigorous application of the Nairobi strategies and urged the international community to unite in support of the achievement of gender equality which, together with the integration of women in development, should be a common goal for the 1990s.

58. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat was a matter of long-standing concern to those three Governments. The United Nations should set an example in the area of women's equality, since the first Article of its Charter had identified that equality as a basic human right. The equal participation of women in the Secretariat was also necessary to achieve the Charter's stipulated goal of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. The talents of women were being under-utilized, since women comprised only about 30 per cent of the Professional staff, and substantially less at the senior levels. If women were not included among the Organization's decision makers, both the needs of women and their potential to contribute would tend to be neglected or ignored.

59. Although some progress had been made on the issue, the process had been frustratingly slow. Women had hardly been mentioned in the Secretary-General's 1990 report to the Organization. The advancement of women in the Secretariat, as one of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, was currently under review and appraisal by the Committee.

60. According to document A/45/548, women currently constituted 28.3 per cent of the total Professional staff, which was an improvement over the 26.9 per cent figure of the previous year. However, the level of representation had been increasing at less than 1 per cent per year for the previous 10 years. At that rate, the proportion of women would not approximate 50 per cent until the year 2012. In addition, the progress had been mainly in the lower and middle levels. There were still only two women Under-Secretaries-General, and no women Assistant Secretaries-General. Women were therefore poorly represented at the levels where the Organization was most visible and where many of the important decisions were taken. While the administrative structures of the Organization must be changed to remove barriers to women's advancement, Member States had the responsibility of putting forward more women candidates for high-level posts.

61. The current five-year programme for improving the status of women in the Secretariat would expire at the end of 1990. A target of 35 per cent had been set for the end of the next five-year programme in 1995. However, the failure to reach the current year's target of 30 per cent demonstrated that, if the Organization did no more than maintain existing measures, the 1995 target would not be realized. Substantial structural and attitudinal changes were needed. Resources should be earmarked for the establishment of a separate unit for the advancement of women, to which all of the departments of the United Nations would be accountable at all levels. The degree of success in fulfilling mandates regarding the status of women should be one of the criteria by which each department's performance was evaluated.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

62. Although statistics and recommendations had been set forth at regular intervals, the reasons for the situation and the nature of the impediments to women's advancement in the international civil service had not been examined. The situation of the women in the Secretariat was shared by women in civil services and international organizations throughout the world. It was time to undertake a comprehensive, analytical study to determine exactly what barriers existed to the equal participation of women at all levels of the Secretariat. The results of such a study would enable the Secretariat to develop truly viable strategies to correct the situation.

63. The first five-year programme had established comprehensive and detailed strategies. For the forthcoming five-year programme, however, document A/45/548 merely suggested the continuation of existing recommendations and of the emergency measures implemented in 1990. Those existing recommendations were not set forth in sufficient detail. Moreover, the use of the term "emergency measures" suggested an extraordinary, short-term strategy, whereas a long-term, systematic approach was necessary to achieve genuine and lasting structural and attitudinal change. The Secretariat should consider proposals from delegations, based on their national experience, in formulating its strategies.

AGENDA ITEM 88: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO THE RACIST AND COLONIALIST REGIME OF SOUTH AFRICA (A/C.3/45/L.4) (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 91: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/C.3/45/L.7, L.8 and L.11) (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 98: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/C.3/45/L.5) (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 103: IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (A/C.3/45/L.6, L.9 and L.10) (continued)

Draft resolutions A/C.3/45/L.4, L.5 and L.6

64. Miss MANSARAY (Sierra Leone), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that draft resolutions A/C.3/45/L.4, L.5 and L.6 (on agenda items 88, 98 and 103 respectively) sought to eradicate racism and colonialism, as conditions that stifled progress. Although the members of the Third Committee had not always agreed on the methods of combating those two evils, their shared vision of justice and progress had sustained their commitment to the cause.

