



UN/SA COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 50th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 83: OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES:

- (a) REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
- (b) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 79: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS:

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 35/46 and 35/174: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 88: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

- (a) WORLD CONFERENCE ON THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/36/SR.50
11 December 1981
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

- (c) DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND AGAINST COLONIALISM, APARTHEID, ALL FORMS OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, FOREIGN AGGRESSION, OCCUPATION AND ALL FORMS OF FOREIGN DOMINATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 89: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (A/36/3/Add.22, A/36/61, 66, 77, 82, 111, 113 and Corr.1, 118, 152, 203, 457, 463, 552 and 640):

(a) REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (A/36/12 and Add.1)

(b) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/316)

1. The CHAIRMAN congratulated the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees on having been awarded the Nobel Prize, for the second time, in 1981.
2. Mr. HARTLING (High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the 30 years since the establishment of his Office (UNHCR) had been marked by conflict and violence, and that the evolution of the world situation had led UNHCR into dramatically increased commitments. There had been a significant growth over the years in the scope and importance of the essential function of his Office: the international protection of refugees. In the past twelve months, events had called for vigorous action to ensure that the principles of international protection were strictly observed, particularly the principles of asylum and non-refoulement. International protection also implied ensuring that refugees were treated in a humane fashion for as long as the situation in their country of origin did not permit their return. His Office had afforded protection to persons not strictly falling within the definition of the refugee laid down in the Statute of UNHCR and the 1951 Convention.
3. The Executive Committee of UNHCR had been paying increasing attention to the large-scale influx situations in different areas of the world. The basic minimum standards for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers had been identified by the Executive Committee at its session in October 1981. Attention had also been given to refugee situations offering specific regional characteristics. In Africa, the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention governing the special aspects of the refugee problems in Africa, and the recommendations of the 1979 Azusha Conference, which had been endorsed by the OAU Summit the same year and by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. In Latin America, his Office was paying close attention to the links between the universal refugee instruments and the inter-American treaties on asylum.
4. Among the difficulties in international protection, the focus of the most serious concern had been the infringements of the physical safety of the refugees, which included incidents involving violations of the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, abduction, disappearances and, the most appalling, pirate attacks on asylum seekers at sea. The UNHCR Executive Committee had asked him to seek, in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, other interested organizations and governments, the support of the international community for the continuation and intensification of efforts to protect refugees from acts of violence at sea. Of no less grave concern were the military attacks

/...

(High Commissioner for Refugees)

on refugee camps in southern Africa, which had been widely condemned by the world community. At the universal, regional, national and individual level, protection continued to demand a sustained and alert response at all times.

5. The UNHCR material assistance programmes had developed substantially. In 1977, UNHCR's annual budget had exceeded \$100 million for the first time. That figure had more than doubled in 1979 and again in 1980, to exceed \$500 million. According to current forecasts, the amount might be somewhat lower in 1981 and 1982. The aim of UNHCR assistance was to make the refugees once more self-supporting, useful and dignified citizens, but before satisfactory durable solutions could be found, relief aimed at meeting the most immediate needs was often required.

6. In Pakistan, refugees formed one of the largest concentrations of uprooted persons anywhere in the world. They had been received there with great generosity and the majority were dependent on relief assistance. In addition to the efforts made by the Pakistan authorities, the refugees received invaluable support from the United Nations system, notably the World Food Programme, and several voluntary agencies.

7. In Somalia UNHCR continued to mobilize humanitarian assistance for relief purposes. In January 1981, the Secretary-General, in conjunction with UNHCR, had sent an inter-agency mission to Somalia to assess the international relief effort undertaken in 1980 and to identify the requirements of refugees in Somalia from 1981 onwards. Problems in transport and distribution of assistance in 1980 had led to the preparation, formulation and implementation of a new transport and distribution programme. That programme included the setting up of an Emergency Logistics Unit, the stationing of commodity monitoring teams, the construction of regional warehouses and mechanical workshops, the improvement of access roads and the training of local transport staff. Progress had also been observed in the health services and water supply schemes and particularly in the development of self-reliance in agriculture.

