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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Second periodic reports submitted by States parties to the
Covenant, in accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX),
concerning rights covered by articles 10 to 12

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC */

[6 November 1986]

*/ The initial report concerning rights covered by articles 10 to 12 of the Covenant submitted by the Government of the Byelorussian SSR (E/1980/6/Add.18) was considered by the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its 1981 session (see E/1981/WG.1/SR.16).

The period which has elapsed since the Byelorussian SSR submitted its first report on implementation of the provisions of articles 10, 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (issued as document E/1980/6/Add.18) has been characterized by the continuing process of development and consolidation of socialist democracy and further strengthening of the legal basis of State and public life in the Republic, by implementation of the policy of steadily improving the well-being of Soviet citizens, by the real equality of rights of nations and respect for personal rights and freedoms, and by the establishment of conditions for the all-round development of the individual.

Attaching great importance to the safeguarding of human rights and freedoms, the Byelorussian SSR considers that the international covenants on human rights have a special place among all the international treaties and agreements on human rights in force within the United Nations system under the Charter since, by becoming parties thereto, States have assumed their respective obligations under international law. In this context, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defines the nature of States' obligations in the areas concerned, and economic, social and cultural rights constitute as it were, the basis for the realization of political and civil rights and freedoms.

In the Byelorussian SSR, material and legal safeguards in respect of the basic economic and social rights of man enshrined in this international covenant are constantly being extended.

Constant improvement of the material and cultural standard of living of working people is the general aim of the economic and social policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In recent years, particularly during the eleventh five-year plan (1981-1985), important measures have been carried out in this area in the Republic.

The Twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union set out a most extensive programme for the steady improvement of the people's well-being and consistent consolidation of social justice. This programme is to be implemented during the twelfth five-year plan (1986-1990) on the basis of more rapid technological progress, the re-equipment and modernization of production and the intensive use of existing industrial potential.

The measures now being carried out in the Republic to implement the objectives and decisions of the thirtieth Congress of the Byelorussian Communist Party will ensure the qualitatively higher realization of the rights and freedoms of citizens enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Article 10

Under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, the family, motherhood and childhood enjoy the protection of the State. The most important aim of current legislation on marriage and the family in the Republic is to protect the interests of mothers and children in every possible way. Article 33 of the Constitution guarantees the establishment of conditions enabling women to combine work with motherhood, and provides legal protection and material and moral support for mothers and children. The State is applying a broad range of measures to improve the living conditions of families and to lighten the burden on mothers both at work and in the home.

These measures include the organization of a wide network of women's clinics, maternity homes, sanatoriums and rest homes for expectant mothers and women with children, nurseries, kindergartens and other children's institutions; the provision for women of paid maternity leave, childbirth allowances and allowances for time spent caring for a sick child; the authorization of leave from work to nurse a child; prohibition of the use of female labour in heavy or hazardous occupations; the transfer of expectant and nursing mothers to lighter work (while retaining the same average remuneration as before); the systematic improvement and creation of healthier working and living conditions of working women; the provision of State and public assistance to families; and other social measures.

In the period since the Byelorussian SSR submitted its first periodic report, the following law-making instruments have been adopted in the Republic with a view to further strengthening and enhancing the well-being of the family:

- Decision of the Central Committee of the Byelorussian Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 15 May 1981 entitled "Measures to improve State assistance to families with children";
- Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 7 December 1982 entitled "Measures to strengthen marital and family relations";
- Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 1 August 1983 entitled "Establishment of regulations concerning the procedure for the allocation and payment of support grants in respect of wards".

Articles 27 and 28 of the Marriage and Family Code and articles 72, 76, 165, 167 and 241 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR, relating to the provision of benefits and enhancement of the well-being of the family, have been broadened and supplemented.

An important role in providing State assistance to the family is played by social consumption funds, which by 1985 had increased significantly in comparison with 1980 and stood at more than 5 billion roubles.

Social consumption funds in the Republic are used to provide free instruction and higher skills training, free medical care, allowances, pensions and education grants, paid annual holidays, travel warrants to sanatoriums and rest homes free of charge or at reduced prices, the maintenance of children at pre-school institutions, the disbursement of maternity, childbirth and child-care allowances, and a number of other payments and benefits.