65. Recent developments in southern Africa, particularly the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and the independence of Namibia, represented very significant progress. However, the racist régime of South Africa continued to receive political, military and other forms of assistance that enabled it to deprive the

(Miss Mansaray, Sierra Leone)

large majority of South Africans of the enjoyment of basic human rights. That problem was addressed by draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.4.

66. Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.5 pointed out that, by dedicating two consecutive decades to combating racism and racial discrimination, the international community had unequivocally signalled its determination to eradicate that scourge. However, the results of its efforts after the first decade had been less than gratifying. The draft resolution, inter alia, called on the United Nations, individual Governments and non-governmental organisations to redouble their efforts in that regard.

67. Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.6 expressed regret that there still existed régimes which sought to deny people their basic human right to self-determination. It called for greater determination by the international community to rectify such situations. Her delegation hoped that the three draft resolutions would be adopted unanimously by the Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.7

68. Mrs. ILIC (Yugoslavia) introduced, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.7 on the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and said that Ecuador should be added to the list of sponsors. She outlined the terms of the resolution, and indicated that operative paragraphs 7 and 8, concerning future efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the financial situation of the Committee, were the result of consultations with numerous delegations. All of the sponsoring delegations hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.8

69. Miss FOSTIER (Belgium), after recalling that her delegation had introduced a draft resolution on the subject of agenda item 91 every two years, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.8 on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. She said that Ecuador and Botswana had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, and pointed out that Belgium had been omitted from the list of sponsors.

70. To date, 130 countries had become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which meant that the Convention had more States parties than any other international legal instrument in the area of human rights. The text of the draft resolution corresponded to General Assembly resolution 43/95, which had been adopted without a vote. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by the Committee without a vote, as in the past.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.11

71. Miss FUNDAFUNDA (Zambia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.11 on the status of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. The sponsors of the draft resolution were Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Universal acceptance of the Convention would contribute significantly to the struggle against the crime of apartheid. The draft resolution therefore sought to encourage Member States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention, in particular those States that had jurisdiction over transnational corporations operating in South Africa. The sponsors hoped that the Committee would support the draft resolution, as it had in previous years.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.9

72. Miss JUNEJO (Pakistan) introduced, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.9 on agenda item 103 and said that Chile and Botswana should be added to the list of sponsors. The text of the draft resolution was nearly identical to that of General Assembly resolution 44/80, which had been adopted without a vote. The draft resolution had merely been updated to include references to the latest resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. It addressed the problem of the growing incidence of military intervention, aggression and occupation of sovereign nations, by which millions of people had been uprooted and forced to become refugees. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote by both the Third Committee and the plenary, as in previous years.

Draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.10

73. Mrs. GARUBA (Nigeria) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.10 on the use of mercenaries as a means to violate human rights and to impede the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. She said that Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Maldives, Senegal and Viet Nam had joined the list of sponsors. The report of the Special Rapporteur on mercenaries (A/45/488) indicated that mercenary activities were still taking their toll on innocent victims in more than one area of the African continent. In the draft resolution, the removal of Central America from the list of areas in which mercenaries were active demonstrated the effectiveness of detailed reporting by the Special Rapporteur on mercenary activities. Her delegation hoped that the text of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries would be incorporated into the national legislation of individual countries. She reiterated the appeal contained in operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, urging States to not only sign, but also to ratify and accede to that Convention.

Revisions to draft resolutions A/C.3/45/L.4 and L.6

74. Miss MANSARAY (Sierra Leone) said that the end of paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.4 should be revised as follows:

"... in the light of any recommendations which the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council, and the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid may wish to submit to it;"

75. The end of the seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.6 should be revised as follows:

"... as well as the report of the Monitoring Group of the Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa of the Organization of African Unity, 4/ and the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the United Nations on 14 December 1989,"

76. Paragraph 13 of draft resolution A/C.3/45/L.6 should be revised as follows:

"Strongly urges the apartheid régime to respond positively to the provisions of the Declaration of the Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa on the question of South Africa, adopted at Harare on 21 August 1989, and the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the United Nations on 14 December 1989, by releasing unconditionally ..."

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.