8. Djibouti was another example of a long-term relief operation. UNHCR was providing some 30,000 refugees in camps and in urban areas with relief assistance in the form of standard rations, high-protein supplementary food, food for mothers and children, household utensils and medical assistance. Efforts were being made to identify durable local solutions in the hope that there would be a gradual shift from relief assistance to activities oriented towards a greater degree of self-sufficiency through such projects as agricultural pilot programmes, handicrafts activities, regular primary instruction and vocational training.

9. UNHCR was aware that relief operations, which were a vital necessity, could only be temporary. Durable solutions must involve, first of all, voluntary repatriation to the refugees' countries of origin, when circumstances permitted, which had been achieved in the past few years on all continents. In 1981, it had been possible to secure the initial resettlement and rehabilitation of 660,000 Zimbabweans. Voluntary repatriation to the Lao People's Democratic Republic was

/...

(United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees)

was also under way and negotiations were going ahead in Bangkok and Phnom Penh to ensure the return of further numbers of Kampuchean. In Ethiopia the infrastructure for five reception centres was being developed and it was planned to expand the current programme as the returnee movement gained momentum. In October, a voluntary repatriation programme had been launched in Chad, to which large numbers of refugees were returning from the United Republic of Cameroon, Nigeria and the Central African Republic. UNHCR was also assisting persons displaced during the disturbances in N'Djamena who had not left the country. In total, the programme now applied to some 160,000 persons. He emphasized that as a rule UNHCR did not engage in assistance to those who were internally displaced unless there was already a substantial programme for refugees, externally displaced persons or returnees.

10. When voluntary repatriation was not possible, local integration in the country of first asylum was the best solution. However, the majority of the refugees of the world were in developing countries - often in the least developed countries - where the resources were scanty. In the Sudan, where the number of refugees was estimated at 500,000, major emphasis was laid on rural settlement projects or on the integration of refugees in urban areas. Some 100,000 refugees had already been permanently settled, but refugees were continuing to enter the Sudan from several bordering countries. In the United Republic of Tanzania, large numbers of refugees had been settled and had become farmers; in addition, 36,000 refugees had been naturalized. In China, some 265,000 refugees had been received, the majority of whom had been settled on State farms. In the Kwangsi autonomous region 11,000 refugee fishermen were being integrated in their own profession and were receiving assistance from the authorities in the form of housing, a hospital, a school and the means to continue their traditional activity.

11. There had also been satisfactory progress with respect to resettlement in third countries. Since 1977, over 700,000 Indochinese refugees had been resettled with the help of UNHCR; of that number, over 400,000 were so-called boat people. Some 250,000 persons were awaiting durable solutions in South-East Asia, while a few thousand new arrivals were registered every month. Resettlement in third countries was a major component in the over-all solution of the problem in South-East Asia. The High Commissioner had held a meeting at Geneva with the representatives of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, at which measures had been agreed that would accelerate legal departures from Viet Nam. At present, more than 1,000 persons a month were leaving Viet Nam in a regular and uninterrupted manner.

12. Positive results had thus been achieved in terms of durable solutions, whether by voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement. The Office of the High Commissioner encouraged Governments, at an early stage of the integration process, to include and harmonize refugee programmes in their development plans. Accordingly, UNHCR programmes would constitute the basis for subsequent action within the wider framework of national development. Further relevant measures, as far as international assistance was concerned, would be the responsibility of other appropriate agencies, both bilateral and multilateral.

/...

(United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees)

13. In mobilizing funds, staff and equipment in response to refugee crises, UNHCR took account of the resources available outside its programmes. It was aware of the views expressed, notably in the Economic and Social Council, on improved co-ordination of humanitarian assistance. The co-operation of the various agencies and programmes of the United Nations system had proved very valuable. The Office's close relationship with the World Food Programme was a model in that respect, ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication of effort. The Office's co-operation with non-governmental organizations was also an invaluable asset in refugee work. The non-governmental organizations acted as operational partners, donors and technical advisers; they also participated in the world-wide dissemination of information on the refugee problem. In May 1981, a consultation had been held at Geneva between the non-governmental organizations and UNHCR in order to enhance co-operation and strengthen links even further. Over 125 agencies had participated in that historic meeting, which was being actively followed up.

