



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/41/SR.20
23 October 1986

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

AGENDA ITEM 85: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
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AGENDA ITEM 91: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/354, A/41/618)

1. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) said that the current recession which continued to batter the world economy despite a slight recovery in a few developed countries, had inevitably caused or exacerbated a deterioration in the socio-cultural environment throughout the world, particularly in the developing countries. Unemployment notwithstanding, and despite the efforts undertaken to reduce its sharp edge, there was an alarming decline in public and private expenditures in the social services sector. Under those circumstances, it was difficult to conceive of a better and a more balanced world where the chronic problems of malnutrition, hunger, illiteracy and diseases would be eradicated. Tunisia believed that economic progress should not be achieved at the expense of social development. Mankind was not only the means but also the end of all development effort. Consequently, development and revitalization of human resources was one of the basic conditions and pre-conditions for all progress.

2. Tunisia recognized that the world was passing through a painful period of transition, but it was convinced that all countries must agree to the inevitable sacrifices in order to bring about the establishment of a new socio-economic world order. In the current period of the persistent economic crisis, the attention of the international community should be focused on the situation of the fragile population groups such as the elderly, the disabled, the homeless and those who continued to live below the poverty threshold. The central responsibility, of course, lay with Governments, but that should not exclude the strengthening of international co-operation in order to realize the dignity and human value of such persons.

3. To that end, it was essential to establish and strengthen education, health and nutrition programmes likely to prevent to the greatest extent possible the causes of disability. While sometimes more costly, prevention remained the cornerstone of any effort in that regard. Training courses would facilitate the

(Mr. Ben Hamida, Tunisia)

use of new techniques and provide an opportunity for the exchange of experience and knowledge in the areas of prevention, re-education and integration into the society of disabled persons. His Government spared no effort to overcome the obstacles to the implementation of the Programme of Action, despite the scarcity of trained personnel and the enormity of the financial resources to be mobilized to ensure the well-being of the disabled.

4. Finally, his delegation suggested that in the future it would be wise to provide in the questionnaire a column on the categorization of disabled persons and the extent of their disability in order to identify more clearly the needs to be met and the priorities to be established with a view to channeling and rationalizing joint efforts and making maximum use of resources for the improvement of the situation of the disabled.

5. Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas) said that now that international awareness of the issues of aging, youth, the disabled and crime prevention and control had been heightened, the international community must accept the responsibility of keeping the momentum going both nationally and internationally. That was a challenging task, given that conditions appeared not to be conducive to the formulation and implementation of social development programmes. The Bahamas agreed that economic and social policies ought to have a mutually reinforcing effect on the overall development process. Furthermore, the Bahamas believed that the task of maintaining and strengthening social development programmes was not as complex or as difficult as it appeared. There were a number of excellent tools which equipped the international community to move forward at both the national and international levels. A spirit of co-operation would lead the way in finding solutions.

6. The current setback in the development and implementation of social programmes was only temporary. Much remained to be achieved by consistent efforts to sustain activities at the present time. United Nations activities should emphasize the developmental as well as humanitarian components of issues pertaining to the elderly and aging. In the Bahamas, the aged were provided for by families, rather than being placed in homes. The Government was continuing to explore ways to ensure that the aged had the best living conditions possible.

7. The Bahamas, being a young nation, had always placed high priority on youth from both a leadership and developmental point of view. The National Youth Co-ordinating Council was giving due attention, in close co-operation with youth and youth groups, to the modalities of implementing and integrating youth programmes.

8. The Bahamas believed that those who were physically challenged had much to offer. It had therefore taken steps to educate the public through the mass media, seminars and forums on the potential contributions of the disabled and the importance of integrating them into the development process.

9. Despite the atmosphere of fear resulting from increased activities in drug trafficking, organized crime and international terrorism, the Bahamas was heartened

(Mr. Hepburn, Bahamas)

that the international community's response had been to take concerted action in matters relating to crime prevention and control. The Bahamas had taken particular note of guidelines calling for training and technical co-operation. It shared the view of Jamaica and others on the importance of regional and subregional collaboration in crime prevention.

10. The recommendations on the various items under consideration formed the necessary framework to continue the work of the Organization and to consolidate the gains already made in social development. Accordingly, they should be favourably considered to the extent possible within existing resources. The Bahamas wished to commend non-governmental organizations for their important role in promoting social development and in helping Governments to formulate appropriate programmes.

11. Mrs. PAMBI (Cameroon) said that the problems of young people were one of the major concerns of all Governments. They were a cause for both concern and hope, and it was encouraging to note that the Committee continued to debate measures which would help to integrate them into the development process.

