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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF PRESIDENT MACHEL OF MOZAMBIQUE

1. The CHAIRMAN extended his condolences to the Government and people of Mozambique on the death of their President, Mr. Moises Samora Machel, in an air crash that morning.
2. Mr. SEWADE (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, Mrs. ITO (Japan), speaking on behalf of the Group of Asian States, Mrs. DARGEL (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, Ms. DIEGUEZ (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and Mr. BRAUN (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, paid tribute to the memory of President Machel.
3. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of President Machel of Mozambique.
4. Mr. DAVANE (Mozambique) said that, on behalf of the Government and people of his country, he wished to thank the Chairman, the representatives of the regional groups and the entire Committee for the condolences expressed on the occasion of the tragic death of President Samora Machel. Their expressions of sympathy would be conveyed to the Government and the people of Mozambique and the families of the deceased.

AGENDA ITEM 85: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/435, A/41/631)

AGENDA ITEM 86: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/340-E/1986/90, A/41/621)

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

5. Miss BARKER-HARLAND (United Kingdom), speaking on agenda item 91 on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, said that crime was becoming a transnational phenomenon. The United Nations clearly had a valuable role to play in crime prevention and control. In its activities, the Organization should focus on action-oriented projects and ensure that it responded to emerging needs. The

(Miss Barker-Harland,  
United Kingdom)

European Community countries had endorsed the Milan Plan of Action, submitted to the General Assembly after its adoption by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The Plan of Action included a request for a review of United Nations activities in that field, which would provide an opportunity for an evaluation of programmes and structures. The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control had submitted some far-reaching proposals to the Economic and Social Council. However, since the above-mentioned review was to be submitted to the first session of the Council in 1987, the European Community countries accepted its decision to defer consideration of those proposals.

6. The European Community countries welcomed the initial report on the measures taken to implement General Assembly resolution 40/32 (A/41/618). They wished to stress the importance of the human rights aspects of crime prevention and criminal justice, and welcomed moves to strengthen co-operation in that field within the United Nations system. They commended the Secretariat for its work with the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa in the establishment of the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The Twelve also welcomed efforts to increase the exchange of information on crime-related matters, and considered that wide dissemination of the Milan Plan of Action, the Guiding Principles for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Context of Development, and other instruments could be best achieved at the national level. The Secretariat also provided technical co-operation and advisory services in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, including an inventory of technical co-operation projects for wide circulation. Such a pooling of resources would be of particular advantage in regional activities.

7. Mr. SVARTBERG (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the Nordic countries had noted with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/41/631). However, the current financial situation of the United Nations left little room for new initiatives, and further cuts in existing programmes could not be excluded.

8. Turning to agenda item 90, he said that United Nations activities for disabled people, with their emphasis on equal opportunities, reflected a commitment shared by the Nordic countries. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/41/605) showed encouraging progress at the national level and in efforts to incorporate activities for disabled people into regular bilateral assistance programmes.

9. The Nordic countries considered that every organization in the United Nations system should be responsible for implementing those parts of the World Programme of Action which came within its sphere of competence. For that reason, however, they had doubts about the value of a permanent trust fund exclusively for disability-related projects, which might obscure the need for existing projects to make provision for the needs of disabled people. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions of

(Mr. Svartberg, Sweden)

the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination had done valuable work in co-ordinating the activities of various United Nations bodies. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development had provided important advisory services on disability policies and programmes. The contribution of non-governmental organizations was also vital to the success of the Decade of Disabled Persons.

10. A meeting of experts was to be held in 1987 to evaluate the progress achieved at the mid-point of the Decade of Disabled Persons. The Government of Sweden had expressed its willingness to host the meeting, and was prepared to cover the additional costs involved in holding a meeting away from the Secretariat's base in Vienna. The Nordic countries therefore hoped that the General Assembly would decide to hold the meeting of experts in Stockholm.

11. The International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, the World Programme of Action and the Decade of Disabled Persons had raised the hopes of the disabled persons of the world. It was essential that all countries should make a sustained effort to fulfil their expectations. The planned meeting of experts would increase awareness of the situation of disabled persons and give fresh impetus to the campaign to improve their lives.

12. Ms. DU Yong (China), speaking on agenda item 85, said that the living conditions and social welfare of elderly people had improved in recent years. Their legal rights and interests were now better protected in many countries. The proportion of elderly people in China was increasing rapidly; in 1982, a National Committee on Aging had been established, run by governmental and non-governmental organizations, research institutions and the mass media. Local committees on aging had been established in 26 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions.

