



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. BROŠNAKOVA (Czechoslovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE
YEAR 2000 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued) (A/41/3, chap. III, sect. B; A/41/45 and Corr.1, A/41/216, A/41/607,
A/41/608 and Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 93: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE
YEAR 2000 (continued) (A/41/3, chap. V, sect. C and chap. VI, sect. C, A/41/216;
A/41/600, A/41/623, A/41/672)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/41/3,
chap. V, sect. C)

1. Mr. ADNAN (Iraq) said that his Government was convinced that women, who accounted for half of mankind, had a crucial role to play. Given the way society was developing that role was becoming increasingly important and it must be based on equal rights. Women's emancipation did not come about simply as a result of the adoption of legislative measures or the action of feminist organizations; it was inherent in the structure of the political system and in a society's philosophy and degree of cultural evolution and liberation.

2. That conviction had enabled Iraqi women to affirm their influence on society and to make the most of their abilities in all walks of life - the professions, diplomacy, politics, administration and even the military - right up to the decision-making level.

3. The Iraqi Constitution guaranteed men and women the same rights and privileges and Iraqi legislation was constantly evolving to keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in society.

4. The General Federation of Iraqi Women was playing an effective role in guiding women along the path of development and in diversifying their role in society. That action was both objective, for the contribution of women to the construction and growth of Iraq was becoming increasingly tangible, and subjective in that Iraqi women were becoming increasingly aware of their own role.

5. The General Federation of Iraqi Women was making its presence felt throughout the country and at all levels and it was helping to develop women's social and cultural awareness and to broaden their employment opportunities in the agricultural, industrial and social sectors. In co-operation with youth organizations, the Federation was contributing to the literacy campaign which had been very successful among women.

6. He was proud to draw attention to the remarkable role played by Iraqi women in the war between Iran and Iraq. Women's responsibilities did not consist solely of attending to domestic chores while, at the front, men defended the nation from Iran's aggression. In committees, associations and trade unions, women were also taking on the task of military education and were thus participating in national defence and working to establish peace.

(Mr. Adnan, Iraq)

7. Peace was of crucial importance not just for Iraq; it was an indispensable element for the development and growth of society. Accordingly, the General Federation of Iraqi Women was playing a central role in sensitizing the population to the cause of peace.

8. The Federation had also participated in numerous international conferences and regional meetings devoted to women, including the Copenhagen and Nairobi conferences.

9. Iraq believed that men and women had equal rights and it had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which constituted a notable and commendable step forward, and was urging all countries which had not yet done so to follow suit so as to accelerate implementation of the Convention.

10. He referred to the tragic suffering endured by the Palestinian women as a result of the Israeli occupation, and to the fate of the South African women, who were the victims of the most odious form of discrimination. Those situations demanded the adoption of stricter measures, including by the Commission of the Status of Women. Since the Tel Aviv and Pretoria régimes turned a deaf ear to all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations and other bodies, the international community must strive without pause to redouble its efforts to make them heed the voice of reason.

11. Miss AIOUAZE (Algeria) recalled that the aim of the World Conference held at Nairobi had been to determine why the purposes and goals of the United Nations Decade for Women had been only partially attained. The adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women testified to the general determination to work together to provide a better future for women. The momentum generated by the Conference must now be put to use and maintained and it was necessary to look to the Forward-looking Strategies for lasting and innovative solutions.

12. Monitoring the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies called for particular attention. That was why the Commission on the Status of Women must be given a clear mandate to establish a plan of appropriate activities and the necessary means to accomplish its task. In that connection, the special session of the Commission, scheduled for January 1987, was very important as it would enable the Commission to draw up its programme of work until the year 2000. In January, when defining the priority issues that would guide its future action, the Commission should not forget that it must work out specific measures to meet the real needs of women bearing in mind the three goals of the Decade. That would enable it to undertake a concerted action that would be the best guarantee of achieving those three goals. The Commission would have to pay particular attention to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirteenth special session. It would also have to take into account the women who, together with their people, were waging a just struggle against colonial domination and racial

(Miss Aïouaze, Algeria)

oppression. Since peace and progress were universal ideals their realization must therefore be within everybody's reach. It was quite reasonable to expect the Commission on the Status of Women to draw up a consistent programme of work based on the fundamental objectives of equality, development and peace.