One of the important measures adopted in the Republic during the period under review to provide assistance to families is the granting, as from 1981, of partial paid leave to mothers to care for a child until its first birthday; this may be granted at the woman's request and is paid in the form of a monthly allowance under the State social insurance scheme. Lump-sum State benefits also introduced in 1981 are paid out of State social insurance funds on the birth of a first child (50 roubles) and of a second or third child (100 roubles); under present legislation, women with three children are paid both a lump-sum benefit and a monthly allowance on the birth of a fourth or any subsequent child.

An increase in the length of paid leave for mothers to care for a child until it reaches 18 months of age, together with an entitlement to supplementary unpaid leave until the child reaches two years of age, an increase in the length of pre-natal leave from 56 to 70 days, and other measures are to be implemented in the Byelorussian SSR under the twelfth five-year plan.

Under article 164 of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR, expectant mothers and women with children under one year of age may be transferred on the basis of a medical certificate to other, lighter work while retaining the same average remuneration as before. This category of working women, of course, may not be required to work at night, on rest days or overtime, and may not be sent on assignments.

Women with children of pre-school or school age have the preferential right to part-time or flexible-time working or to work at home, without any limitations on the length of annual leave or loss of seniority. Remuneration under such arrangements is proportional to hours worked or in accordance with output.

Since 1981 an additional three days' paid leave and a further period of unpaid leave of up to two weeks to look after children have been instituted for working women with two or more children under 12 years of age. Men bringing up children without a mother enjoy the same benefits as from 1986.

With effect from 1 January 1986, monthly allowances for single mothers, widows and the families of servicemen on fixed terms of duty were more than doubled. These allowances are paid for each child up to the age of 16, or 18 in the case of students who do not receive an education grant.

The decision entitled "Additional measures to assist low-income families with three or more children raised by one parent", adopted in October 1986, calls for the provision as from 1987 of free school, sports and pioneer uniforms and of free lunches out of the universal primary education fund for school children from low-income families with three or more children under the age of 16 being raised by one parent.

It has been established that travel warrants to pioneer camps for children from low-income families with three or more children and travel warrants to sanatoriums for parents with such families shall be issued free of charge.

During the twelfth five-year plan, leave for working women to care for a sick child under the age of 14 will be increased from seven calendar days to 14, and the payment of an allowance will be made under the State social insurance scheme.

During the period under review, the Byelorussian SSR has taken an important step towards enhancing the well-being of families, by entitling enterprises, organizations and collective farms to provide any one spouse under the age of 30 who has been employed by the enterprise, organization or collective farm in question for at least two years with an interest-free loan, out of its own funds, to improve housing conditions or equip the household up to an amount of 1,500 roubles repayable over eight years, and with a credit of 200 roubles towards repayment of the loan on the birth of a second child in a family receiving such a loan, and a further credit of 300 roubles on the birth of a third child.

One form of assistance to the family is the establishment of preferential State retail prices for children's goods, periodical reductions in such prices and the specialization of enterprises and individual production units in the manufacture of cheap and good-quality children's goods.

The situation of families with children who are mentally or physically retarded is constantly being improved. If parents do not wish such a child to be educated at a boarding school with full State support, they are paid a monthly allowance.

Measures are being implemented in the Byelorussian SSR aimed at further improving the status of women, lightening their work, improving social and domestic services, establishing additional benefits for them and maximizing their opportunities to combine work and public activities with the performance of their maternal duties. These measures permit a high level of female employment in social production: the average number of manual and non-manual female workers employed in the Byelorussian national economy amounted (during the period 1981-1985) to more than half the total workforce. In terms of employment in various sectors of the economy, women accounted for 88 per cent of the workforce in trade and public catering, 82 per cent in the health sector and 74 per cent in public education and culture. Fifty-three per cent of the total number of specialists with higher education and 64 per cent of those with secondary specialized education employed in the Republic's economy were women.

The various shops and centres providing domestic services and the growing network of public catering establishments are also of increasing help to women in successfully combining work in industry and household tasks with studies and public activities. Approximately 10,500 consumer service enterprises now operate in towns and villages of the Byelorussian SSR. More than 160 new cafeterias, coffee houses and other eating places catering for 22,000 people were opened during the eleventh five-year plan alone.