13. The Chinese approach stressed the part which elderly people could play in society. Seventy per cent of retired people in China were in good health, and they possessed a wealth of experience. Elderly people worked in schools, public advisory services and research and helped to maintain public order. The elderly were given the opportunity to learn and to enrich their lives. More than 100 universities for the aged had been set up throughout the country, where elderly people could study a variety of subjects. There were recreation centres, and special television and radio programmes for the elderly.

14. China had recently started to conduct research into gerontology, and in April 1986, the Chinese National Association of Gerontology had been established. An International Seminar on Aging had also been held in Beijing in May 1986.

15. Ms. BARUTCU (Turkey) said that more than 500 million people the world over were discriminated against because they were disabled. Individuals, Governments and international organizations should seek to alleviate that situation. Turkey had proclaimed its own International Year of Disabled Persons at the same time that it had been declared by the General Assembly in 1981. The Turkish Co-ordination Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons had done pioneer work in the field and had sponsored a host of activities, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

(Ms. Barutçu, Turkey)

16. The Turkish Government had intensified its activities on behalf of the disabled during the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Foremost among the measures it had taken to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons was the establishment of its Co-ordination Committee as a permanent body in 1985. Renamed the National Co-ordination Committee for the Protection of the Disabled, it was responsible for ensuring the adoption of measures for the treatment of the disabled and the prevention of disabling accidents. It also provided for social, medical and vocational rehabilitation and education of the disabled, and served as a co-ordinating agent for the public, private, national and international institutions rendering services to the disabled. It was Turkey's goal to educate, employ and improve the living standards of the disabled by 1992, with a view to reintegrating them into society at large.

17. During the first half of the Decade, new general hospitals and rehabilitation centres for the disabled had been established. Medical rehabilitation was available at university faculties and Government ministries, along with some private associations and foundations, providing vocational rehabilitation. There were increasing efforts to provide jobs and job training for the disabled.

18. Special schools had been established for the education of disabled children. Disabled children were also educated in special classes within the normal school environment. As a preventative measure, Turkey was using the mass media to educate its population at large on the major causes of disability.

19. In conclusion, from the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (document A/41/605), it was clear that, although much had been accomplished in the early part of the Decade, further action was required at both the national and international levels. In that connection, mobilization of public opinion on behalf of the Decade was imperative.

20. Mr. GJIKA (Albania) said that the younger generation was playing a greater role in the development of human society, and yet, in many countries, the ideals and aspirations of youth were not taken into account. Worse still, the younger population was often the object of oppression, exploitation, racial discrimination and social injustices.

21. Since the ideals and aspirations of young people were bound up with their national identities, a discussion of the problems of youth could not be dissociated from the political situation in general. The threat to international peace and security posed by the two super-Powers, and the world crisis in general, were making it difficult for young people to realize their aspirations or participate in political, social and economic life. Youth, particularly young women, were among the first to enter the ranks of the unemployed and financial constraints were closing off educational opportunities to young men and women and pushing up illiteracy rates, even in the developed countries.

(Mr. Gjika, Albania)

22. The burden of solving the world's political, economic and social problems fell to the younger generation, and many of the freedom-fighters in Asia, Africa and Latin America were, in fact, young men and women. Young men and women, more than anyone else, were thrown into prisons or subjected to torture because they dared to raise their voices in protest.

23. In Albania, however, the rights of youth were guaranteed, as were the material conditions necessary to enjoy them. School doors were open wide to the children of workers and farmers, and young people did not know the meaning of social ills such as drugs, alcoholism and violence. Young people were guaranteed jobs and an active role in all avenues of social and economic development.

24. Mrs. MATVEYEVA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on agenda item 87, said that the problems facing young people could not be divorced from those of society as a whole. Chief among them was the preservation of peace and the prevention of nuclear war. It was young people, with their entire future ahead of them, who formed one of the most active elements in the anti-war movement. It was the State's duty to encourage them in that effort. However, the Governments of some countries persecuted young people for their activities in the peace movement.

25. Ukrainian young people had taken an active part in the campaign by the World Federation of Democratic Youth to promote world-wide action by young people against nuclear war and in favour of peace and disarmament. Young Ukrainians took part in the anti-war movement from a very early age. During International Youth Year, the young people of the Ukrainian SSR had donated 17 million roubles to the Soviet Peace Fund.

