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POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE:
PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 40/14 of 18 November 1985, decided to evaluate, at its forty-first session, the results of the International Youth Year on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General. The present report is submitted in accordance with this decision.

2. Concern for youth has been officially expressed within the United Nations system since its inception. Between 1946 and 1964, a few specialized agencies within the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), initiated several policies and programmes on youth within their respective fields of competence. However, it was not until the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (resolution 2037 (XX) of 7 December 1965) that the concern for youth began to be expressed on a system-wide and cross-sectoral basis. The concern was subsequently followed up and elaborated by the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, particularly in Council resolution 1353 (XLV) of 2 August 1968 and by the Assembly in its resolutions 2460 (XXIII) of 20 December 1968 and 2497 (XXIV) of 28 October 1969, which led to the convening of the first World Youth Assembly at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 17 July 1970; to other measures to establish channels of communication with youth and international youth organizations (Assembly resolution 2633 (XXV) of 11 November 1970); and to the establishment of the United Nations Volunteers programme (Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV) of 7 December 1970).

3. These expressions of the international community, and the national concern that they reflected, gradually evolved into the international consensus that made possible the designation of the International Youth Year. It was thus recognized that more efforts were needed to promote the participation of young people in national development and in international peace and co-operation. Consequently, in its resolution 34/151 of 17 December 1979, the General Assembly designated 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, and decided to establish an intergovernmental Advisory Committee for it. The Assembly, in its resolution 35/126 of 11 December 1980, requested the Advisory Committee to formulate a specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year, on the basis of a draft programme prepared by the Secretary-General.

4. The Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year held its first session at Vienna from 30 March to 7 April 1981, formulated the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities and submitted it to the Assembly (A/36/215, annex, sect. IV, decision 1 (I)) which endorsed it in its resolution 36/28 of 13 November 1981. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its thirty-seventh session a progress report on the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities through the Advisory Committee. The progress report (A/37/237) was submitted accordingly; the Advisory Committee, at its second session also submitted recommendations for the further implementation of the Specific Programme (A/37/348, annex, appendix III). The Assembly endorsed these recommendations in its resolution 37/48 of 3 December 1982, and called for a

further progress report to be submitted to it at its thirty-eighth session. In its resolution 38/22 of 22 November 1983, the Assembly took note of the report (A/38/460 and Add.1) and requested the Advisory Committee, at its third session to provide it with practical proposals on specific ways and means for the observance, in 1985, of the International Youth Year. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/39/262, annex) were accordingly submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session; the Assembly, in its resolution 39/22 of 23 November 1984, endorsed them, and called upon the Committee to formulate guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth, on the basis of a draft prepared by the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee, at its fourth session, elaborated these guidelines, and submitted them to the Assembly at its fortieth session (A/40/256, annex, sect. IV, decision 1 (I)).

5. During its fortieth session, the General Assembly, acting as United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year, had before it two reports of the Secretary-General: a preliminary assessment of the preparation and observance of the Year (A/40/701), and an overview of the situation of youth in the 1980s (A/40/64-E/1985/5), requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1983/14 of 26 May 1983. It also had before it the report of the fourth session of the Advisory Committee, which included the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth (A/40/256, annex). In its resolution 40/14 of 18 November 1985, the Assembly endorsed the guidelines.

II. IMPACT OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

A. General considerations

6. The review of the legislative mandates and their implementation clearly indicates that the International Youth Year was not, in fact, an end in itself. It was, rather, one link in a continuously evolving process that began before it, and will continue beyond it: the de facto United Nations youth programme. The evolution of this programme has thus progressed through several steps. National concern led to international action, which was eventually manifested in the consensus that made possible the International Youth Year. The adoption and implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the Year at the international level proceeded simultaneously with concerted action at the national level. The national co-ordinating committees that were created for the Year were testimony to this political will and commitment on the part of the Member States. Working upward from the national level, and downward from the international one, regional preparatory meetings for the Year drew up plans of action for youth for each of the five regions. The Specific Programme of Measures and Activities, the regional plans of action, and national policies and programmes - all three became integrated into the composite mosaic of the actual observance of the International Youth Year in 1985. The symbolic culmination of the Year came in the form of five plenary meetings of the General Assembly, together designated as the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year. All the experience gathered during the preparations for the Year was distilled into the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth.

7. It is clear that the guidelines themselves are central to the evaluation of the International Youth Year. They grew out of the experience of preparing for it; they were based upon a preliminary assessment of its impact; and they embody the collective wisdom of the international community with regard to the question of what is to be done in the period after 1985. Given this relationship between the Year and the guidelines, one criterion for assessing the impact of the Year would be the extent to which the guidelines are used in the different Member States. However, it should be noted that the guidelines were only adopted by the General Assembly at the end of 1985. Their utility as a criterion for evaluation is therefore contingent upon allowing sufficient lead time for their dissemination and implementation.

8. The question of lead time is also germane in the more specific context of the present report. It is the second stage of the process through which the International Youth Year is being evaluated. The preliminary evaluation was submitted to the Assembly at its fortieth session in a report on the preparation and observance of the Year (A/40/701). The Assembly, acting as United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year thus provided a crucial element in this process of evaluation. Delegates of over 100 Member States addressed the Conference and provided the international community with a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Year. The present report attempts to build upon it, to refine it, and to extend it further. The substance of this further evaluation is based on replies to a questionnaire on the impact of the Year, sent to Member States and to various United Nations bodies and agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, and youth non-governmental organizations. Thirty-one replies have been received so far. This information will subsequently be added to, comprehensively assessed, and detailed in the third stage of evaluation, which comprises: a technical publication entitled "Assessment of the impact of measures and activities accomplished during the International Youth Year", to be prepared in 1987, and the regular examination of specific youth issues by the Commission for Social Development, as called for in Assembly resolution 40/14. The whole process of evaluation is thus conceived as one that moves in tandem with the unfolding of a continuous international strategy for youth.