With a view to the further improvement of pension benefits for women, limitations were removed as from 1981 on the granting of pensions to women who have raised five or more children or a disabled child from infancy. Old-age pension increments were raised from 10 to 20 per cent in respect of uninterrupted service for women with children employed by the same enterprise, institution or organization for at least 20 years.

In the twelfth five-year plan it is intended to adopt a number of additional measures in the Republic to develop the active employment of women, to strengthen the family, to create favourable conditions for education of the rising generation, to combine motherhood with active female participation in work and public activities, and to extend and improve State assistance for families with children and young families.

In addition to other forms of assistance, an extensive network of special institutions assures the right of every woman in the Byelorussian SSR to free qualified medical care. These institutions include women's clinics, maternity homes, sanatoriums and rest homes for pregnant women and mothers, and children's pre-school institutions. The Republic has 650 women's clinics and children's polyclinics or out-patient centres. Specialized hospitals and out-patient departments can treat some 8,000 women during pregnancy and confinement at any one time.

Maintenance of a child at a children's pre-school institution is of substantial material benefit to the family, since most of the expenses involved (80 per cent) are borne by the State and only 20 per cent by parents.

Since 1 June 1984, fees for the maintenance of children at children's pre-school institutions have been levied on the basis of total family per capita income; where this is low, the parents are exempt from the payment of fees, and such fees have been reduced by 50 per cent in the case of parents with four or more children.

An extensive system of children's institutions operates in the Byelorussian SSR. At the beginning of 1986 the Republic had more than 4,000 kindergartens and nurseries in constant operation to cater for more than 530,000 children. In the last decade alone, the number of places in nurseries and kindergartens in the Byelorussian SSR has increased by 160,000. In addition to the permanent children's pre-school institutions, seasonal pre-school institutions are organized during the summer period. The choice of a child's pre-school institution is made by the family itself. Children of working mothers who are single or have a large number of children, children of women who study at various educational institutions and children whose fathers are on fixed-term military service have priority as regards admission to pre-school institutions. Over the coming years the task is to satisfy fully the population's needs for children's pre-school institutions.

A unified system of public education exists and is being constantly improved in the Byelorussian SSR to provide for the general-education and vocational training of citizens and for the intellectual and physical development of young people, as well as to prepare them for labour and social work. In elaboration of the constitutional right of citizens to education, a number of law-making instruments were adopted on 12 April 1984 covering the most important aspects of the work of general-education and vocational schools - the nature of instruction and education, labour training and occupational guidance of schoolchildren, development of the system of vocational and technical education, the work of pre-school institutions, and the improvement of training and of the working and living conditions of teaching staff.

In accordance with the decision entitled "Guidelines for the reform of general-education and vocational training", adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on 12 April 1984, during the twelfth five-year plan a range of measures are to be implemented in the Byelorussian SSR aimed at raising the quality of instruction, moral and aesthetic education and training of young people for socially useful work. Schools with 274,000 places, or 50 per cent more than in the eleventh five-year plan, are to be built during this period.

In the 1985/1986 school year the Byelorussian SSR had 6,223 general-education schools, attended by 1.5 million pupils. In addition to universal, free and compulsory secondary education and other benefits to families, the free supply of textbooks was introduced as from 1982 for pupils in secondary general-education schools. During the period under review, extended-day schools and groups, in which all educational activities are carried out at the State's expense, underwent further development in the Republic. The cost of meals is borne by parents, but 10 per cent of children are exempt and 15 per cent pay only half the costs.

Children and adolescents who have been deprived of parental care or do not have the necessary conditions for upbringing within a family, and orphan children, are normally placed in general-education boarding schools or children's homes, where they live and study at the State's expense.

Since January 1984, single mothers and families with a total family per capita income of no more than 60 roubles per month have been exempted from the payment of fees to maintain their children in boarding schools.

The decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR entitled "General-education boarding schools, children's homes and other boarding institutions", adopted on 13 February 1984, is also intended to improve the living conditions, education and instruction of children at such institutions.

Monthly cash allowances were also raised during the period under review in respect of disabled children. These are supplied with drugs prescribed by a physician free of charge. A 50 per cent discount has been introduced for such children during the autumn and winter period on the cost of rail, air, sea or river and inter-city road transport, and some categories of disabled children are now entitled to free travel on all forms of urban transport other than taxis.

Parents continue to be provided with considerable assistance in raising children by extracurricular children's institutions: pioneers' and schoolchildren's palaces and homes, centres for young technicians and naturalists, children's music, art and dance schools, and children's sections and departments in trade-union clubs.

The network of pioneer camps and other trade-union health resort facilities where schoolchildren can enjoy recreation during holiday periods is being intensively developed. Whereas 450,000 children attended such camps in 1980, by 1985 that figure had risen to 538,000. In 1983 additional concessions were introduced in respect of the cost of travel warrants to pioneer camps. Whereas before 1983 only 10 per cent of travel warrants were provided free of charge, since then 50 per cent have been issued at no charge and the remainder at 20 per cent of their cost.

Sanatorium-style pioneer camps and sanatoriums offering preventive medical care which belong to industrial enterprises have been broadly developed in the Byelorussian SSR and provided with facilities for the comprehensive treatment of parents and their children. Travel warrants to these resort institutions are normally issued at concessionary rates.

Exceptional importance is attached to protection of the health of young people. Adolescents, pupils attending schools, vocational and technical colleges or institutes and students at higher educational establishments are given comprehensive medical check-ups each year, thus making it possible to detect illness or health disorders at an early stage and carry out any necessary treatment or rehabilitation in good time.

In the Byelorussian SSR, the use of child labour not connected with formal education or work training is prohibited under the Constitution (article 40). A reform of general-education and vocational schools is being carried out in the Republic to improve labour training, acquaint pupils and students with the basic principles of modern industrial and agricultural production, construction, transport and service trades, mould their working habits in the process of study and socially useful activities, provide initial

vocational training and encourage the intelligent choice of a trade or profession. The State concerns itself in every possible respect with the rising generation. In addition to providing families which have children with a number of benefits and assistance, present legislation obliges parents to bring up their children, concerning themselves with their physical development, instruction and training for socially useful work.

With regard to juvenile delinquents, present legislation in the Byelorussian SSR is aimed at further extending opportunities for reforming them, but without isolating them from society.

An important role in preventing offences by minors in the Republic is played by commissions on minors established under the local Soviets of People's Deputies. Together with the public education, vocational and technical education, social security and militia authorities, and with extensive public participation, these commissions register, take charge of and make arrangements for: children and adolescents who have lost their parents; minors whose parents or guardians fail to provide adequate support for the children's upbringing; adolescents who have left school and are not employed; and other minors who are in need of State or public assistance.

Matters relating to marital and family relations and to marriage were covered in sufficient detail in the initial report.

Under present legislation in the Byelorussian SSR, the principle of the equality of rights of citizens in marital and family relations applies also to foreign nationals and to stateless persons.

In pursuance of the USSR Act on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the USSR adopted on 24 June 1981, article 215 ("Rights and duties of foreign citizens and stateless persons in marital and family relations") has been added to the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR.

Article 11

The principal aim of the five-year plans for the economic and social development of the Byelorussian SSR is to ensure steady improvement in the people's standard of living. This follows, as emphasized in the first report of the Byelorussian SSR, from the "supreme goal of social production under socialism - the fullest possible satisfaction of the people's growing material and intellectual requirements" (article 15 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR).

The development of social production and growth of national income in the Republic during the period since the submission of the first report have created the necessary prerequisites for further enhancing the people's well-being, which is specifically reflected in the steady increase in the standard of living of the working people.

Personal incomes are the main basis for the formation of the consumption fund and its development in the process of national income utilization. Consistent application of socialist principles of distribution allows for the growth of personal incomes in direct relationship to the level of development of material production and labour productivity. Thus, personal incomes in the Republic are increasing as social production is developed and becomes more efficient. Real personal incomes are used as the most comprehensive measure of changes in living standards. Article 23 of the Constitution of the

Byelorussian SSR reads: "The State pursues a steady policy of raising workers' pay levels and real incomes on the basis of the growth in labour productivity".

During the eleventh five-year plan, the Republic's national income increased by 32.5 per cent. Eighty per cent of national income was used directly for consumption.

The increase in national income was the basis for the growth of real personal incomes. In 1985 these had risen by 13 per cent compared with 1980.

During the period under review, workers employed in various branches of the national economy received pay increases. Measures to increase the pay of public education and health service workers are being implemented. Additional benefits have been granted to several categories of workers in the light and food industries. Remuneration for length of service has been introduced in the rail and river transport industries, in contractual building organizations and certain other sectors. As a whole, wages of manual and non-manual workers rose by 15 per cent during the five-year plan and the wages of collective farm workers increased by a factor of more than 1.5. The average monthly wage of manual and non-manual workers in the national economy in 1985 amounted to 173.7 roubles, the average in industry being 191.0 roubles and in agriculture 163.5 roubles. Wages including payments and benefits amounted to 243 roubles.

Under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR (article 38), the State establishes a minimum wage, which is regularly reviewed in the course of fulfilment of the economic and social development plans. The latest increase in the minimum wage and reduction in the rate of taxation on low incomes are now being implemented. In 1983 there was a 30 per cent reduction in the income tax assessment of each parent in families with four children.

Plans for the economic and social development of the Republic in 1986-1990 and for the period up to the year 2000 have set the task of raising the people's well-being to a qualitatively new standard and of ensuring a level and pattern of consumption of material, social and cultural goods which will meet the aims of shaping the harmonious development of the individual to the fullest extent. In the coming 15 years, the amount of resources directed towards supplying the people's requirements is to be doubled. The achievement of this objective during the period up to the year 2000 means that the Republic's existing economic potential should virtually be doubled.

An important role is assigned to the twelfth five-year plan, during which national income is to increase by 26 per cent. The programme developed to improve the people's well-being will be consistently implemented on this basis.

During the twelfth five-year plan, real per capita incomes are to increase by 13.5 per cent, the average monthly wage of manual and non-manual workers by 13.5 per cent and the pay of collective farm workers by 17-19 per cent.

In the course of 1986-1990 and the period up to the year 2000 a further increase in wages and salaries is envisaged. The remuneration of workers in the non-material sphere will be increased. In 1987 the introduction of new conditions of remuneration for all public education workers will be completed. It is planned to increase in several stages the pay of doctors and medical personnel. During the twelfth five-year plan, there will be increases

in the wages and salaries of several categories of workers in higher education and in cultural or educational institutions. It is planned to abolish taxation on incomes below 80 roubles per month and to reduce taxes on incomes of between 80 and 100 roubles per month.

Along with raising wages, a considerable role in increasing workers' incomes and supplying more fully their material and intellectual requirements is played by social consumption funds.

During the eleventh five year plan, payments and benefits out of social consumption funds in the Republic increased by 26 per cent and amounted to more than 5 billion roubles. This represented 508 roubles per capita in 1985. A further strengthening of the role of social consumption funds in addressing industrial and social problems is envisaged. These funds will continue to be developed consistently during the twelfth five year plan. Payments and benefits from the social consumption funds will increase by 20 per cent and exceed 6 billion roubles by 1990.

The satisfaction of people's needs through the social consumption funds is being achieved in a number of ways. These include free health care, all forms of education, vocational training and upgrading of skills, improvement of workers' rest and leisure facilities, housing and living conditions, and the provision of an adequate standard of living for the disabled members of society. In accordance with article 41 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, citizens of the Republic have the right to maintenance in old age, in sickness and in the event of complete or partial disability or loss of the breadwinner. This right is guaranteed by the social insurance of manual and non-manual workers and collective farmers; by allowances for temporary disability; by the payment, at the expense of the State or collective farms, of old-age pensions, disability pensions and pensions for loss of the breadwinner; and by providing employment for the partially disabled and care for the elderly and invalids.

All the basic measures planned for 1981-1985 and the period up to the year 1990 to strengthen State assistance to the population from social funds and to improve social security are being implemented.