12. The training of young people and their integration into society were two of the major priorities of the Cameroonian Government. Educational and training establishments were open both to Cameroonian nationals and to refugees from southern Africa and Chad. Youth Centres had been established, where young people could learn crafts and clerical and domestic skills. Special units toured from village to village to show films to young people in rural areas. Holiday villages had been built for young people from poor families, and national and international work camps were organized every year. The National Office for Participation in Development provided material assistance to young people who wished to establish themselves as farmers or craftsmen. Re-education centres had been built to help young people who were unemployed.

13. It was regrettable that certain nations, which had achieved a commendable degree of social integration for their own young people, still indirectly supported the persecution of young people in southern Africa. The international community must work actively to improve the situation of young South Africans and young Palestinians.

14. Cameroon supported the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The Government had set up schools and training centres for young disabled people, including the National Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled in Yaoundé. Some establishments were facing technical and financial problems, and any assistance would be most welcome. A nation-wide census of disabled people was currently in progress. Equality of opportunity for disabled people could only be achieved by concerted action and greater national and international awareness of the problems they faced.

15. In her country, the elderly were cared for by their families and made a valuable contribution to the upbringing of younger generations. Nevertheless, Cameroon had contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging in

(Mrs. Pambi, Cameroon)

November 1985, and had taken part in the meeting on aging and development organized by the American Association of Retired Persons in April 1986. Her country supported the recommendations contained in paragraph 6 of the International Plan of Action on Aging, and considered that the inter-regional consultations on development and social welfare, to be held in Vienna in 1987, should consider all aspects concerned with aging.

16. Mr. KOON (Malaysia), speaking on agenda items 86 and 87, said that young people were a source of inspiration and hope for the future, but they must be carefully nurtured and integrated into society. It was essential to instill positive values in young people in order to maximize their potential.

17. The International Youth Year had given developing countries the opportunity to formulate their own youth programmes and review the problems of their young people in the light of the guidelines which had been established. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Policies and Programmes Involving Young People: Participation, Development, Peace" (A/41/621) provided a basis for achieving the objectives of the International Youth Year.

18. Young people were Malaysia's greatest human resource and accounted for about 60 per cent of the population. However, they were vulnerable to the unhealthy social influences connected with modernization, and a large number had resorted to drug abuse. The time and money needed to rehabilitate them had held back the process of national development. Youth volunteer services provided education and counselling, and youth training centres had been established to prepare youth leaders and workers in vocational fields. Young people were helped to set up in small businesses or co-operatives.

19. A Committee for ASEAN Youth Co-operation had been established in September 1975 by the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations. Its objectives included regional co-operation, active involvement of young people in their country's affairs and the promotion of equality and justice among youth. The Committee had also participated in events organized by national Governments, United Nations agencies and the International Youth Year Advisory Committee. Workers from the United Nations Volunteer Force and the United States Peace Corps Volunteers had also worked in Malaysia. Bilateral youth programmes had also been organized in collaboration with other nations.

20. The report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/41/631) had led many to question the results achieved by the International Plan of Action on Aging. In his region, basic family structures had rapidly changed, and it was increasingly difficult to maintain the extended-family system. It was essential to provide facilities for elderly people and find an alternative to institutionalization. The knowledge and experience of elderly people could prove invaluable in community service. The United Nations Trust Fund for Aging should concentrate its resources on ensuring better co-ordination of programmes for the aged.

21. Mrs. MAJID (Pakistan) said that the problems of the developing countries should be emphasized in discussing the questions now before the Committee. In Pakistan, the prevention of disability, rehabilitation, and equal opportunities for the disabled remained matters of high priority. The recommendations of the United Nations World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had been integrated into its National Plan of Action and its sixth Five-Year Development Plan. Pakistan was concerned over the decline in contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and urged all Member States to support the Fund.

22. In connection with International Youth Year, the Government of Pakistan had formed a National Co-ordination Committee to sponsor events with the full participation of youth organizations. Attention had been focused on the problems of youth, their role in society and the promotion of peace and development. An exchange of youth delegations had also been conducted with a number of countries. Pakistan agreed that adequate follow-up of International Youth Year activities was needed.

23. In her country, where assistance to senior citizens was rooted in social values and traditions, a National Committee on Aging had been established to implement the recommendations of the International Plan of Action on Aging. Pakistan was concerned over diminishing financial support for technical co-operation projects and other United Nations activities in the field of aging.

24. A plan to prevent crime should address the socio-economic inequities which were often its underlying cause. The developing countries, in particular, required assistance in improving their national machinery for crime prevention and control. Their situation, as well as the distinguishing features of each society, must be respected in formulating criminal justice standards. The Pakistani Government was intent on protecting the fundamental rights of its citizens and controlling crime as part of its Five-Point Programme for an Islamic welfare State.

25. In conclusion, her delegation fully endorsed the conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/41/613). New forms of crime, especially transnational crime, should be the subject of further study, and technical co-operation should be extended to the developing countries for the prevention of crime.

26. Mr. DE BONIS (Malta) emphasized that the International Plan of Action on Aging had been born of consensus, and that same spirit should continue to prevail. The non-governmental organizations had had much to do with the success of the United Nations World Assembly on Aging, and it was time for Governments to play a greater role.

27. In many countries, great strides had been taken in the field of aging, but clearly, an enormous amount of work remained to be done. While implementation of the Plan of Action was chiefly the responsibility of Member States, the United Nations, through its Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNSDA), should continue to play a vital role, particularly with respect to

(Mr. De Bono, Malta)

the developing countries. The United Nations Trust Fund for Aging clearly needed support but that could not be achieved by divisive measures. The situation of the Fund reflected a general shift towards bilateral and project-specific aid, which had been brought out at the recent meeting of Commonwealth Ministers of Health in the Bahamas. The message from the aid donors was clearly that greater precision in targeting priorities would ensure more effective use of the limited resources available.

28. More support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was required to deal with the relationship between population and the question of aging. Consideration should be given to whether UNESCO was adapting education techniques sufficiently to a population whose life span was increasing, and to what the World Health Organization (WHO) had accomplished through its global programme on health care for the elderly.

29. The problems of mass aging must be defined, measured and monitored as a first step towards resolving them in a cost-effective manner. Elaboration and execution of practical policies and plans would then be the next steps. All of those steps required skills and appropriate training. In that connection, the Government of Malta had set up an International Institute on Aging whose primary task was to train personnel from developing countries in the skills necessary to implement the Plan of Action.

30. Despite the disappointing loss of momentum in activities on aging, there was new hope in the proposal, co-sponsored by Malta, to strengthen the implementation of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging.

31. Mr. NABIEL (Afghanistan) said that despite all that had been done for youth, in many countries young people were still seriously, and even increasingly, affected by such problems as unemployment, violence and drug abuse, which undermined the important role they should play to benefit society. In his own country the State was responsible under the Constitution for providing young people with the education, training and jobs they needed to ensure their all-round development as individuals and as creative participants in society. The Government was expanding job opportunities for youth, increasing its participation in public affairs and vastly expanding the country's educational and recreational infrastructure, all with the active participation of the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan. For example, youth brigades had been organized to promote health and combat illiteracy, drug abuse and crime.

32. His country, as a victim of an inhuman and undeclared war imposed upon it, attached special importance to preserving peace and taught its youth to love and fight for peace. Its youth delegations had participated actively and extensively, both nationally and internationally, in many peace activities and had, through the issuance of declarations and the adoption of resolutions, solemnly declared that it would spare no effort to promote complete disarmament and to ensure peace and prosperity everywhere. His country's youth was especially active in promoting the lofty ideals of the International Youth Year and agreed that the Year was a continuously evolving process rather than an end in itself.

(Mr. Nabel, Afghanistan)

33. Turning to agenda item 90, he said that the disabled were entitled to equal opportunities and to an equal share of the benefits of social and economic development. He commended the important role played by the United Nations in support of the disabled, and particularly the goals reflected in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. In his own country, a commission including high-ranking officials, promoted and co-ordinated disability-related activities, and much work was being done on rehabilitation and reintegration of disabled persons into society.

34. Mr. DAMM (Chile) said that his delegation supported initiatives aimed at rationalizing the Third Committee's important and promising work on social issues, an area in which his own country had shown a widely acknowledged and undeniable clear-sightedness, despite distorted representations to the contrary.

35. In Chile State subsidies were part of the Government strategy to combat poverty and provide the poor with the basic necessities they required to develop their full potential. In fact the World Bank had commended Chile for its success in channelling social expenditures towards the poorest sectors of the population, despite the serious economic crisis, so as to provide it with urgently needed social services.

36. Even though Chile was a developing country, its social indicators and general welfare were on a level with those of the most developed countries. That was reflected particularly in the statistics relating to mortality, malnutrition and education.

37. Lastly, on the question of aging, his delegation shared the concerns reflected in the Dominican proposals but reserved its judgement on them pending replies to the questions they raised.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.