9. The objectives of the International Youth Year were first set forth in the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities. They have subsequently been refined and reiterated, most recently in the guidelines. They should be restated briefly here, since they form the basis of the analytical framework within which the impact of the Year can be assessed. There were four general objectives:

- (a) To enhance awareness of the situation of youth;
- (b) To promote youth activities as an integral part of social and economic development;
- (c) To enhance the active participation of youth in society;
- (d) To promote, among young people, the ideals of peace.

10. The modus operandi conceived in the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities sought to sharpen the focus from these four general objectives to five specific ones, which were:

- (a) To review and assess the situation of youth;
- (b) To evaluate and improve existing policies on youth;
- (c) To develop new policies and programmes where necessary;
- (d) To mobilize resources for the implementation of these policies and programmes;
- (e) To promote and strengthen the exchange of information on youth issues.

11. The strategy for achieving these objectives was built into the conception of the International Youth Year. The Year was thus conceived as a matrix of three concurrent frameworks, each with a triad of component parts. The thematic framework - participation, development, peace - provided three analytical categories to organize the variegated ways in which youth is perceived in different societies. The themes also reflected the ideals and aspirations of young people, and expressed the concerns of the international community about their situation. They supported the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and provided a dynamic concept for integrated action (see A/40/701, paras. 10-18). This action was to take place through the second, spatial framework: at national, regional and international levels, which divided the vast social space devoted to youth activities, and created definite operational parameters. Finally, the need for a timetable of action was fulfilled by the third, temporal framework: before, during, and after 1985. The first element was the selection of objectives and the formulation of a global programme. The Specific Programme of Measures and Activities was consequently adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 36/28). The second temporal element, the actual Year - 1985 - was conceived not merely as a period of observance per se, but also of preliminary evaluation of progress achieved till then, a reassessment of long-term objectives, and the formulation of a strategy for the future. This resulted in the guidelines, which encompass the third temporal element comprising the period after 1985. It is therefore within such a context that the present report is submitted.

B. National level

12. In order to ensure the implementation of the objectives of the Year, the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities contained a series of steps that Member States were encouraged to take (A/36/215, annex, sect. IV, decision 1 (I), para. 28). Within this series, first priority was accorded to the establishment of national co-ordinating committees for the Year, or similar bodies. It was suggested that the composition of the Committees should include representatives of: (a) the Government; (b) non-governmental organizations; and (c) organizations of and for young people themselves. The conception of the national co-ordinating committee was, therefore, that of a mechanism that, once in existence, would contribute directly to the fulfilment of the Year's objectives - before, during, and perhaps even after 1985. In the event, 158 national co-ordinating committees or similar bodies were formed during the preparation and observance of the Year, and this made it unique among United Nations special events (see A/40/701).

13. Given the immense diversity of conditions and policy stances among Member States, each country formed its national committee with a shape and a purpose that was particularly suited to itself. Many variables were involved here. But there were clearly at least two general determinants of the form and content of these committees: the level of social and economic development in the country concerned and the level of awareness of the situation of youth. These two elements were responsible, inter alia, for the degree to which an infrastructure was already available for dealing with the problems of youth. In short, diversity of conditions, policy stances and developmental levels all collectively engendered a commensurate diversity in the nature of the committees and the issues they chose to confront.

14. The heterogeneity of form and functions of the various national committees is reflected in the information that the Secretariat has received about their activities. This pertains not merely to the activities reported (ibid., annex), but also to the nature of the reportage itself. 1/ In view of the disparity of the information, any attempt to create a unified global picture would have run the risk of becoming artificial. However, this danger was prevented by the fact that, well before 1985, there was already in existence a global perspective and agenda for action - the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities. It embodied an international consensus, and therefore allowed for a measure of agreement on how to define youth; how to categorize its problems; how, at least in ideal terms, countries could try and resolve these problems; and how the information flowing in to the Secretariat could be classified.

15. The Year, and its specific programme, therefore provided an opportunity for many States to give definite purpose and direction to youth policies and programmes. It gave countries and their national committees an internationally accepted agenda, and thus focused attention upon some agreed areas of concern, and upon a series of methods by which these issues could be approached. As the activities of the national committees gathered momentum, it became necessary to extend and refine the international consensus that subsumed them. This process, as noted above, resulted in the five regional plans of action for youth and the guidelines. The latter, and the instruments from which they grew, now provide a means of ordering the diverse information available for assessing the impact of the Year.

16. Though the specific mandates of the different national co-ordinating committees varied according to the specific national milieu, there were certain basic conditions that usually had to be fulfilled if the committee was to be successful, among them an adequate commitment to, and adequate means or instruments for furthering the objectives of the Year. The latter implied a capacity to actually co-ordinate ongoing activities, and identify areas that required more or less attention and developmental effort. Co-ordination was thus more effective when governmental, non-governmental and youth representation in the committee was sufficient to give it the proper organizational balance.