During the period under review, a number of measures were taken with a view to further improvement of the pension system. The minimum levels of old-age and disability pensions and of pensions for loss of the breadwinner were increased. The pensions of manual and non-manual workers were raised, partly as a result of a 20 per cent supplementary allowance for uninterrupted service. The minimum levels of collective farm members' old-age and disability pensions and pensions for loss of the breadwinner were raised in November 1985. Thus, the pensions of manual and non-manual workers and of collective farmers are gradually being brought into line and the prerequisites for achieving the important social objective of eventually establishing a uniform system of pensions for working people are being met. On 1 November 1985, increases were made in the pensions of manual and non-manual workers and their families awarded 10 or more years ago. This was done in order to bring them into line with the pensions now awarded to workers with similar trades and skills. These pensions will be increased further every two years. Machinery for reviewing previous pension entitlements is being put into operation on a regular standard basis, making it possible in future to bring the rate of growth in the material welfare of pensioners closer to that of actively employed citizens.

More than 2 million people in Byelorussia receive pensions and benefits. Men become entitled to old-age pensions at the age of 60 and women at the age of 55; in industries where conditions of work are severe or hazardous, they may become entitled to such pensions five to 10 years earlier. As a whole, the pension benefits of some 1.5 million people were improved in the Republic during the eleventh five-year plan.

As from 1987, benefits for persons who have been invalids since childhood are to be increased and their living conditions improved. During the twelfth five-year plan, there will be a further increase in the minimum levels of the old-age and disability pensions of manual and non-manual workers and of the pensions previously awarded to collective farmers, an expansion of the services provided at home to elderly and disabled citizens living on their own by enterprises in the trade, public catering and service sectors and by health-care institutions, and an extension of the network and improvement of the facilities of homes for the elderly and invalids. Certain other forms of social welfare also exist in addition to pensions. For example, many invalids of the Great Patriotic War are supplied with motor cars or carriages free of charge.

The right of citizens of the Byelorussian SSR to education (article 43 of the Constitution) is assured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education for young people and broad development of vocational, specialized secondary and higher education, and by the provision of State grants and allowances to pupils and students. At the present time, there are 3,847,000 people studying in Byelorussia. Of these, 1.5 million are at general-education schools, 321,000 are at vocational and specialized secondary educational establishments and 182,000 at institutions of higher education, 1,876,000 people are studying new trades or professions or are upgrading their skills.

In the eleventh five-year plan, the effective demand of the population for goods and services was more fully supplied. During this period, the output of consumer goods considerably increased and the range of paid services was extended. Retail trade increased by 18.3 per cent and the supply of domestic services rose by 43.7 per cent. As the money incomes of working people rapidly grow, the population will continue to be supplied more fully with good-quality products and services. The Republic's comprehensive programme for the development of consumer goods production and the services sector in 1986-2000 calls for a 29 per cent increase by the end of the twelfth five-year plan in the output of non-food goods, including a 50 per cent increase in cultural and household goods. By 1990 it is planned to increase the retail trade turnover by 20.5 per cent and the volume of services by a factor of 1.5, while at the same time improving their quality.

It should be noted that the high level of public consumption is ensured not only by consistent growth in real personal incomes, but also by the stability of retail prices for basic goods in mass demand such as bread, meat, butter, milk, etc. Low prices have been fixed for children's goods, public transport and utility services. Each year, the prices of some types of consumer goods are reduced.

There was a significant growth in the supply of durable goods for cultural and domestic use to the population in the Republic. For example, whereas in 1970 there were 122 television sets for every thousand people, by 1980 there were 188 and in 1985 there were 260; for radio receivers, the respective figures were 154, 221 and 254; for refrigerators, they were 76, 238 and 266; and so forth.

Supplying the population's needs for high-quality food products is one of the most important ways of raising the people's standard of living. This objective is being achieved by more effectively developing agricultural production in the Republic.