26. As well as participating in the peace movement, it was essential that young people should express their solidarity with those peoples of the world fighting against colonialism and racism. Twelve per cent of the people murdered by the South African régime had been under 15 years old. It was clear that only the complete eradication of the apartheid régime could help the young people of southern Africa to achieve freedom and social progress.

27. If the aims of International Youth Year were to be achieved, it was essential to solve the social and economic problems facing young people. In many "prosperous" societies, young people lived in poverty, deprived of education, culture and social benefits. Rising unemployment among young people led to an increase in social problems such as drug addiction, crime and prostitution. It was essential for the State and society to introduce a detailed and effective policy to combat those problems, with the participation of the young people themselves.

28. Unemployment was not a problem in the Ukrainian SSR, but it had been found necessary to reform the system of secondary education and professional training to enable young people to meet the challenge of scientific and technological progress. A reform of higher education was to follow. Access to culture for young people was provided by newspapers, radio and television programmes devoted to young people's concerns.

(Mrs. Matveyeva, Ukrainian SSR)

29. International Youth Year had drawn attention to the needs of young people, but it was only the first step, and the Commission for Social Development should continue to discuss young people's problems on a regular basis. Her delegation would support any draft resolutions to increase United Nations activities in that field.

30. Ms. BROŠŇÁKOVÁ (Czechoslovakia) stressed that Governments and Member States of the United Nations must play the central role in implementing the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. Essentially, the position of youth - the driving force in the development of any society - could be improved by securing their right to education and to work.

31. Illiteracy among young people in the developing world had to be wiped out, and in that connection, Czechoslovakia supported the Mongolian representative's proposal to declare 1989 as the Year of Struggle Against Illiteracy and the beginning of a decade against illiteracy. Some Western States should make greater efforts to democratize education fully and to eliminate functional illiteracy.

32. Despite the economic recovery in advanced capitalist States, unemployment was affecting more people everywhere, and for longer periods of time. Worse still, many countries in the European Community were compounding the problem by reducing State unemployment benefits. Full employment of youth, an urgent goal in the developing world, would never be achieved unless fundamental socio-economic changes were made. Failure to implement the rights of youth to education and to work had a direct bearing on anti-social behaviour, which took the forms of drug abuse, alcoholism, prostitution and criminal activities. Full exercise of those rights, on the other hand, would benefit the development of society as a whole.

33. Czechoslovakia agreed that implementation of the guidelines designed to secure the well-being of young people after the conclusion of the International Youth Year were far more significant than mere observance of the Year itself. Czechoslovakia hoped that its earlier proposal on education and employment would be widely supported.

34. Murder and violence on television in some States were distracting young people from more serious social issues, making them callous and reluctant to join with other young people in the struggle for a better world.

35. In conclusion, Czechoslovakia was making substantial efforts to ensure the sound physical and mental development of its younger generation. It offered assistance to young people starting out in life and to married couples and families with children; it guaranteed free education and the right to work, and it was constantly seeking new ways to involve youth in society, and in the decision-making process. In fact, almost one third of the deputies elected to Czechoslovak legislative bodies were young people.

36. Mr. HEDE (Denmark) said that in Denmark, the secretariat for International Youth Year had been responsible for disseminating information on the Year and encouraging youth organizations to participate actively in it. More than 120 local youth committees had been established in 1985.

37. In no sector was the participation of youth more important than in education and leisure activities. During International Youth Year, the Danish Youth Council had proposed a youth policy programme providing for political initiatives, practical training, higher education grants and a youth activity and development foundation.

38. Since, in Denmark, establishing one's own residence was an important part of becoming an adult, the Danish authorities planned to build 2,500 youth residences in 1986. In that connection, Denmark welcomed the United Nations initiative planned for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

39. Although the unemployment rate in Denmark was declining, continuing efforts were being made to integrate a segment of the younger population, mainly women, into the labour market, and to introduce women to professions that had been traditionally male-dominated. It would take time, however, to re-educate parents in that area and to bring about any meaningful change.

40. The International Youth Year might have produced few concrete results, but it did demonstrate the existence of a youth culture, with its own life style and forms of expression. Young people were eminently tolerant towards people of different cultures. Danish youth had actively supported sanctions against South Africa and would continue to press for equality in South African society. In August 1986, the Danish Youth Council had participated in a study tour of southern Africa in co-operation with the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference. It was an occasion for Nordic youth to learn more about young people from southern Africa, including young members of the African National Congress and the South West Africa People's Organization. The vital channels of communication between the United Nations and youth could be improved by the direct participation of young people in the General Assembly, and by strengthening the Geneva Informal Meetings (GIM).