17. It was not only necessary for the national committee to open and to nurture effective communications with various agencies concerned with youth issues, but also with those parts of the United Nations system responsible for attending to the problems related to youth. A relationship of mutual exchange did, in the event, develop between many national committees and the Centre for Social Development and

Humanitarian Affairs, which was the focal point in the United Nations system for the preparation and observance of the International Youth Year. This relationship was fostered, on both sides, by a variety of methods and mechanisms that have been regularly reported to the Assembly in previous reports on the Year (A/37/237, A/38/40, A/39/262, A/40/64 and A/40/701). It is clear that the forging of these relationships was an important element contributing to the success of the Year.

18. National committees, however, could only function efficiently if they had the support of the Government, of which most of them were a part. The ultimate responsibility for implementing the objectives of the Year obviously lay, in most cases, with Governments themselves. It was only concerted governmental commitment and action that could possibly manage programmes of legislation, social services, employment, education and vocational training - to mention but a few of the determinants of the situation of youth. The preparation and observance of the Year provide a more than adequate illustration of the amount of political will among Member States. It found fruition in the vast number of policies, programmes, events, competitions, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, seminars, projects and festivals inspired by the Year (see A/40/701, annex). The participation of young people engendered by all these activities is perhaps the most significant achievement of the Year.

19. No discussion of the Year's results at the national level could be complete without a consideration of the social and economic context within which youth policies and programmes operated. It has already been noted how this context largely determined the nature of the national co-ordinating committees. But it clearly went beyond this. One of the most notable findings of recent global surveys of the situation of youth - many of them inspired by the Year - has been that the young are increasingly called upon to bear a disproportionate burden of various social problems (A/40/64-E/1985/5). This has been found to be almost world wide. 2/ Depending upon the social, economic and political contexts in which they functioned, national committees were created and supported, and then disbanded, extended or transformed after 1985. The nature and direction of a country's social policy naturally influenced the nature and viability of its national committee; the level of development determined the material resources available for youth policies and programmes; and ideological stances concerning social welfare policy influenced the process of allocating these resources.

20. Countries with developed market economies display a great diversity of social policies and approaches. Commitments to social policy sometimes vary, depending upon the fortunes of different political forces and the relative power of organized interest groups. The resulting State policy can become a variable entity, since it is often a reflection of shifting alignments of social, economic and political forces. Differing perspectives of the private and public sector also influence the nature of the policies adopted. However, for all this diversity, patterns can still be discerned, and a common one seems to appear with regard to the International Youth Year. In essence, this hinges upon the constructive results of the Year in a multifaceted area. Prior to the Year, most of these countries already had some institutional capacity to deal with the problems of youth, as well as networks to disseminate solutions of these problems. The activities of national committees for the Year tended, therefore, to concentrate on extending the policy or co-ordinating the activities of existing institutions, though this did not preclude many committees from undertaking other valuable initiatives.

Co-ordination often engendered greater sensitivity to the essentially multidimensional nature of youth problems, and a commensurate reduction in the tendency to adopt purely sectoral approaches to these problems. Economic constraints sometimes tended to circumscribe the resources available, but despite this, many gains were registered as a result of the focus provided by the Year. From most of these countries, there has been evidence of greater participation of youth at all levels, of greater solidarity among young people, of a more sensitive appreciation - by society at large - of the needs and aspirations of youth, and of a more clearly heuristic approach to youth policy on the part of Governments.

21. In countries with centrally planned economies, the State assumes major responsibility for dealing with the problems of young people. The constitution of the State, as well as various statements on social policy, assure young people of the services that they need for growth and development. However, there are sometimes difficulties in the attainment of these goals and in the delivery of these services. The International Youth Year provided a focus for working towards these ends, through a general emphasis upon the modernization of existing services as well as the extension of a still broader range of services and facilities. In these societies, full employment, guaranteed by the State, and the mobilization of the populace for the achievement of collective goals generally provides a basis for economic, social and political participation. Many initiatives undertaken in the context of the Year worked towards increasing opportunities for a more specific youth component in these general participatory schemes. Controls over these processes have sometimes been decentralized, and this has encouraged youth to participate at the local level, to solve local problems within the context of collective goals. There has been evidence, from some countries, of active youth involvement in the political decision-making process. Various youth groups and leagues - several of them directly concerned with the Year - have played a significant role, particularly in the educational and cultural fields. In all these activities, the national committees usually played a pivotal role.

22. In the developing world the International Youth Year provided an opportunity - in some instances, for the first time - to articulate a policy on youth. In several countries, the designation of the Year found little or no pre-existing organizational structure for dealing with youth. In such cases, national committees had to confront a very different range of priorities and activities. In the event, many committees provided the starting-point for youth policy, and for the establishment of institutional frameworks to formulate and implement it. This often coincided with the first attempts at creating a network of those interested in the situation and problems of young people. Though a number of developing countries have cohesive family and community structures that prevent a disruptive period between youth and adulthood, the vitality of these structures is being increasingly sapped by the forces of the market, of urbanization, and of new information technology. Traditional obligations and codes of behaviour tend to lose their legitimacy, and consequently young people are cast adrift. Relations between generations are particularly vulnerable, and a positive social policy is an essential requirement.