13. Mrs. BARROW (Barbados) said that the Government of Barbados viewed the right of women to full equality with men as a fundamental human right and was taking every opportunity to promote the advancement of women at the national, regional and international levels. Her delegation considered that the Forward-looking Strategies, whose adoption by consensus testified to the general determination to improve the status of women throughout the world, was a sound basis for progress to the next stage, namely, the appreciation and proper utilization of women's skills in the international development effort. However, if the objective of the Strategies was to be achieved it was essential that adequate human and financial resources be provided for their implementation and monitoring.

14. In order to accelerate, or at least maintain, the momentum provided by the Nairobi Conference, efforts must be made at the forty-first session of the General Assembly to translate the Forward-looking Strategies into concrete activities designed to benefit women at all levels of society world-wide. She hoped that women would participate duly in planning at the policy level and that they would be involved in the execution of those plans. The United Nations must itself stress the importance of women by strengthening their presence at the decision-making level and in key positions. It was essential in that respect to strengthen the Commission on the Status of Women. Accordingly, her delegation fully supported the proposal to convene a session of the Commission in January 1987. The Commission had a central role to play in the promotion of women's rights and in the creation of new opportunities for women. It should be afforded the opportunity to consider how the Forward-looking Strategies would be integrated into its long-term programme of work and how the latter would fit in to the context of the United Nations system as a whole. The Commission should not only select priority issues but should also give thought to elaborating a set of specific projects and a realistic timetable. Such an approach would make for increased efficiency and enhanced ability to evaluate progress periodically.

15. As a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Barbados paid close attention to matters pertaining to the Convention and to the important work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The latter had expressed concern over the fact that summary records had not been available to it before and during the adoption of its report. Her delegation was of the view that, in the interest of monitoring the implementation of the Convention, which was a unique international instrument, summary record coverage of the Committee's meetings should continue to be provided, notwithstanding the Organization's financial difficulties.

16. Her delegation stressed, in all areas relating to women, the role and contribution of NGOs, which must be given full recognition and the necessary support.

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(Mrs. Barrow, Barbados)

17. Technological advances had led to the structural transformation of the entire work-force. No one had felt the impact of that transformation more than women.

18. Her delegation believed that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) made a useful contribution to the development of the potential of women. It required a considerable increase in funding if it was to carry out its mandate. It was to be hoped that Member States would increase their contributions. Barbados welcomed the progress made in the preparation of regional priority strategies and supported the recommendation of the Consultative Committee to establish a UNIFEM presence at the subregional level. Such a tiered approach would help in the implementation of the Fund's mandate, and would facilitate the presentation and implementation of valuable projects by Member States. She trusted that the debate on women would take full account of their needs and would reflect a commitment to the decisions taken collectively in 1985 at the Nairobi Conference.

19. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) said that his delegation firmly believed that the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women would provide a powerful instrument for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which could be achieved only through concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels and with the increasing assistance of the United Nations and all its agencies, which would co-ordinate activities. The Commission on the Status of Women could play a significant role in that connection.

20. His delegation welcomed the decision of the Economic and Social Council to convene a session of the Commission in January 1987 to consider a number of important issues, including the revision of the United Nations medium-term plan so as to fully integrate the Forward-looking Strategies into economic and social development programmes.

21. Bangladesh welcomed the work of the Secretariat in consolidating the monitoring system for the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (A/41/623) and was heartened by the content of the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/41/45). His delegation had been happy to learn, from document A/41/608, that a large number of countries had ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and hoped that all States that had not yet done so would speedily follow their example.

22. The Constitution of Bangladesh provided for equal rights for men and women in respect of suffrage, employment in public service and education. Special provision had been made for women in various fields. In 1978 the Government of Bangladesh had established a Ministry of Women's Affairs, which had subsequently taken important administrative and legislative measures to solve problems affecting women.

23. Mr. MORA (Cuba) said that his delegation hoped that the number of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would increase as quickly as possible, and thus supported the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Cuba welcomed

(Mr. Mora, Cuba)

the fact that the Economic and Social Council had decided to convene a session of the Commission on the Status of Women in January 1987. The Commission, which was responsible for major initiatives which had led the international community to seek equality of rights for women, must now be strengthened so that it could tackle its new tasks: the implementation of and follow-up to the Forward-looking Strategies. Cuba was, therefore, in favour of increasing its membership, in accordance with the principle of geographical distribution, and establishing an annual cycle for its meetings. His delegation trusted that the financial crisis would not have an adverse impact on programmes and meetings in that area.

24. The status of women could not be isolated from the problems affecting their countries. Women were the first victims of wars, policies of aggression and interference, the arms race and the waste of resources it entailed, and of the economic crisis and its consequences: unemployment, illiteracy, hunger and disease. The international community could not remain indifferent to racism when Namibian, South African and Palestinian women were suffering the most from dual discrimination, based on race and sex; nor could it ignore the problem of self-determination when women played such an important role in the struggle for national independence and dignity. Cuba was not opposed to consideration of the questions of family violence and access to health services and water supply, but thought that they should not divert attention from the more general, priority questions to which he had just referred. To ignore those priority questions would be to play into the hands of partisan political interests. Cuba thus hoped that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies would be fully implemented so as to give women their due place in society, on a basis of equality with men.

25. Mrs. FERNANDEZ (Chile) said that, in order to maintain the political momentum generated at Nairobi, United Nations activities should be strengthened, notwithstanding the financial crisis. The session of the Commission on the Status of Women scheduled for January 1987, which would deal with the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies and with the periodicity of the evaluation cycle, was a first step in that direction. Nevertheless, for it to be a success, the session must be preceded by informal meetings. In view of the key role that the Commission was called on to play in implementing the Strategies, its membership should be expanded.

26. One of the first tasks to be undertaken by the United Nations system was the dissemination of the Strategies in intelligible terms, accessible to all men and women. However, it was necessary for the United Nations system to monitor implementation of the Strategies and for each Government to carry out specific activities in that connection.

27. By Decree No. 630 of July 1985, her Government had established, under the Ministry of Justice, a commission responsible for studying the legislative reforms required by the Strategies. The report of the Commission had inspired a bill reflecting the Nairobi recommendations and advancing the equality of women in the areas of political rights and access to work, education and health through equality in marriage, which was still not guaranteed under the Civil Code. In effect, Chile

(Mrs. Fernandez, Chile)

had elected to bring its legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women before ratifying it.

28. Unlike the European countries, which had just adopted a medium-term programme of action to guarantee women equality of opportunity by 1990, developing countries had difficulties, essentially financial, in adopting such a programme. Nevertheless, it had been possible to undertake continuing activities in Latin America through the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW). The new President of the Commission, a Chilean lawyer, had stated that the questions of peace, terrorism, violence and drug abuse, with which the Commission would deal, were the very questions which the Nairobi World Conference had analysed in detail. Only time would tell whether the United Nations system and Governments would measure up to their responsibilities and ensure the effective implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

29. Ms. GUO YuanHui (China) stated that after the adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the major task was to incorporate them, at the international and regional levels, into the programmes and plans of the various United Nations bodies, which would promote the adoption of more effective measures to implement the Strategies at the national level. Her delegation was pleased to learn from the report of the Secretary-General on the incorporation of the interests of women in the work programme of the regional commissions (A/41/672) of the action planned or already taken towards that end by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in which China wished to take part.

30. The Commission on the Status of Women should strengthen and improve its work so as to play its co-ordinating and central role and co-operate more closely with the various United Nations bodies. The Commission might, as appropriate, expand its membership in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It should also pay closer attention to the education, and employment of women and their participation in the decision-making process, since those were universal and key issues in the enhancement of the status of women. Despite its importance, the labour of women, who constituted half of world population, had often been neglected, especially in rural areas, and in some cases it was even excluded from estimates of the gross national product. The survey of the role played by women in development contained data on the evolution of the situation and on the role played by women in the informal sectors of the economy, issues which were of the utmost importance to the effective mobilization of women and which should therefore be given in-depth consideration by the Commission.

31. The special session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1987 would be of great importance, for it would have an impact not only on the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies and their various follow-up actions, but also on the formulation and revision of various programmes and plans within the entire United Nations system. Preparations for the session should begin without delay.

(Ms. Guo YuanHui, China)

32. Her delegation commended the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for their useful work and hoped that they would persevere in their efforts.

33. Miss BOCOU (Côte d'Ivoire) pointed out that despite the many difficulties they faced, women throughout the world were aware of what was at stake and had unanimously adopted the Forward-looking Strategies. What remained to be done was perhaps the most difficult task in a period of economic crisis: to implement those Strategies. Though the primary responsibility in that area lay with each State, United Nations bodies also had their role to play. Their work should be co-ordinated by a central body, and the Commission on the Status of Women was obviously the best placed to act as catalyst. To do so, however, it needed to be reorganized and strengthened. It should also stop wasting time on empty speeches and concentrate all its efforts on implementing the Strategies. The work of the Commission should be conducted in an atmosphere of trust and should not be used by any State as a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of another State. Only in that way could the Commission objectively discuss the advancement of women and the obstacles hindering it. Her country hoped that the Strategies would be integrated into the medium-term plan for 1990-1995 which was the only planning and programming mechanism that would make it possible for the United Nations system to implement the Strategies.

34. In 1977 her country had established national machinery whose work reinforced that of the Association of Ivorian Women, established in 1963 to accelerate the emancipation process of Ivorian women. Women currently participated in all spheres of national activity, both public and private, and in political and university life. Because her country had made a second religion of peace, women played all the more important a role in the activities organized for the International Year of Peace.

35. The developing countries, which had been seriously hit by the economic crisis and forced to adopt Draconian corrective measures, while coping with the heavy burden of the external debt, and which had been the victims of natural disasters, had very few resources at their disposal to finance numerous crucial activities, including women's programmes. Her country therefore wished to thank the donors to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which had established a bond of solidarity between women from the wealthy countries and those from the developing countries. That was an example of the kind of generosity and solidarity which women must continue to provide for the entire world.

36. Miss EMARA (Egypt) said that her country had been able to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women because it had had the possibility of making a reservation to take into account the provisions of Egyptian legislation, which was based on the Shariah. Her country's case was not unique, and several States would be unable to ratify the Convention if they could not formulate reservations. Her country therefore found it disturbing that, in some United Nations bodies, certain States, which were not always themselves parties to the Convention, were passing judgement on whether or not a reservation formulated by another State was compatible with the purposes of the Convention. The decision to make a reservation lay first and foremost with each

(Miss Emara, Egypt)

country. Attempting to proscribe reservations or object to them might discourage countries from becoming parties to the Convention or even incite others to denounce it. If the Convention was to become universal, countries must refrain from criticising or passing judgement on reservations made by certain countries. Her country for its part had always been careful to fulfil its obligations under the Convention and had just submitted its second periodic report under article 18.

37. Concerning agenda item 93, she stressed the fact that the international community had unanimously expressed satisfaction at the success of the Nairobi Conference, wished to preserve the achievements of the Conference through implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, requested effective and regular assessment of their implementation at the national, regional and international levels and insisted that a spirit of consensus should be maintained. Similarly, there had been agreement that United Nations bodies, and especially the Commission on the Status of Women, had a new role to play in that area. Her country was in favour of holding Commission sessions annually and increasing the membership of that body. It welcomed the decision of the Economic and Social Council to hold a Commission session in January 1987 and was prepared to participate in all prior consultations with a view to facilitating the session. It also hoped that the financial crisis would not hinder the implementation of the Strategies. The Third Committee should come to a decision on the proposed modifications in the medium-term plan for 1984-1989 with a view to taking account of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, in order to enable the Fifth Committee to reach a decision on the matter at the current General Assembly session.

38. Mrs. NDUKU BOOTO (Zaire) said that the momentum of the United Nations Decade for Women should be maintained by implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. One of the important aspects of the Decade had been the special emphasis placed on the role of women in agriculture, particularly in Africa. In Zaire, for example, women played a much greater role in the agricultural work force than men. While the working conditions of rural women must be improved, even greater emphasis must be placed on education so that women could become actively involved in areas which concerned them, and they must be given financial and technical assistance.

39. The United Nations Decade for Women had made women aware of the importance of their contribution to national life and of the need for them to demand their rights. However, women continued to face enormous difficulties when they tried to continue their studies or find a job. Women were often penalized in their professional life because they had to take leave from work when they gave birth, for their absence had an adverse effect on their firm's productivity. They were thus subjected to unjustified discrimination, which must be eliminated. That was why her delegation welcomed the action taken in favour of women by such bodies as the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, FAO and UNESCO. It hoped that the Commission on the Status of Women would do all it could to promote, as it had been mandated to do, the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

(Mrs. Nduku Booto, Zaire)

40. The enthusiasm generated by the Nairobi Conference had been maintained in Zaire by holding a national women's symposium to make a provisional assessment of the action taken in favour of women over the past 20 years by the President of Zaire. Zaire had just ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and would spare no effort to ensure the advancement of women.

41. Mrs. THOMAS (Liberia) said that, despite the progress made in the past few years in many parts of the world, the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women were far from being achieved because of the deteriorating international political and economic situation. She was pleased that, some United Nations agencies, as the Secretary-General had indicated in his report (A/41/623), had brought the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies to the attention of their governing bodies, which had been eager to implement them. As a result, many United Nations agencies had placed renewed emphasis on programmes and activities for women. However, the Strategies should also be incorporated into the mandates of the smaller, specialized bodies of the United Nations in order to enable them to overcome future financial constraints and to maintain their long-term activities for the Decade. Moreover, her delegation was concerned that, while some United Nations institution subscribed in principle to the Strategies, they were not in a position to incorporate them in a concrete manner.

42. The extent to which Liberian women enjoyed equal opportunities generally seemed to be influenced by their level of education. While qualified women were able to compete favourably with men on the employment market, illiterate or semi-literate women were very often victims of inequality and injustice. Women who were governed by customary laws were also inhibited with respect to ownership of property, inheritance and child custody.

43. Her delegation was pleased that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women continued to have a very close working relationship with the United Nations Development Programme. That relationship should be maintained and strengthened beyond the Decade.

44. The women of Liberia supported their sisters who were struggling for the independence of their countries and for the elimination of racial discrimination. Her delegation hoped that the Strategies would solve the problems of women living in regions affected by war or subjected to certain political conditions. All Member States and specialized agencies should endeavour to design appropriate projects and programmes to improve the status of women currently living under the system of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia and in Palestine.

45. Realizing the important role of the Commission on the Status of Women in periodically reviewing the progress made and the concrete measures taken to implement the Forward-looking Strategies, Liberia appealed for the provision of greater material and human resources to the Commission so that it could perform its task effectively. It also supported the recommendation that Member States should provide the Commission with high-level expertise and representation, including officials with substantive policy responsibilities for the advancement of women.

46. Mrs. DARGEL (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that her country attached great importance to the implementation of the instruments adopted by the international community with a view to ensuring the advancement of women, in particular the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The implementation of those instruments should be accompanied by a periodic review of the results achieved and an analysis of the difficulties encountered. Her delegation considered that the work done by United Nations bodies in that field, in particular by the Commission on the Status of Women, and the documentation provided by them should be concerned essentially with the elimination of discrimination against women, the participation of women in the strengthening of international peace and co-operation and the role of women in development. Furthermore, the problems of equality between men and women should be considered in the light of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The entry into force of that Convention had been one of the milestones of the United Nations Decade for Women.

47. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women played a special and very useful role by permitting an exchange of information on national experiences in the implementation of policies for enhancing the status of women. The Byelorussian SSR, as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, had participated actively in the drafting of the Convention, had ratified it and was implementing its provisions fully. The report which it had submitted to the Secretary-General on that subject had been approved by the Committee at its second session. It was regrettable that all Member States had not ratified the Convention, since that would facilitate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

48. It was socialism that had first given women what progressive minds had dreamed of: economic, political and spiritual liberation, dignity and self-confidence, and equality with men in society and within the family. Thanks to those guarantees of social and legal equality, Byelorussian women could, in the best possible conditions, reconcile motherhood with active participation in professional, social and public life. The equality enjoyed by Byelorussian women was coupled with deep respect for them and with the State's constant concern to protect their health and provide them with good working, living and leisure conditions, and to protect motherhood and childhood. Equality did not mean that men and women were identical, however. Women therefore enjoyed special advantages which enabled them not only to preserve their femininity but also to fulfil their role as mothers and home-makers.

49. Her country's economic and social development plans were based on recommendations of the Commission on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR. Thanks to the supervision exercised by that Commission, women benefited fully from the economic development of the country. The number of schools was growing and assistance to families and children was increasing steadily.

50. The advancement of women was linked closely with the peaceful progress of mankind and with international security. Byelorussian women participated actively in the peace movement at the national, regional and international levels. The

(Mrs. Dargel, Byelorussian SSR)

preservation of peace was a universal concern and it was essential for all States to give the universal values of mankind priority over the interests of any particular social group. Thus, the Byelorussian SSR steadfastly implemented the three interdependent themes of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies: equality, development and peace.

51. Mr. NIYOKINDI (Burundi) said that future reports submitted by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should take account of the general comments made during the fifth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women so that the status of women in the various countries was presented in a more comprehensive and objective manner.

52. Burundi was pleased to note that States were ratifying the Convention rapidly, demonstrating clearly the importance attached to it by Governments and the international community.

53. However, his delegation could not fail to be concerned at the large number of reservations entered to the Convention by States which were parties to it, since some of those affected the intention and even the very purpose of that instrument. Burundi supported the idea of appointing a special rapporteur or a working group to prepare a document which would help States to understand the objectives of the Convention and the nature of the obligations assumed by them in ratifying it.

54. Burundi itself had signed the Convention shortly after its adoption by the General Assembly and would soon be in a position to ratify it.

55. The Constitution of Burundi proclaimed that all citizens of Burundi were equal in rights and duties without any distinction as to sex, a principle which was actually applied, as could be seen from the presence of women in the Government, in all bodies of the Party and in the civil service. In November 1982, Burundi had established a ministry for the Status of Women and had entrusted it with the task of preparing programmes designed to improve the status of women in rural and urban areas and of ensuring that their rights were safeguarded and respected.

56. While the Nairobi Conference could, because of the consensus which had emerged there, be viewed as a success, it must be borne in mind that the second half of the Decade had been characterized by an economic crisis which was persisting in most developing countries and was preventing the full implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Burundi, which considered that the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies should be a continuous and co-ordinated process, had welcomed with great satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on the question (A/41/623). It also welcomed the fact that many United Nations bodies were giving special attention to programmes and activities concerning women, but believed that the time had come for the Strategies to be incorporated on a permanent basis in the mandates of all organizations within the system.

(Mr. Niyokindi, Burundi)

57. His delegation considered that General Assembly resolution 39/125 was of special importance for women. Burundi supported the efforts of UNIFEM, which acted as a catalyst in order to ensure the participation of women in development activities undertaken at national and regional levels.

58. It would rest with the Commission on the Status of Women in particular to choose wisely the priority themes that would determine the action to be taken, and it was with confidence and hope that his delegation awaited the results of the Commission's work, in particular that of its forthcoming session in January 1987.

59. Mrs. KOZAKOU-MARCOULLIS (Cyprus) said that since the adoption in 1967 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations had come a long way in the advancement of women (convening of three world conferences, adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, establishment of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, launching of the United Nations Decade for Women, and creation of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women). In addition, in 1985 the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had adopted by consensus the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which must be translated into concrete action by Governments, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. Full implementation of the Strategies was of paramount importance if real progress in the status of women was to be achieved the world over. There was a danger that the momentum created by the United Nations Decade for Women, and especially by the Nairobi Conference, would not last for long, and a mechanism was therefore needed to ensure the implementation of the Strategies. As the Commission on the Status of Women had a central role to play in monitoring such implementation, her Government supported all efforts aimed at strengthening that body. Favourable consideration should be given to the proposals to enlarge the membership of the Commission, place greater emphasis on the expertise of its members and rationalize its work. Her delegation hoped that the Commission's session in January 1987 would be successful, although its duration was too limited by comparison with the many difficult items it would have to address.

60. While progress had undoubtedly been made in many areas, it would be a mistake to overemphasize that progress because the international community was only at the very beginning of a long and arduous road, with many pitfalls on the way to the attainment of the objectives set forth in the Strategies, and it was only through severe criticism of the action undertaken at the national, regional and international levels that the root causes of existing obstacles could be identified clearly.

61. It was undeniable that in many parts of the world women continued to be regarded and treated as unequal to men, that they constituted the vast majority of the world's illiterates, and that their participation in central policy- and decision-making organs was negligible because of socio-cultural attitudes and the lack of support systems and the necessary infrastructures to assist them in

(Mrs. Kozakou-Marcoullis, Cyprus)

assuming greater responsibilities. It was also undeniable that centuries-old traditions and conservative attitudes in many societies still hindered the full and equal participation of women in development and were to blame for the maintenance of discriminatory practices and exploitation of women. Furthermore, in view of the economic, political and social situation existing in the world (threats to peace and security, poverty and malnutrition, famine and disease, unemployment, lawlessness in international relations, aggression and occupation, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the suffering of millions of refugees and displaced persons), it seemed likely that the lower status of women would be maintained in many parts of the world.

62. The people of Cyprus had had its share of suffering and the adverse consequences for the advancement of Cypriot women of the 1974 invasion and occupation of Cyprus had been dealt with in detail in her statements to previous sessions of the General Assembly. She simply wished to stress therefore that the women of Cyprus could not achieve real equality and development without the necessary prerequisite of peace and justice. Cypriot women were resolved not to accept the forcible division of their country and their people and not to cease their struggle for freedom until Cyprus was united once again and peace, progress and prosperity reigned there. To that end, they extended a hand of friendship and co-operation to Turkish Cypriot women, with an appeal to work towards the attainment of that objective.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.