14. As the Committee was well aware, central to UNHCR's role in any refugee situation was the exclusively humanitarian and social character of its activities, as laid down in its statute. It had been stressed at the thirty-second session of the Executive Committee of the Programme, held at Geneva in October, that the High Commissioner's activities must be kept distinct and separate from United Nations activities regarding the root causes of refugee situations. Clearly, the international community must continue to give priority to the root causes; however, it should do so in the appropriate forums, leaving UNHCR's humanitarian character unscathed.

15. Owing to the period of unprecedented growth and the level of activities at which a certain stabilization was developing, a review of the management tools at the Office's disposal had become necessary. The Executive Committee of the Programme, at its most recent session, had endorsed the staffing proposals for 1981 and 1982, including a recommendation for the strengthening of UNHCR management. Work had recently been completed on a provisional version of a Handbook for Emergencies, designed to improve the Office's emergency capacity and ensure that the experience gained in one crisis was not lost in the next. Another important management aid, the project management system, had been introduced to systematize the planning and design of projects and to provide a comprehensive framework for financial monitoring and programme evaluation.

16. To mobilize resources for great humanitarian causes of a much larger scope than UNHCR could include in its programmes, major assemblies were sometimes organized, evoking vigorous responses. Far-reaching recommendations had emerged from the Arusha Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa, held in May 1979, and they formed the basis of much of the work currently performed by UNHCR in Africa. The International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, held under the joint auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and UNHCR, had brought together in Geneva representatives of some 100 countries - thus demonstrating world-wide interest and support - who had pledged approximately \$US 572 million, to be channelled bilaterally or through various organizations. That demonstrated the

/...

(United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees)

will of the international community to meet the needs of some 5 million refugees in Africa and of the host countries struggling under an enormous burden. At both Conferences, UNHCR had been given invaluable opportunities to continue to strengthen even further its co-operation with OAU.

17. The Office had also been able to make its contribution to world-wide efforts in other areas. It was devoting increasing attention to the needs of women refugees and had undertaken a number of activities as follow-up to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. Those activities included closer co-operation with Governments in extending protection against violence to women refugees, the promotion of training of women refugees, and a number of other measures designed to enhance women's social and economic potential and skills.

18. As part of its contribution to the International Year of Disabled Persons, UNHCR had taken steps to identify physically and mentally disabled refugees on a systematic, solution-oriented basis. In August 1981, he had launched a special appeal to a number of countries, asking them to give particular consideration to accepting a larger number of disabled refugees; so far, the response had been encouraging.

19. The Office had always been privileged to enjoy the support of Governments. He was deeply grateful to them, whether they gave over-all support, received refugees with hospitality and generosity, or contributed financially to UNHCR programmes.

20. The world refugee problem was huge and would not vanish overnight. The efforts of the international community had borne fruit and would continue to do so. Millions of persons in distress had been given the opportunity to reshape their lives. As long as persons were forced to flee and seek refuge, all concerned must continue to strive to give them a new home, a new life and restored dignity.

21. Mr. EKINGE (Sweden), referring to the tremendous increase in UNHCR activities in recent years, said that the refugee situation in Pakistan had developed into the largest single exodus in the experience of UNHCR; more than two million refugees were currently assembled along the border.

22. There were disquieting developments in Latin America also. In view of the increasing number of refugees from El Salvador, the allocation of additional resources to the region was justified, pending a political solution. In Africa, especially in the Horn and southern Africa, a serious refugee situation threatened to become permanent.

23. However, the picture was not altogether gloomy. As the High Commissioner stated in his report to the General Assembly, there had been some promising developments recently in both South-East Asia and Africa. The programme for the repatriation of Kampuchean refugees gave rise to cautious optimism and refugees from Chad were returning in great numbers.

/...

(Mr. Ekinge, Sweden)

24. A preliminary financial target for the High Commission's activities in 1982, amounting to some \$420 million, had been approved by the Executive Committee and was encouraging evidence of the full awareness in the international community of the seriousness of the refugee problem. It was heartening to note, moreover, that by and large it had been possible to meet rapidly increasing requirements by means of voluntary contributions.

25. Sweden had observed with satisfaction that a growing proportion of the UNHCR programmes were being included in the regular budget. Several major advantages resulted from that trend: it facilitated the planning process for both UNHCR and the recipient countries; and it simplified funding decisions on the part of donor countries and gave them a better overview of the use made of their contributions. His delegation was aware of the difficulties encountered in making estimates of the needs arising from future refugee flows; it feared, however, that the estimates of lower expenditure in the regular budget might be on the optimistic side. A case in point was the Afghan refugees, who continued to leave their country in large numbers and to seek protection in Pakistan and Iran.