23. The designation of the Year, and the policy framework offered by its specific programme, provided an agenda and an opportunity to create structures and policies that could focus upon issues concerning youth. In some developing countries, this

facilitated the extension of ongoing youth policies, as it often did in the developed countries. In many other developing countries, however, national co-ordinating committees made the first moves towards creating new institutional and organizational structures for youth. This was predicated upon research, often initiated by the committee, which provided a profile of the country's youth, and the magnitude of its problems. The role of the Government was crucial here, since it provided both funding as well as organizational support. Throughout the developing world, many Governments adopted positive social policies with regard to youth, thereby creating conditions in which the endeavours of the national committees could succeed. The Year, therefore, clearly had a considerable impact in this context, though it should be noted that economic constraints in the developing world attenuated an achievement that was potentially much greater.

24. Thus, the existence of 158 national co-ordinating committees made it possible for Member States to examine their own youth problems within a global context. Where governmental policy on youth issues did not exist, or where it was in the preliminary stages of consideration, the flow of information from other societies, at similar or different stages of development, not only permitted comparison but also provided Governments with an extensive range of policy options and instruments. In the formulation of the global agenda, and in facilitating a global exchange of information germane to youth, the United Nations system played a crucial role, thereby providing an effective spatial framework for the International Youth Year at the national, regional and international levels; action at the national level constituted the bedrock, and activities at the regional and international levels supported it.

C. Regional and international levels

25. Regional and international activities undertaken in the context of the International Youth Year have been reported to the Assembly as they unfolded (see para. 17 above), and are not, therefore, repeated here. The present report aims, rather, at assessing the cumulative impact of these activities upon the process of fulfilling the objectives of the Year. Thus a realistic assessment should attempt to fuse together findings at the national, regional and international levels, thereby arriving at a composite global picture of the results. The picture at the national level was arrived at by analysing the basic mechanisms conceived for the Year - the national committees. It is now necessary to place this within the regional and international frameworks that both support and subsume it.

26. The United Nations system of bodies and agencies, including its regional commissions, worked individually and collectively towards achieving the objectives of the Year. Certain trends can be discerned in the individual activities of the various bodies and agencies that have been recounted in the progress reports to the General Assembly (*idem*). The International Youth Year appears to have acted as a catalyst to develop new programmes and strengthen regular programme activities. There was a considerable expansion of information and promotional activities, which included, among other things, the publication and dissemination of special issues of newsletters and bulletins, articles, information kits and other material for the mass media. The preparation for and observance of the Year also showed that several United Nations bodies and agencies co-ordinated their activities with

Governments in order to encourage or strengthen national and local initiatives, policies and programmes for youth. In many cases, this entailed technical, substantive and material support to various national committees. In addition, the Year seems to have produced other constructive results: the increasing number of focal points for youth appointed by various United Nations agencies and bodies; a greater awareness of youth issues among the governing bodies of several agencies; the incorporation of a youth component in the medium-term plans of several agencies; more critical and heuristic research on youth, which gave rise to new policies and programmes; youth activities in specific sectors, such as youth and employment, health, education, the environment, crime and drugs; more intensive and extensive technical co-operation activities and advisory services to Governments at their request; and better working relations between the United Nations system and groups of non-governmental organizations with a view to reinforcing channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations. 3/

27. All these individual activities were bound to become that much more effective if they unfolded within the framework of inter-agency co-operation. The mechanism that was conceived to make this collaboration operationally effective was the ad hoc inter-agency consultations on youth, which were to be held in conjunction with meetings of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year. In March 1981, at the first ad hoc consultation, a smaller working group was created to facilitate its endeavours: the Informal Inter-Agency Working Group at the Technical Level. These two bodies have met regularly since 1981. The ad hoc consultations were held prior to each of the four sessions of the Advisory Committee. 4/ The Informal Working Group also met four times, the most recent occasion being in April 1986, to consider the follow-up to the International Youth Year. 5/ The contribution that these two groups made to the preparations for and observance of the Year has been recognized, both by the General Assembly, in its resolutions 38/22 and 40/14, and the Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions 1983/26, 1985/30 and 1986/13. Inter-agency mechanisms enabled the organizations within the United Nations system to join forces on youth issues and try to develop strategies, means and ideas for joint action. Various bodies and agencies were provided with the means to conceptualize and further refine their ideas on youth and youth participation, and on the question of how youth programmes should be planned, implemented, monitored and assessed. The result of this was the development of a variety of individual agency activities, and collective inter-agency ones.

28. In this process of inter-agency co-operation, and indeed in all the activities of the International Youth Year, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, was given a pivotal role. The Specific Programme of Measures and Activities designated the Centre as the lead entity and focal point of the United Nations system for the International Youth Year. In this role, the Centre developed a variety of activities that concentrated on advocating the specific programme globally and co-ordinating the complex variety of initiatives that resulted. These activities may be broadly categorized as follows: stimulating, co-ordinating and catalyzing activities in the context of the Year; providing information to countries, organizations and individuals about the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities and other aspects of the Year; initiating a global exchange of information on issues germane to youth; establishing channels of communication with

national committees for the Year, and assisting these committees when requested; providing advisory services to countries at their request; encouraging technical co-operation through the Trust Fund for the International Youth Year; co-operating and collaborating with non-governmental youth organizations; co-ordinating United Nations system-wide inter-agency co-operation; encouraging and co-ordinating youth research at various levels; assisting in the preparation of conferences and meetings pertaining to youth; and reporting to intergovernmental bodies, as required, on the activities of the Year.