The basis for carrying out further major socio-economic measures in agriculture is the Food Programme of the USSR for the period up to 1990, one component of which is the comprehensive food programme of the Byelorussian SSR for the same period. Implementation of this programme through a range of important measures over the period 1981-1985 has resulted in a substantial strengthening of the material and technical base of agriculture. This sector received 9.7 billion roubles, or one in every four roubles of capital investment in the Republic's national economy. The level of mechanization of crop and livestock production was raised, the use of mineral fertilizers on each hectare of farming land was increased, the labour and living conditions of rural workers were improved, and the amount of housing construction in the countryside was expanded. Positive advances are taking place in the development of agriculture as a result of strengthening the material and technical base, mechanization, greater use of chemicals and land reclamation, improved agricultural technology and a higher quality of work in fodder and livestock production. The rate of growth of agricultural production increased. During the eleventh five-year plan, average annual gross output rose by 8.3 per cent, and growth was achieved in the production of meat (per capita production in 1985 amounted to 103 kg) and milk. This has made it possible to improve the supply of food products to the population. Annual per capita consumption of the basic food products in 1985 was as follows: meat and meat products - 69 kg (1980 - 61 kg); milk and dairy products - 383 kg (1980 - 369 kg); fish and fish products - 18.8 kg (1980 - 16.3 kg); eggs - 316 units (1980 - 294); vegetable oil - 8.0 kg; potatoes - 188 kg (1980 - 200 kg); vegetables and melon crops - 82 kg (1980 - 77 kg). In general, the quality of food consumed by the population in the Republic will inevitably continue to improve in terms of complying with scientifically-based standards of nutrition. This objective is to be achieved by 1990 through implementation of the Food Programme. Strict execution of this programme is the aim of the Republic's agricultural development plans for 1986-1990. During these years, the policy of developing livestock farming with emphasis on meat and dairy produce will continue to be applied in agriculture. Furthermore, livestock production is to be raised to a qualitatively new level. This will be achieved through intensification of that sector on the basis of a comprehensive approach to fodder resources, the use of developments in genetics and breeding, and advanced biological methods of livestock improvement.

During the current five-year plan, the production of vegetables is to be increased to a level which will make it possible to supply the population's needs for such produce according to scientifically based standards. Material and technical facilities for the storage and processing of agricultural produce will be specially developed for that purpose. The annual average gross output of agriculture is to be increased by 12-14 per cent. It is planned to raise the production of grain by 1990 to 8-8.2 million tonnes, potatoes to 13 million tonnes, meat (carcass weight) to 1.2-1.3 million tonnes, milk to 7.1-7.3 million tonnes and eggs to 3.4-3.5 billion.

A large return is expected from drained lands, which now total 2.5 million hectares in area. Another 518,000 hectares of land will be reclaimed during the twelfth five-year plan.

In addition to strengthening the public sector of agriculture, interest is now being shown in to citizens' private plots and in the development of collective horticulture and market gardening.

Particular attention in recent years has been focused on a more rapid solution to the housing problem. The supply of housing to the population is one of the most important aspects of the system for ensuring that people have an adequate standard of living.

In December 1980, the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR adopted the Housing Code of the Byelorussian SSR. New regulations to take account of citizens needing improved housing conditions and to provide accommodation were adopted, and model statutes for housing construction co-operatives, a standard lease agreement and regulations for the use of residential accommodation, etc. were approved. A goal of particular social significance has now been set, namely, by the year 2000 to provide practically every family with separate accommodation, either an apartment or an individual house. During the eleventh five-year plan, considerable strides were made in the Republic towards solving that problem. Some 23 million square metres of housing space were built and made available which exceeded the planned figure by 11 per cent. This made it possible for one in every five inhabitants of the Byelorussian SSR to improve his housing conditions.

The realization of the targets set in this regard for the twelfth five-year plan is an important stage in the practical implementation of the right to housing guaranteed to every citizen under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR (article 42). It is intended to make available 24 million square metres of housing (approximately 420,000 apartments). More rational use will be made of State funds for housing construction, co-operative and individual construction will be further expanded, the housing stock will be renovated and better maintained and tighter controls will be kept on its allocation and utilization. The population is provided with accommodation at low rents, as explained in detail in the previous report.

Rapid social development will be continued in the countryside. Here, approximately 6 million square metres of housing was built during the last five-year period. The amount of housing construction in the countryside will increase during the twelfth five-year plan by 20 per cent to over 9 million square metres.

There will be a 30 per cent increase in State investment for the development of communal services.

Article 12

As already indicated in the first report, the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR governs all basic matters relating to maternal and child welfare, the harmonious development of children, the attention and concern shown by the State towards young people, labour safety, protection and hygiene arrangements, and the protection and formation of an environment beneficial to human health. The right to health and safe working conditions is one of the fundamental labour rights of manual and non-manual workers. Total expenditure on labour protection measures in the Republic during the eleventh five-year plan alone amounted to 1.7 billion roubles, and during the twelfth five-year plan more than 2 billion roubles will be spent for the same purpose. Labour protection is dealt with in special sections not only of the Labour Code of the Byelorussian SSR, but also in other instruments of labour legislation, particularly those governing the length of working time and holidays.

Legislative norms regarding labour hygiene requirements and the prevention of industrial injuries, occupational diseases or other illnesses are also contained in collective agreements.

In addition to existing legislation in the field of health care, during the period under review a decision entitled "Progress in implementation of the Act of the Byelorussian SSR concerning health care and measures for the further improvement of public health protection" was adopted in the Republic in 1982, defining more fully the basic ways of improving the health-care system and setting out a comprehensive programme for the further development of all forms of medical care and the implementation of wide-ranging measures of preventive treatment.

Application of all these measures to maintain and strengthen public health is regarded in the Byelorussian SSR as a most important social goal. The twelfth five-year plan, in particular, calls for the construction of hospitals with a total of 13,000 beds and polyclinics or out-patient institutions with a total capacity of 35,000 cases per shift.

Strengthening of the material and technical base of the health service, advancement of medical science, personnel development and expansion of the medical industry have ensured progress in all areas of medicine and made it possible to deal with major social and medical problems, thus permitting a considerable improvement in the standard of medical services to the population, the elimination or dramatic reduction of a whole range of diseases, the lowering of mortality rates among children and mothers and a higher increase in the level of physical development of the population.

The number of doctors in all fields of specialization in the Republic amounted to more than 36,000 at the beginning of 1985, and there were more than 105,000 middle-level medical personnel. The number of medical institutions providing out-patient or clinical treatment to the population rose considerably, reaching more than 13,000 in 1985. The total number of hospital beds in the Republic exceeded 127,000.

Regular preventive check-ups, covering almost 99 per cent of the population of the Republic each year, are an important part of the consistent improvement of citizens' health. Systematic medical screening is provided to children, adolescents, manual workers in all branches of industry, agricultural machine operators and expectant mothers.

The prevention of disease, strengthening of the population's health and shaping of a healthy way of life are the aim, in particular, of the decision entitled "Further encouragement of mass participation in physical culture and sport", adopted on 11 September 1981, and the decision entitled "Measures to improve the use of club institutions and sports facilities".

The number of persons who regularly engage in physical culture and sport has now reached 3,304,000 of whom approximately half are young people. In 1985 the Republic had 159 stadiums, 3,387 sports halls, 97 full-sized swimming pools and over 4,000 different sports grounds and playing fields. More than 400 sports schools also operate in the Republic, catering to more than 147,000 children and young people.

The main guidelines for the reform of general-education and vocational schools call for further improvement in the physical education of school children and the development of sports facilities.

During the period under review, a number of special instruments were adopted in the Byelorussian SSR in the area of environmental protection:

Act of the Byelorussian SSR of 26 November 1981 entitled "Protection of the atmosphere";

Act of the Byelorussian SSR of 26 November 1981 entitled "Protection and use of the animal world";

Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 9 November 1981 entitled "Additional measures to strengthen the protection of fish stocks and to improve the organization of fishing and angling";

Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 11 October 1980 entitled "Strengthening the protection of small rivers from pollution, obstruction and depletion and rational use of their water resources";

Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 21 March 1986 entitled "Improvement of the organization of work to protect small rivers from pollution, obstruction and depletion";

Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 18 January 1983 entitled "Establishment of regulations governing water conservancy belts (areas) of small rivers of the Byelorussian SSR";

Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR of 28 May 1981 entitled "Establishment of regulations governing the procedure for submission and consideration of applications for the reclassification of forests and their inclusion in the category of protected forests".

The implementation of measures to protect the environment, including those provided for under the law-making instruments adopted during the period under review, has a positive effect in preserving natural resources and strengthening the health of the population in the Republic.

Total expenditures on nature protection and the rational use of natural resources during the eleventh five-year plan amounted to more than 400 million roubles, and in the twelfth five-year plan these expenditures will be considerably increased.

This information on legislation and practice in the Byelorussian SSR regarding the matters covered by articles 10, 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights supplements the initial report previously submitted by the Byelorussian SSR.