26. On various occasions Sweden had pointed to the regional imbalances in the allocation of funds; while it was cause for satisfaction that the resources set aside for the various regions for the current year and the following corresponded more closely to actual needs, it must be noted that for 1982 Africa, with twice as many refugees and displaced persons as South-East Asia, was to receive less than half the amount set aside for the latter region. However, the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa had led to a renewed recognition of the overwhelming needs of the millions of African refugees and displaced persons. It was of great importance that the momentum of awareness thus gained should not be lost.

27. The largest programmes for 1982, those in Pakistan, Somalia, Thailand and the Sudan, would place continued heavy responsibilities on the High Commissioner. In that connexion he wished in particular, to commend the High Commissioner for the way in which the situation in Pakistan had been handled. Pakistan, for its part, despite the paucity of its own resources, had shown generosity and hospitality to the refugees.

28. Sweden also favoured continuation of the programme in Kampuchea, of which the UNHCR repatriation project was a part, and attached great importance to the returnee programme for Ethiopian refugees.

29. There was general agreement that the primary and most humane solution to the refugee problem was to create the conditions for return to the country of origin. Neither by integration in poor neighbouring countries nor by resettlement in some other part of the world could the problem of most refugees be rapidly resolved. The creation of conditions for voluntary repatriation, however, called for political action, and it was the responsibility of the States Members of the United Nations to work tirelessly to that end. If the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan, if the Vietnamese troops withdrew from Kampuchea, if South Africa

/...

(Mr. Ekinge, Sweden)

ceased attacking its neighbours, particularly Angola, in flagrant violation of international law, if a peaceful settlement for the conflicts in various parts of Africa could be found, if human rights were respected throughout the world, refugee problems could be virtually eliminated.

30. Trying to come to grips with those fundamental causes was an important task. Sweden therefore supported the work done in the Commission on Human Rights in relation to mass exoduses and the violation of human rights. His delegation was also studying with interest proposals aimed at the elaboration of a set of guidelines for the conduct of States.

31. Until political solutions could be reached, and where the refugee situation was a long-term problem, solutions should be sought in an over-all development context. The aim should be to help the refugees achieve social and economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Host countries should be encouraged to find ways and means to include refugee projects in their national development plans. It was encouraging that some African Governments had already, in co-operation with UNHCR, embarked on such schemes. Until the primary objective of enabling refugees to return to their countries of origin could be attained, such schemes would require joint efforts on the part of the recipient countries, other Governments and international agencies, and areas of competence and responsibilities would have to be clearly established.

32. However, to the extent that it was not possible to achieve political solutions that would enable refugees to return to their countries of origin, and considering that there were obvious limits to what could be achieved in respect of local integration, the High Commissioner would continue to have the essential task of providing resettlement opportunities. The creation of such opportunities was the responsibility of the world community, and in meeting that responsibility all countries concerned should devise resettlement programmes and criteria in such a way as to avoid creating residual problems for UNHCR. In that connexion it must be stressed that countries like Sweden, with small populations, could not possibly play a leading role in providing resettlement opportunities. Nevertheless, Sweden was applying very liberal criteria in respect of the acceptance of difficult cases, such as handicapped refugees. It also tried to apply expeditious procedures which would enable it to respond quickly to urgent requests from the High Commissioner. Sweden intended to continue applying that policy.

33. Sweden supported the Programme of Orderly Departure, since it considered the reunification of families necessary for the integration of resettled Vietnamese refugees.

34. One of the main topics discussed by the Executive Committee concerned the mandate of the High Commissioner, particularly the question of assistance to displaced persons, the difference between relief assistance as such and assistance of a developmental character, and the "phasing out" of the High Commissioner's assistance measures. Sweden was sure that the High Commissioner would not want to increase his already enormous responsibilities, and it was

/...

(Mr. Ekinge, Sweden)

also aware that the High Commissioner was sometimes called upon by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to undertake certain activities, as had occurred recently in Zimbabwe, which might go beyond his traditional area of responsibilities.