29. The programme for the International Youth Year at the regional level was carried out by the regional commissions of the United Nations, and served as a link between activities at the national and international levels. This created a unified flow of operational initiatives, upward from the local and national levels, and downward from the international level with regional bridges linking the two. These bridges were the regional plans of action on youth. Thus, in 1983, in accordance with decisions of the General Assembly (resolutions 35/126 and 37/48), five regional preparatory meetings for the Year were convened: for Africa, at Addis Ababa, from 20 to 24 June; for Asia and the Pacific, at Bangkok, from 26 to 30 September; for Europe, at Costinesti, Romania, from 5 to 9 September; for Latin America, at San José, Costa Rica, from 3 to 7 October; and for Western Asia, at Baghdad, from 9 to 13 October.

30. Each of these regional meetings assessed the situation of youth in the respective region and proposed recommendations that complied with the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities and had a direct bearing on its implementation. Throughout the meetings, there was a degree of uniformity among the recommendations adopted, which suggested that definite priorities could be established during the planning for the Year. It was also recognized that each region had a distinct social and cultural heritage that would have to be taken into account while planning, promoting and implementing youth policies and programmes.

31. The regional meetings developed and adopted regional plans of action for youth. These served as models for national plans of action, as well as directing youth activities at the regional level. An important feature of each regional plan of action was that it dealt with all three levels of activity and implementation: national, regional and international. Another important element of the plans was that they provided guidelines for action during the three distinct phases of the planning and observance of the Year: before the Year (1983-1985), in observance of the Year itself (1985) and during the appropriate follow-up beyond the Year (post-1985). This structure responded to the recognition that the overall improvement of the situation of youth required long-term planning. Thus, the plans were each region's specific contribution to the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth.

32. Various intergovernmental organizations, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe, actively supported and participated in the preparations for and observance of the Year. Progress reports to previous sessions of the Assembly have detailed a number of the activities undertaken by those intergovernmental organizations. In general terms, those activities involved the organization of high-level meetings on youth with a view to assisting Governments in the development of youth policies; training courses and

workshops for youth trainers and workers; research and a variety of studies on the situation and needs of youth; youth exchange programmes; and promotion of the objectives and strategy of the Year through exchange of information and publication of newsletters and bulletins. All these activities collectively contributed to the success of the Year.

33. Within the context of international exchange, several countries demonstrated their willingness to participate and involve the young people of their countries with the plans and intentions of the Year. Ample testimony of the spirit of participation, development and peace between countries was provided by the many international gatherings that took place across the world during and prior to 1985. The impact of these meetings was felt by various groups and governmental bodies at both the national and international levels. One of the main visions encompassed within the broad objectives of the Year was the idea of co-operation. In this sense, the international exchanges and activities did much to enhance and build channels of communication between various national and international governmental and non-governmental agencies that could, in the future, generate many valuable joint projects. These activities sponsored and encouraged active participation and co-operation between the youth of different nations, and helped to engender a feeling of peace and understanding between the potential leaders of the international community.

34. Technical co-operation activities also formed part of the impact of the Year. In 1981, a Trust Fund for the International Youth Year was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/151 to supplement funds from the regular United Nations budget to meet the costs of the programme for the Year. In his report on the preparation and observance of the Year to the fortieth session of the Assembly, the Secretary-General recommended renaming the Fund the United Nations Youth Fund in order to deal with activities beyond 1985 (A/40/701, para. 82). The guidelines endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 40/14, recommended the continuation of the Fund beyond 1985 (A/40/256, annex, decision 1 (IV), para. 95).

35. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was charged, in the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities, with providing appropriate support to national activities upon request; encouraging fund-raising at all levels, particularly for underprivileged youth; and encouraging an increased flow of financial support to projects benefiting youth in developing countries. The Fund has been used, therefore, to support projects at national, regional and international levels.

36. The Fund has supported pragmatic projects of a catalytic or replicable nature, directly involving young people in the development of their countries, especially the least developed countries. It has concentrated on areas such as small-scale youth research projects; infrastructure development; ecology; training and job development; basic health care; and planning and communications activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations in developing countries. The non-governmental organizations have supported the Fund by direct contributions to its capital; by encouraging financial support from Governments; by disseminating information about the programme and the Fund in particular; and by assisting in the implementation of various projects.

37. As of July 1986, 12 Governments 6/ had made cash contributions directly to the Fund. It is intended to include the Fund in the 1986 Pledging Conference for Development Activities. Other contributions in cash and in kind have been received from non-governmental organizations, the public, proceeds from the use of the International Youth Year logo and interest income. As of June 1986, the balance in the Fund was approximately \$US 208,600, of which approximately \$US 124,000 had already been committed. Over 200 requests for projects have been received and of the 55 already approved, 26 have received full or partial funding. A project catalogue containing 31 requests for projects has been distributed to the donor community to generate additional resources. Six projects in the catalogue have so far received financial support. However, requests for support of priority government projects in these areas far exceeds the financial resources available for these purposes, and the projects already received and reviewed could immediately benefit from any funds made available. It is expected that, without additional financial support in the near future, the resources of the Fund will be depleted before the end of 1986. In this event, its utility as an instrument for implementation of the long-term strategy of the Assembly would be lost.

D. Non-governmental organizations

38. Non-governmental organizations have made a significant contribution to the impact of the International Youth Year. The Specific Programme of Measures and Activities conceived their role as being a crucial one in recognition of the fact that many non-governmental organizations concerned with youth had been working in the field before the preparations of the Year began, and would continue to do so after 1985. These organizations were seen as, inter alia: major forces of social and economic development; innovative agencies initiating new approaches to developmental activities at the community and grass-root levels; interpreters of change to local people; and agents influencing Governments to take initiatives towards peace and security. The specific programme also saw non-governmental youth organizations as major contributors to the process of creating a more meaningful participation of young people in society, and recognized their substantive expertise in the development of effective channels of communication between youth and the United Nations.