41. During the International Year of Peace, peace and security were particularly important to young Danes, who lived in a country located between the major political blocs, and who had often spoken out against disarmament. The road to peace, however, involved more than disarmament. Universal respect for human rights and increased contacts between different peoples were necessary. In that respect, youth tourism and youth exchanges could play an important role in promoting understanding across both political and cultural borders. It was Denmark's hope that the scheduled meeting in Vienna would increase contacts among young people.

42. Mrs. KALININA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that youth was the population sector most affected by current problems of social development. All States must work independently and together to implement United Nations policies aimed at educating youth to be socially active and physically and morally healthy. In her own country, the problems of youth were the concerns of both the State and society, and comprehensive measures were taken to broaden the participation of



(Mrs. Kalinina, USSR)

youth in all areas of the country's life. The rights of youth were not only protected by law, but also implemented in practice, as evidenced in the current educational and other reforms designed to improve the spiritual and physical conditions of youth.

43. Youth-oriented policies were most effective when they had the support of the State. Unfortunately, in many countries State policy was to curtail youth programmes because of the burden of armaments, the economic crisis and the persistence of racism and discrimination.

44. Youth must play a greater role in social development. She therefore welcomed the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/578). In her own country many youth-related events were held, including conferences, summer courses, regional meetings and seminars. Soviet youth organizations actively co-operated with United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to promote peace, disarmament and mutual understanding. Her delegation felt that co-operation between the United Nations and its specialized agencies with youth organizations should be stepped up.

45. Lastly, her delegation supported the draft resolution proposed by the representative of Romania and other resolutions aimed at improving the situation of youth and intensifying United Nations efforts in that area.

46. Mrs. ALVAREZ (France) said that her country supported the United Nations programmes on aging, which it had itself helped to develop on the basis of its own experience. It did not, however, wish to see the establishment of new and costly bureaucratic machinery to implement programmes on aging and recommended instead that the role of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be maintained and strengthened. Nor did her delegation feel that a new trust fund would have more resources available to it than the existing one. Also, the urgency of the problem of aging made it essential to concentrate on implementing, rather than perpetually questioning, General Assembly decisions.

47. Her delegation welcomed the co-ordination of efforts between the various United Nations bodies to implement the International Plan of Action on Aging, but regretted that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities had not attached greater importance to the problem, and would like UNESCO to show greater interest in the cultural and educational aspects of aging. Her delegation also welcomed the policy of giving priority to the developing countries in allocating the funds of the United Nations Trust Fund on Aging.

48. Efforts to enhance greater awareness at all levels of the economic, social and cultural impact of aging and to promote training and exchange of experience were logical and realistic. When the financial situation permitted, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should also be given the resources to deal with problems such as the income of aged persons and medical and social facilities. Non-governmental organizations should also be encouraged to help implement the Plan of Action. France would not, however, support any initiatives that would distort the Plan by having the United Nations replace the member States in implementing it.

(Mrs. Alvarez, France)

49. Turning to crime prevention and criminal justice, she said that in the light of its current financial difficulties, the United Nations must rationalize its efforts to respond to the growing seriousness of the crime problem and concentrate on actually implementing the relevant instruments. Specifically, it should publicize the instruments adopted, promote the exchange of information and experience, direct research geared to specific areas, develop technical co-operation, provide technical assistance and mobilize all the machinery that might contribute to the study of phenomena relating to crime and to combating it. That meant providing the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, whose role was essential, with adequate means.

50. Where ordinary crime was concerned, her country had an active crime prevention programme but it was also facing a serious problem of terrorism and had recently passed a law providing for compensation to its victims. Means to combat crime must be geared to the nature of the crime and must include prevention as well as punishment. Her delegation had therefore proposed at the current General Assembly a draft resolution on the basic principles of justice for the victim of crime and of abuses of power. The international community must always keep the rights of victims in mind when dealing with crime and its prevention and the Secretary-General should establish a world information network to encourage an exchange of information that would help States Members implement reforms to help crime victims.

51. Ms. SEAH (Singapore) said that her delegation welcomed the growing international perception that young people were agents of development rather than merely passive recipients of it. Youth's primary role was to promote regional and international peace and stability and it must therefore be educated with a sense of tolerance and sensitivity, as it was in her own country.