35. With regard to the question of international protection, he said that the work done in the Executive Committee had been fruitful. Experience showed that there was a great need for certain minimum standards in respect of the treatment of victims of mass refugee movements. In that context, the conclusions of the Executive Committee stressed the obligation of States to share the burden of countries struck by mass influxes of refugees. With respect to the reunification of families, States should try to apply a comprehensive concept of the family when admitting refugees.

36. The rapidly expanding activities of UNHCR made it necessary to ensure that it had adequate administrative capacity. His delegation therefore welcomed the High Commissioner's plan for strengthening his Office, which would be conducive to greater delegation of authority to the field and more decentralization of decision-making at Headquarters.

37. With regard to emergency preparedness, prevention and relief, it should be noted that UNHCR had improved its capacity to deal with emergencies. Lastly, there was the matter of emergency co-ordination, which continued to be of concern to his Government: co-ordination required the active and constructive participation of all the United Nations bodies concerned.

38. Mr. PARSONS (United Kingdom), referring to the question of protection of refugees, said that his delegation supported the High Commissioner in his efforts to ensure that asylum was granted in appropriate cases and that the principle of non-refoulement was observed as the primary protection of refugees. The High Commissioner's report indicated that there had been further accessions by Member States to international instruments concerning refugees. However, there were numerous unresolved problems in that area which should be urgently addressed. Asia and Africa remained the two main areas of concern: those continents had received respectively 54 and 36 per cent of UNHCR's total resources in 1980. In Asia the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan and Iran as a direct result of the Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan continued. In that connexion it should be mentioned that the United Kingdom Government had responded, both bilaterally and through the European Economic Community, to the appeals of the High Commissioner on behalf of Afghan refugees. The situation of Indo-Chinese refugees was also a continuing cause for concern. Many of them had been resettled in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, and it was to be hoped that that support would continue.

39. With regard to the contribution of the United Kingdom Government to refugee projects world-wide, it should be noted that in the past 10 years the United Kingdom had been among the top five countries in terms of total contribution to UNHCR. However, its resources were limited; it was therefore essential that other countries that were in a position to do so, some of which were contributing little or nothing, should contribute as generously as possible.

/...

(Mr. Parsons, United Kingdom)

40. In conclusion, he observed that, looking beyond the vital humanitarian task performed by UNHCR in alleviating refugee problems after they had risen, those problems were almost invariably man-made, often arising from armed conflicts or gross violations of human rights. He therefore welcomed the initiatives, in both the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly, designed to address those issues.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on item 83 would continue at the next meeting. He then invited members to conclude their explanations of vote on draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1, relating to item 79.

AGENDA ITEM 79: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (A/C.3/36/L.43, L.44 and L.46)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 35/46 and 35/174: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

42. Mr. BORCHARD (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking in explanation of vote, welcomed the fact that, by proclaiming the right to development, the United Nations had underlined the importance of human rights in all efforts directed towards development. In that connexion, his Government had supported decision 1981/149 of the Economic and Social Council, in which the Council had approved the decision taken by the Commission on Human Rights to establish a working group of 15 governmental experts to study the scope and contents of the right to development. If there was to be a meaningful dialogue on that matter, the deliberations and conclusions of the Working Group must not be anticipated. Unfortunately, draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1 prejudged that discussion to a considerable extent. It was important not to give the impression that the right to development or the establishment of a new international economic order were prerequisites for guaranteeing other human rights. Not only the means of securing respect for human rights but also all violations of such rights should be discussed in specific terms within the framework of the United Nations, and not on the basis of general phraseology. His delegation regretted that paragraphs 1 and 2 of draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1 emphasized certain categories of human rights violations. When there was a question of violations of human rights, distinctions and categories were unnecessary.

43. He also regretted that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1 had not drafted it on the basis of generally accepted principles, which would have helped it to receive consensus support. Guaranteeing human rights was one of the central issues for consideration by the United Nations, and agenda item 79 offered a particularly suitable and comprehensive framework for that undertaking. Consequently, the Federal Republic of Germany could not support any resolution which diminished the clarity of the discussion on ways of promoting and encouraging human rights or which confined it to certain categories. For that reason, his delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1.

44. Ms. FAWTHORPE (New Zealand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her delegation had voted in favour of the revised text of the draft resolution (A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1) because of the spirit of co-operation and compromise displayed by the sponsors of the original text. However, its support was by no means unequivocal: New Zealand had several reservations in that connexion. First, the text did not reflect a balanced approach to the consideration of human rights questions by the United Nations system. Although paragraph 5 contained an important affirmation concerning the need for Member States to continue efforts to promote civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, the importance of the latter category of rights was in fact given priority in other parts of the text. Accordingly, her delegation would have welcomed the addition of at least one operative paragraph in order to re-establish balance in that respect. Secondly, with regard to paragraph 8 concerning the right to development, her delegation would have abstained had a vote been taken on the formulation contained therein. New Zealand felt that no decision should be taken in that connexion until the Working Group established by the Commission on Human Rights to examine the scope and contents of the right to development had completed its work and until its conclusions had come before the General Assembly.

45. Mrs. LORANGER (Canada) said that her delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1 because, in its opinion, the revised text just adopted was imperfect. It was hazardous to emphasize certain specific rights, thus diminishing the importance of others. Her delegation would have expected the draft resolution also to reflect the Assembly's concern for other questions, for example torture, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners, arbitrary and summary executions and other serious and flagrant violations of human rights.

46. Her delegation also had reservations about the ninth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 8, both of which stated that the right to development was an inalienable human right. Canada believed that it was premature to qualify as "inalienable" a right which had not yet been adequately defined by the United Nations.

47. Mr. SIBAY (Turkey) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1, because his country supported the idea of a new international economic order. However, the text of the draft resolution was not sufficiently balanced, nor did it give due emphasis to the basic concept or to the classical elements of the theory of human rights. While he shared the view that the exercise of fundamental human rights could be facilitated by economic welfare and social justice, those factors were neither determining elements nor essential conditions for the existence of and respect for human rights.

48. The exercise of fundamental human rights safeguarded individual freedom and ensured the participation of all citizens in the decision-making process, but that principle had not been adequately expressed in the wording of the draft resolution.

49. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy) said that her delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1 and still had reservations about the criterion the sponsors had applied to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights, which were only mentioned in the preamble to the draft resolution.

50. Her delegation could not accept the view that the establishment of the new international economic order was a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights. Her delegation also felt that the fact that reference was made to the human rights of peoples before the human rights of individuals could lead to mistaken interpretations and was unclear.

51. In addition, her delegation had some doubts about including the concept of the right of workers to participate in management in a draft resolution on human rights, since that right was contained neither in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights nor in the Covenants.

52. As to the right to development, her delegation wished to reserve its opinion on that question until the Working Group established by the Commission on Human Rights to study the scope and contents of that right had completed its work.

53. Mrs. YONG FATIMAH (Malaysia) pointed out that her delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.41/Rev.1 in order to promote the right to development. However, her delegation wished to enter its reservations on paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 88: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/36/3/Add.20, A/36/490, A/36/620; A/C.3/36/L.50, L.51, L.53)

- (a) WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/564; A/C.3/36/L.47)
- (b) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/485, A/36/646, A/36/647; A/C.3/36/L.49, L.52)
- (c) DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND AGAINST COLONIALISM, APARTHEID, ALL FORMS OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, FOREIGN AGGRESSION, OCCUPATION AND ALL FORMS OF FOREIGN DOMINATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/476 and Add.1; A/C.3/36/L.48)

AGENDA ITEM 89: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/36/63, A/36/295 and Add.1; A/C.3/36/L.54)

54. Miss DORJI (Bhutan) said that women had been the victims of discrimination inequality for centuries, but it was only in recent times that their right to economic, social and political equality had become an issue. However, discrimination continued even in areas where barriers were supposed to have been

/...

(Miss Dorji, Bhutan)

lifted. Being a woman often meant having less scope for personal development than a man, which was a strong reason for the mobilization of women.

55. Her country greatly appreciated the efforts of the United Nations and the specialized agencies to promote and strengthen services aimed at improving the conditions of women, in particular the efforts of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women.

56. In her own country, development plans and programmes to promote the participation of women in all spheres of national activity had so far met with modest success. High priority had always been given in Bhutan to the improvement of health services for women. Special efforts had been made in the field of education to provide more facilities for women. National policies concerning the employment of women had always provided for women to be treated on a par with men. Thus, women were represented in the National Assembly, the Royal Advisory Council and the Ministries of Finance and Development. The National Women's Association of Bhutan had been established early in 1981 with a view to promoting women's rights.

57. Her delegation reiterated its support for the measures adopted by the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. Bhutan had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had ratified it before its entry into force on 4 September 1981. With the Convention now in force, her delegation trusted that women would begin to enjoy the same rights and freedoms as men.

58. Mr. LIGAIRI (Fiji) said that there was a close relationship between the situation of women and the objectives of the Decade, since it was only in conditions of peace and stability that the objectives of equality and development could be implemented. Women were part of society; they contributed to national wellbeing in the home, the country, the factory, the office and elsewhere, and their contribution was appreciated. It was government policy to ensure that women were integrated as equal partners with men in the national development process. Men and women also had equal opportunities for education.

59. The women of Fiji were making a thorough examination of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with special attention to home economics, home-based income-generating activities, and small-scale industries. Stability in social and economic activities and learning was the key to self-sufficiency in both rural and urban areas.

60. In paragraph 46 (n) of the World Plan of Action it was stated that one of the main objectives of the first five-year period was the "establishment of interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within the government for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunities for women and their full integration into national life". Fiji recognized that, in order to achieve those objectives, it was vital to have institutional and organizational structures for identifying problems, formulating the necessary policies, monitoring the implementation of such policies and co-ordinating all the relevant national activities.

/...

(Mr. Ligairi, Fiji)

61. The employment of women was admittedly a controversial concept. Although women's labour input was considerable, in many countries it was unpaid and unrecognized by society.

62. It was important to recognize the contribution made by women in the home to the wellbeing of the family and society.

63. Mr. TIMOTHY (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation agreed that women and men had equal rights to participation in all sectors and at all levels of the development process, in which the end result would benefit mankind and the environment. His delegation supported the United Nations Decade for Women in principle because it believed in the equality of all mankind.

64. The issues under discussion were complex because of the different social, economic and political systems under which women lived and the problems of women should be considered in their natural setting, at the national, regional and international levels, in that order.

65. Women had been home-makers in traditional Papua New Guinea society and to a large extent that role still prevailed. With the coming of industrialization, urbanization and social changes, the country's life-style would have to be revised in order to meet those changes.

66. It was almost seven years since Papua New Guinea had become independent, and during that period there had been many changes; one of the Government's aims was to promote the country's development while ensuring that the traditional way of life was not disrupted by social change.

67. Papua New Guinea's "Eight-Point Strategic Development Plan" and its Constitution both recognized women's participation in the development process. Progress was slow but the trend had been set for women's advancement in all fields.

68. A number of women currently occupied top posts in his country, three as members of the National Parliament. The number of women participating in development would be increased in the near future.

69. The Constitution set forth the national goals and guiding principles which every citizen was supposed to observe. Everyone was to be involved in endeavours to achieve integral human development and fulfilment through contributing to the common good; all citizens were to have an equal opportunity to take part in and benefit from the country's political, economic, social, religious and cultural development; and all persons were to have basic specified obligations to themselves, their descendants, their compatriots and the nation.

70. With regard to item 89, his country's opposition to all forms of racial discrimination, racism, and apartheid was clearly stated in its foreign policy. In line with that policy, Papua New Guinea had ceased its limited comm-~~to~~...

(Mr. Timothy, Papua New Guinea)

dealings with South Africa and had discouraged its nationals from participating in sports in which South African teams were involved. Those measures were directed not against the South African people but against the South African Government's policy.

71. His delegation supported the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and looked forward to its practical application. His Government had not yet signed and ratified the Convention, but it was more important to adhere to its principles and not discriminate against women. The Government's first priority on the home front was the social, political, cultural and economic development of all the population, including women.

72. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had consulted the Chairman of the Second Committee informally about draft resolution A/C.3/36/L.50, on the role of women in development, and draft resolution A/C.2/36/L.26/Rev.1, on the World Survey on the role of women in development. He renewed his appeal for members of the Committee to consult their colleagues in the Second Committee informally on the two draft resolutions.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

73. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the time-limit for closing the list of speakers and for submitting draft resolutions on item 30, International Year of Disabled Persons, should be Friday, 20 November, at 6 p.m.

74. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.