39. In addition to the traditional dealings with international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities called upon the Secretariat to develop closer links with other non-governmental organizations dealing with youth at international, regional, national and local levels. During the preparation for the Year, this was done through more effective utilization of existing mechanisms, as well as through the creation of some new ones. The wide-ranging consultations resulted in the maximum participation of the organizations and their substantial youth memberships. It was also a demonstration of maximizing the use of existing resources in innovative ways. As a part of this process, international non-governmental organizations worked closely with the Secretariat to seek closer co-operation in the planning for the Year and the ongoing youth programme. They made considerable contributions, both in cash and in kind, and provided for several volunteers to work with the Secretariat. In some cases, the relationship between

non-governmental organizations and the Secretariat were formalized through the signing of letters of agreement for specific co-operation in the context of the Year.

40. The Secretariat used several other mechanisms to consult with the non-governmental organization community, both for its long-term youth programme as well as for the programme of the Year. In the planning of their activities and meetings, many non-governmental organizations consulted the Secretariat, which, in turn, promoted and participated in these activities and meetings. Non-governmental organizations articulated their positions in all the sessions of the Advisory Committee for the Year, and participated in the five regional preparatory meetings for the Year. The Geneva Informal Meeting of International Youth Non-Governmental Organizations, the Vienna non-governmental organization Committee on Youth and the collective consultations held by UNESCO played major roles in assisting the process of communicating with non-governmental organizations at various levels. For non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs provides regular services in implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The Department of Public Information, the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), the Non-Governmental Liaison Service and the liaison officers of other Secretariat offices, such as the secretariat of the International Year of Peace, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Centre against Apartheid, all provide continuing opportunities for consultation.

41. Within the context of the Year, the non-governmental organizations conducted an enormous number of activities, spread over a wide operational area. The diversity of activity in spatial terms - local, national, regional and international levels - was matched by the diversity of the subject-matter that was addressed. These activities have been covered in previous progress reports, and several of them were detailed in the annex to the report on the Year to the fortieth session of the General Assembly (A/40/701, annex). Certain general trends can, however, be discerned from the vast amount of information that the Secretariat has received about these activities. In their efforts to promote the Year, many non-governmental organizations used their information systems, their networks of regional and national affiliates, and various other established channels of communication with youth. In conjunction with this process, several of these organizations established task forces and working groups to develop and implement specific programmes in the context of participation, development and peace. Non-governmental organizations contributed substantially to the growing corpus of knowledge on the global situation of youth; they played an equally important role in the dissemination of this information. A variety of studies have been reported on diverse subjects such as unemployment, the social situation of students, disability, family welfare, educational reform, and counselling. There is also evidence of action programmes that grew out of such studies. Many non-governmental and student organizations organized various regional meetings, seminars and conferences emphasizing the objectives, strategies and programmes of the Year.

E. The United Nations World Conference for the
International Youth Year

42. From 13 to 15 November 1985, the General Assembly devoted itself to youth and the International Youth Year. These plenary meetings were designated the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year (1985). The Conference represented the culmination of the Year, and lent to it all the political and moral authority of a full plenary session of the General Assembly. Delegates of over 100 Member States addressed the World Conference and provided the international community with a comprehensive assessment of the results of the Year. As noted earlier in this report, the proceedings of the Conference constitute a crucial element in the actual evaluation of the Year. Assessments made by Member States at the Conference are therefore integrated into the body of the present report, since they cannot always be easily distinguished from other assessments made by Member States in the information they have provided to the Secretariat. This section of the report consequently presents a brief synopsis of this significant event.

43. Though the World Conference marked the culmination of the Year, it was also, in line with the original concept, the beginning of a long-term process. The proceedings of the Conference showed clearly that the designation of 1985 as the International Youth Year became an idea and an organizing principle for the meaningful concentration of world attention on the situation of youth at the international, regional and national levels. In their statements to the Conference, many delegations expressed their appreciation at the designation of the Year, and stated that it had highlighted the importance of ongoing work in the field of youth. Activities and programmes in preparation for the Year had created increased awareness and concern for the situation of youth, resulting in the exchange of experience and information, and had encouraged a new perception of youth as a positive force for development and social change. The Year had focused attention on the effective participation of young people in society, attempted to overcome institutionalized barriers to that participation, and had mobilized practical action. Most speakers recognized that programmes and activities in the field of youth were ongoing, and that the Year was thus part of a continuing process.

44. A majority of speakers emphasized the significant contribution made by the national co-ordinating committees to the success of the Year in their respective countries. The composition, structure, activities and achievements of many committees were detailed, and some delegates raised the question of the continuation beyond 1985. In this regard, several delegations confirmed that the work of national committees in their countries would be long-term and continuous, and the co-ordination of activities after 1985 would be advantageous. Hopes were expressed that the links established among national co-ordinating committees would intensify international co-operation. Broad and continuing participation of non-governmental organizations in the committees was frequently mentioned. Some speakers cautioned against the creation of too many centralized structures, preferring to leave the initiative and responsibility for activities to young people themselves; others felt that young people's initiatives needed an institutional structure to be effective. Thus, the need of a national machinery for youth was stressed, particularly in those developing countries where young people were isolated, youth organizations were weak and further action was required.