52. Her delegation realized that sustained commitment to implementing youth policies and programmes could be an acute problem for the developing countries because they lacked the basic institutional and organizational structures of the developed countries and had only limited financial resources. However, the emphasis on the linkage between economic conditions and improvement in the lives of young people could be carried too far. The active participation of youth in national development could be ensured only through a political will to translate programmes and policies into action. Education was vital. Successful youth programmes could take the form of cost-effective pragmatic projects.

53. On the question of aging, her delegation found the comments made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/41/631) relevant for small developing countries such as Singapore, which was well on its way to becoming what the United Nations defined as a mature aging society. Medical and other advances had increased life expectancy and the Governments and peoples of the world must show the political will to deal with an older population that still needed to remain active. Her Government believed that the elderly, who had contributed to making the country what it was, must not be forgotten or abandoned. It therefore encouraged the extended family, which educated young citizens to accept the responsibility of looking after their parents and grandparents.

(Ms. Seah, Singapore)

54. Lack of financial resources could undermine any Government's programme for the aged, but the financial burden posed by an aging population would have to be faced sooner or later and it would be prudent to plan early and adopt long-term policies because the financial burden was unlikely to grow lighter over the years.

55. Lastly, her delegation reaffirmed its commitment to the principles and goals of the International Youth Year and the International Plan of Action on Aging and hoped that the international community would mobilize the necessary resources and co-operate in those areas.

56. Mr. MBAYE (Senegal) said that his delegation wished to underline the need for the international community to continue to accord special attention to the items under consideration. Senegal was resolutely committed to doing so at the national, regional and world levels.

57. In traditional African society, the elderly had always been accorded a privileged status. However, in the contemporary world cultural, economic and social changes had led to the generalization of the problems of aging. The question required a concerted study and for that reason Senegal enthusiastically embraced the objectives of the International Plan of Action on Aging. Senegal had undertaken a thorough national study with a view to improving and strengthening its policy on behalf of persons over 60 years of age. It hoped that the United Nations, the specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations would continue to assist African countries in that regard, in particular, with respect to the African Society of Gerontology.

58. While the elderly continued to be the major protector of African cultural and social values, it was through the youth of those countries that those values were perpetuated. In Senegal, young people were perceived as active agents for development. Despite the rigours imposed by the difficult economic situation, Senegal had renewed its commitment to work on behalf of youth and the Government had strengthened its policy aimed at the increased participation of youth in the development process. International co-operation would strengthen the effectiveness of programmes in that connection and Senegal therefore welcomed the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report on channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations (A/41/578).

59. For the Government of Senegal, no social category should be excluded from the development process, regardless of whether they were disabled persons or delinquents to be rehabilitated. His delegation believed that technical co-operation and concerted action were essential to permit developing countries to achieve the objectives which they had set at the national level and those to which they subscribed at the international level. He therefore hoped that future meetings at both the regional and world levels on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and crime prevention and criminal justice would result, inter alia, in more emphasis being placed on such co-operation.

60. Mr. MINET (International Labour Organisation) said that among the category of people for whom life was not easy, because of the difficulties they encountered in finding steady employment, were young workers, the handicapped and elderly workers. Accordingly, ILO had taken action on their behalf as a result of measures adopted by the International Labour Conference. Over the years, ILO had formulated a series of instruments concerning vocational training, employment and working conditions, which responded directly to the needs of youth. On the whole, those instruments had had a notable impact on legislation in a large number of countries. Of course, much remained to be done regarding their ratification and implementation. Technical assistance in vocational training and training in the rural environment were currently two sectors in which ILO operated, particularly with a view to meeting the special needs of young women, young migrants and refugees.

61. ILO projections indicated that the number of persons over 60 years of age would increase by 2.4 per cent by the year 2000, in other words, much quicker than the other age groups of the population. While the percentage of youth would increase in the next 10 years in the third world, at the same time, the phenomenon of aging would have a great impact in the most advanced countries. In those countries, the question of the cost of social budgets was most important. A flexible approach to the age of retirement would meet the social aspirations of today, while easing the growing burden on pension systems. With respect to developing countries, ILO was pursuing the promotion of social welfare systems in a pragmatic and diversified way, while seeking to promote the implementation of the 1980 international labour recommendation on elderly workers.

62. ILO was also urging its members to ratify the 1983 Convention and Recommendation on the rehabilitation and employment of handicapped persons.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.