45. Many delegations expressed their views concerning the importance of the three themes of International Youth Year, "Participation, Development, Peace", in relation to one another. There was a recognition that all three themes were closely interrelated and could not be easily separated. Many speakers attached primary importance to the active participation of young people in all facets of their societies; for others, the theme of development, and particularly the need to aid the least developed countries, was crucial. Still others spoke of the paramount importance of peace and disarmament, stating that without peace there could be no participation or development.

46. A number of speakers reflected upon the situation of youth in the world. Within the context of the three themes of the International Youth Year, several of the major problems affecting young people were listed, such as unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, discrimination in education, lack of housing and shelter, deterioration of the environment, insufficient medical care and limited access to their cultural heritage. Concern was expressed about the marginalization of some young people, as well as the particular vulnerability of certain subgroups of youth. Several delegations emphasized the need to address these problems within specific national contexts; others pointed to the need for regional and international action to support national initiatives, particularly in the areas of providing financial and technical support. Attention was drawn to the special problems faced by young people in the least developed countries, and to the fact that specific efforts would have to be directed at improving their situation. Attention was also drawn to the need for cross-cultural contacts and activities among the youth of programmes among which reforestation campaigns, camping and scouting were emphasized.

47. A majority of delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of the United Nations during the preparations for and observance of the Year, and for the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. Several speakers stated that the guidelines were a balanced synthesis of experience gained, and an appropriate reflection of the previous strategies adopted for the Year. Many declared that the guidelines provided a valuable conceptual framework for future activities, and were pleased to note that they avoided prescribing a strict set of policies and measures, and that the emphasis remained at the national level, at the discretion of individual Governments. The guidelines would serve to assist Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in undertaking programmes and activities that addressed issues of youth. Several delegates noted with satisfaction that many provisions, suggestions or recommendations made in the guidelines conformed with or complemented already existing national youth policies or programmes; in other cases, it was noted, the guidelines served to provide general parameters within which new policies and programmes could be developed.

III. CONCLUSION

48. The assessment above would appear to indicate that the International Youth Year did indeed have a considerable global impact. Much progress has been made in the process of bringing the problems of youth, and their enormous social consequences, to the attention of the Governments and peoples of the world. Today, a refined international consensus - in the form of the guidelines - is in place as

an instrument to combat a situation that is a difficult one. There is today, a framework for action where none existed before. Youth is an integral part of the human condition. In demographic terms, it forms an increasing component of the total population (see A/40/64-E/1985/5). Its problems will always need consistent attention and care. The consequences of these problems cover the entire range of societal life. The solution of these problems is therefore an intrinsic part of the whole development process. The Year initiated a process of attention to and concern with these problems. This happened because the very designation of an International Youth Year became, ipso facto, an idea and an organizing principle for the meaningful concentration of world attention on the situation of youth.

49. The primary significance of the Year, and the national, regional and international policies, programmes and instruments that came out of it, was increased global awareness of the situation of youth. On the part of many decision-makers, as well as on the part of the general public, there appears to be a more intensive and extensive appreciation of the unique position of youth, based upon a deeper understanding of their specific needs, their aspirations and their creative potential. Many young people have benefited from this process, not only in the direct sense of gaining from programmes on youth, but also in developing a greater sense of solidarity, of identity, and of aspiration. This is all a part of the global consensus which made possible the designation, preparation and observance of the Year. The dynamic links established between these two levels of discourse and action - youth at large, and the world at large - have thus constituted a powerful impetus towards improving the situation of young people.

50. Perhaps the most important element of this new awareness is the fact that many old stereotypes and visions of youth and youth reality have now been superseded. They have been replaced by a new perspective on youth. There is much evidence to show that young people are increasingly seen as real agents for development, rather than merely passive recipients of it. Thus, as noted above, the Year was an occasion for initiating many new approaches to youth problems, most of them holistic, and extending beyond partial and isolated sectors and dimensions. The Year provided a framework, particularly in some developing countries, for the initiation of a process directed at the establishment of a unified national youth policy, elaborated on wide inter-institutional and multidisciplinary bases. Closely inhering in this process was a significant participative component, which was of course supplied by young people themselves.

51. It is possible for policy-makers today to draw upon a large corpus of specialized knowledge on youth. This did not appear to have been the case a decade ago. While some knowledge did exist, it has been demonstrably expanded and refined. As the knowledge base has grown, so also have policies and programmes that emanate from it. There has been considerable evidence of a variety of global and sectoral studies on the situation of youth, many of them inspired by the Year. The work of researchers on youth has tended to receive more recognition. Seminars and workshops on different aspects of youth have been organized across the globe, creating, for the first time, something like a network of international research and researchers on the subject. Also for the first time, a sizeable number of countries prepared or commissioned country monographs on youth. Several of these appear to have at least two major elements in common: an objective assessment of

the situation of youth, and young people's own perceptions of this situation. A number of these national profiles are now being used as the basis for comprehensive youth policies.

52. It was noted above that youth policies and programmes have grown because of an expanding knowledge base. While the latter constitutes a necessary condition, it is by no means a sufficient one. Such a condition is fulfilled by the Government in question having the commitment and political will to translate knowledge into policy, and the wherewithal to translate such policy into action. The national co-ordinating committee for the Year was an appropriate mechanism for accomplishing the former; and the fact that 158 such committees were formed is more than adequate testimony to the existence of political will and commitment on the part of Governments. A combination of the knowledge base, the mechanism to translate it into policy, and the political will to do so - all these made for the significant impact of the Year at the national level. To this must be added a further crucial determinant of success: the involvement of young people themselves in the whole process. Here too, the Year provided a focus and an organizing principle that made for an emerging solidarity of identity and aspiration among young people, both within their countries and across national frontiers.

53. One fundamental element in the set of sufficient conditions for success, however, was missing. The fact that the financial resources necessary to translate youth policies into action were not always readily available attenuated the positive impact of the Year. The problem of economic constraints, though with considerable difference in degree, was manifest across the world. While this was usually a reflection of constrained economic growth, it was also, at least in part, a consequence of other sectors being given priority in the allocation of resources. There is evidence that social development investments have, in some cases, been reduced in favour of other areas of expenditure. Austerity and adjustments for recession have had significant effects, particularly in the developing world, where most of the world's young people live. ^{2/} Representatives of a number of Member States drew attention at the World Conference to the limited resources available for youth policies and programmes, despite a determination to improve the situation of youth.

54. The impact of the Year at the global level is the sum total of its impact in various countries and the impact of the activities carried out by the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and the non-governmental organizations. These activities were conducted at the local, national, regional and international levels. The United Nations system co-ordinated and supported the wide variety of national initiatives and actions, and helped to translate this national concern into an international consensus embodied in the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 40/14.

55. The guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth provide the basis for an ongoing global strategy on youth and for the follow-up to the International Youth Year. If extensively used, they will offer a way of ensuring that the gains made during the Year will not be lost. While it may be possible to speak of a successful outcome of the Year, it should also be recognized that this success by no means represents a permanent state. There is undoubtedly a need to build upon the success so far achieved and the guidelines represent an internationally accepted strategy to accomplish this.

56. The follow-up of a special event is, by its very nature, a more complex process than the event itself. This is because it has less of the momentum and publicity that invariably attach themselves to a special event. It also has even less of a claim on resources that may already be scanty. The follow-up is none the less important, arguably as important as the event itself, since without it all the gains made might be lost. In the case of the International Youth Year, follow-up is also important because it represents the ongoing youth programme of the United Nations, of which the Year was only a part.

57. The strategy and instruments for the follow-up are, for the most part, already in existence. At the international level, with a global ambit, are the guidelines. Within the United Nations system, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is the focal point for promoting and advocating their use. At the regional level are the regional applications of the guidelines and the regional plans of action. The regional commissions of the United Nations are responsible for promoting and co-ordinating activities at this level. At the national level are the various specific plans, policies and programmes pertaining to youth, as well as the more general guidelines. Responsibility here lies largely with Governments themselves, the various activities being co-ordinated either by national committees that have continued to exist beyond 1985, or by the appropriate government departments. Finally, cutting across all three levels, are the youth and youth-related non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations.

58. In conclusion, an adequate follow-up for the Year, which is synonymous with the ongoing youth programme of the United Nations, would therefore entail a complex set of activities: promoting, monitoring and appraising the use of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth; supporting national committees that have continued beyond 1985, or other government mechanisms with similar functions; collecting and disseminating information on the situation of youth; initiating and co-ordinating heuristic research on youth; strengthening technical co-operation activities and the United Nations Youth Fund; intensifying consultation and collaboration with non-governmental organizations, and other intergovernmental organizations, and strengthening United Nations system-wide inter-agency co-operation in the context of youth policies and programmes, with the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs continuing its role as the United Nations system focal point for youth affairs.

59. Looking backwards, the saliency of these factors in the success of the International Youth Year is manifest; looking forward, there is an equally manifest need to sustain them, even despite the present financial crisis of the Organization. It may in this context be appropriate to consider, inter alia, the following lines of action to be pursued in parallel to the consistent implementation of the guidelines:

(a) A comprehensive review of the situation of youth every four years, with each study emphasizing a salient sectoral issue germane to youth as the basis of a periodical review and appraisal of the use of the guidelines by the Commission for Social Development, and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council and by the General Assembly;

(b) The General Assembly might wish to consider in the interest of maintaining the momentum generated by the International Youth Year, the recommendation contained in the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/28, that a certain day be designated to be observed every year as International Youth Day. This recommendation, which carries no financial implications, was also included in three of the five regional plans of action for the International Youth Year.

Notes

1/ Includes replies from Member States to a note verbale and questionnaire sent out in early 1986.

2/ See The Situation of Youth in the 1980s and Prospects and Challenges for the Year 2000 (future ST/ESA/186).

3/ This is the subject of a separate report to the General Assembly at its present session (A/41/578).

4/ The participants in the ad hoc inter-agency consultations for the International Youth Year were: Department of Public Information, United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, Division of Narcotic Drugs, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Volunteers programme, United Nations Fund for Populations Activities, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations University, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Far East, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization and United Nations Industrial Development Organization. The consultations were held on 26 and 27 March 1981; 10 and 11 June 1982; 29 and 30 March 1984; and 21 and 22 March 1985.

5/ The participants at the meeting of the Informal Inter-Agency Working Group at the Technical Level for the International Youth Year were: Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Volunteers programme, International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Health Organization. It met on 18 and 19 March 1982; 18 and 19 January 1983; 17 and 18 December 1984; and 28 and 29 April 1986.

6/ Canada, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Japan, Liberia, Malaysia, Netherlands, Philippines, Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand.