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Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VI, sect. B), A/46/56-E/1991/6 and Corr.1, A/46/137-E/1991/40, A/46/281-E/1991/112, A/46/315, 360, 361, 362 and Corr.1, 366, 414, 501/Rev.1)

1. Mr. VELLA (Malta) said that the public sector's inability to meet all the needs of an ageing population, particularly in the developing countries, necessitated an alternative approach. Governments should strengthen the existing support systems of the family and the community, and particularly the mutual aid system of cooperatives in rural populations. Such activities should form an integral part of an overall economic and social development programme.

2. Currently, elderly people constituted 14.5 per cent of Malta's population; the figure was projected to reach 24 per cent by the year 2025. The family, which had traditionally supported the elderly in Maltese society, was under economic, social and psychological strain. The consequent growth of the public sector's role in caring for the elderly had, to date, been largely restricted to the provision of medical care and other basic humanitarian needs, with little emphasis on the integration of the elderly in the community. To broaden that approach, the Maltese Government had established, in 1987, the post of Parliamentary Secretary for the Care of the Elderly. The activities of that office had concentrated on providing an integrated network of services which enabled the elderly to live full lives in their own homes. A new geriatric hospital with in-patient and out-patient facilities also promised to enhance the care and rehabilitation of elderly people.

3. The Malta-based International Institute on Ageing had carried out numerous activities in 1991. It had conducted three short-term training courses on subjects relating to the elderly and had awarded scholarships for training courses to 102 candidates from developing countries. It had co-sponsored, with the United Nations Statistical Office, a seminar on disability statistics, and had raised over \$200,000 in extrabudgetary resources for training and research activities. It had acquired databases on ageing from various United Nations bodies and the United States Government, and had undertaken collaborative studies and research. It had begun publishing a journal on elderly people in developing countries, which it distributed free of charge to 93 nations. It was also collaborating in the production and publication of country monographs on population ageing, and was giving technical and administrative support to a United Nations Population Fund project in China concerning elderly people and policy formulation.

(Mr. Vella, Malta)

4. Malta's traditional problem-oriented approach to caring for the elderly had caused the development of its welfare services to lag behind that of social security, and the State's social services had tended to replace, rather than complement, family support. However, the current Government had created a new Ministry for Social Policy to ensure an integrated approach to the twin objectives of basic equality and maximum individual care. The Ministry coordinated the efforts of State and voluntary agencies in such fields as health, social security, social and family welfare, housing, the handicapped, the elderly, women, employment and training. In particular, the training of workers in the field of family welfare was a high priority. The Maltese Government was committed to continuing its policy of transforming the welfare State to a welfare society in which all social institutions contributed to the well-being of the individual, the family and the community.

5. Mr. RANASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that the expected ageing of the populations of both developed and developing countries in the coming decade would have the greatest impact on the developing world, where the annual growth rate of the number of elderly people was about twice the rate in the developed countries. The weakening of the extended family system because of urbanization and modernization would require developing countries to set up new social institutions and support systems to care for the elderly.

6. The problems of youth, including unemployment and the undermining of traditional values in a rapidly changing social and economic environment, threatened to give rise to social upheavals in developing countries. Youth in rural areas had special needs which required special attention.

7. Although medical science promised to provide eventual solutions to the problem of disabilities, all countries should take immediate action to allow disabled persons to maximize their abilities to get an education, perform meaningful jobs, support families and contribute to their communities.

8. Sri Lanka's free health services, free education, subsidized food, scholarships, free midday meals for school children and free textbooks had contributed to its low infant mortality, declining fertility, high literacy and high life-expectancy rates. The Government gave high priority to the development of youth, since one third of the population consisted of persons between the ages of 15 and 35. The creation of the Ministry for Youth Affairs in 1978 had represented a milestone by providing for enhanced coordination of the youth services of governmental and non-governmental organizations. One such governmental body was the National Youth Services Council, which promoted business enterprises among youth. The National Youth Clubs Federation was affiliated with about 6,000 local youth clubs, mainly in rural areas.

9. The unavailability of job opportunities for educated youth appeared to have been a root cause of insurgencies in Sri Lanka. After investigating the causes of youth unrest, a Presidential commission had recommended, inter alia, the strengthening of youth representation in political institutions and

(Mr. Ranasinghe, Sri Lanka)

administrative bodies; the creation of an office of Youth Ombudsman to look into specific grievances of youth; and the establishment of youth organizations at the village level to provide services and forums for discussion of the problems of youth. Accordingly, the Government had already taken measures to increase youth participation in local political bodies and to set up more regional colleges, a Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission and a National Education Commission. Moreover, the Government's poverty-alleviation programme had undertaken skill-development activities for youth.

10. The Sri Lankan Government had also acted on various United Nations recommendations. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/91, a national Committee for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons had been established to provide vocational training and support for the involvement of disabled persons in income-generating activities. In addition, a Trust Fund for the Visually Handicapped would be established in the near future to provide financial assistance. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/106, a National Committee on Ageing had been created. Additional welfare homes for the elderly had been set up and steps had been taken to introduce an insurance scheme that would cover disabled and elderly persons. His Government would welcome advice from United Nations bodies on rehabilitation activities for the disabled and the elderly.

11. Mr. VERMA (India) said that the high social cost of economic adjustment, especially for vulnerable groups, required Governments to fulfil their social responsibilities. Toleration of human and social deprivation was inconsistent with the generally accepted values of democracy and human rights. He therefore welcomed the consultations initiated on the holding of a world summit for social development.

12. Flexible responses to specific problems were required in order to build development and peace on a solid foundation of social justice. Although Governments had primary responsibility for addressing the problems of vulnerable groups, the talent and experience of non-governmental organizations should also be fully utilized.

13. The interim report on the world social situation (A/46/56-E/1991/6) gave too little attention to the worsening economic situation in many developing countries and to the significant decline in their social and economic indicators. Such reports should reflect, in addition to the transformations in the formerly centrally planned economies, the continuing widespread poverty and attendant problems in the developing countries.

14. The statement in paragraph 3 of the interim report that sustained growth in output per capita in countries with large populations had helped raise incomes in countries that accounted for nearly 60 per cent of the population in developing countries obscured the larger economic picture: poverty in the developing countries was widespread and the overall external economic

(Mr. Verma, India)

environment continued to be unfavourable. The sustained growth of which the report had spoken neglected to mention the extremely low consumption base from which countries like India started.

15. His delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/46/360) and agreed that the three objectives of the International Youth Year, namely participation, development and peace, should continue to be the theme of the programme of action. It had also noted with interest the reports on ageing (A/46/361), the disabled (A/46/366) and the International Year of the Family (A/46/362); it was to be hoped that they would generate more initiatives and concrete programmes.

16. In India, more than 50 per cent of a total population of approximately 850 million was below the age of 21. That posed tremendous challenges and opened up immense possibilities. His Government aimed to universalize elementary education and modernize vocational training. In formulating its educational policy, it gave particular attention to the socially disadvantaged, girls and women, people living in poor urban and rural areas, educationally deprived minorities and disabled persons. India attached great importance to the role of the United Nations in that area.

17. Mr. MONTALVO (Ecuador) said that his delegation supported the convening of a world summit for social development, which would provide an important opportunity to redefine policies and strategies, map out solutions and alert the international community to the current dramatic situation in the developing world.

18. With regard to the Secretary-General's interim report on the world social situation (A/46/56-E/1991/6), his delegation had made clear its reservations on that document during the debate on the item in the Economic and Social Council. Ecuador was confident that the Secretary-General had taken due note of the comments of delegations and would abandon the limited, partial and discriminatory format of the current provisional report, in particular the inclusion of ideological and political language. It was to be hoped that the report would undertake a more serious and impartial economic analysis and a more balanced examination of the various economic indicators. References to UNDP and World Bank studies must be taken with caution, because as the Secretary-General himself had acknowledged (A/46/137-E/1991/40, para. 5), social indicators were different from social statistics. It should be borne in mind that the UNDP Human Development Report 1991 had been the subject of considerable criticism and therefore was not the best reference source for a study on the world social situation.

19. Turning to the specific subjects under consideration, his Government had taken due note of the Secretary-General's report on international cooperation on ageing (A/46/361) and intended to participate actively in the activities proposed for the decade 1992-2001. The National Congress of Ecuador had just adopted the Protection of the Aged Act, which drew upon principles established

(Mr. Montalvo, Ecuador)

at the international level in favour of the elderly. His Government supported the proposal to create a world fund for the elderly through the Banyan Fund, to which all States should contribute generously.

20. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the disabled (A/46/366), his delegation subscribed to the need to shift the focus from awareness-raising to action. It was unfortunate, however, that only three staff members of the Secretariat were working in that area; that made effective action impossible. His delegation suggested creating an international foundation for the disabled in order to mobilize resources, along the lines of the Banyan Fund for the aged. His delegation had taken due note of the need to strengthen the national committees of disabled persons but underscored the importance of providing United Nations assistance so that those committees could remain properly informed. Disabled persons in the developing countries must receive better information on the numerous events referred to in the annex to the report, as well as assistance to enable them to attend. Ecuador was implementing the Tallinn Guidelines annexed to General Assembly resolution 44/70 to the best of its ability; but assistance must be provided to the poorest States to help them integrate disabled persons in society.

21. Concerning youth, Ecuador had drafted a programme in accordance with the objectives of the International Youth Year and the draft world youth programme of action. A National Youth Agency had been established to coordinate activities in line with the policies adopted by the General Assembly. The topics developed in the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/46/360) would be useful in guiding the work of Ecuador's youth organizations. As in the case of the disabled, however, his delegation hoped that the United Nations events in the area could be adequately publicized and that assistance could be made available to allow youths from poorer countries to attend, in particular the proposed world summit for social development.

22. His delegation had taken note of the Secretary-General's report on preparations for the 1994 International Year of the Family (A/46/362). It was essential to improve the effectiveness and the scope of the preparatory body. Ecuador shared the Secretary-General's concern at the reduced budget and called upon Member States to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for the Year. His delegation supported the initiative of the First Lady of Costa Rica and would participate in the "First Ladies for the Family" initiative in 1992.

23. Concerning the Secretary-General's report on International Literacy Year (A/46/281-E/1991/112), his Government attached high priority to the observance of the Year. President Rodrigo Borja had attended the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in 1990, and his Government had undertaken an ambitious campaign to eradicate illiteracy with a view to attaining a literacy level similar to that of developed countries.

24. Mr. KOTEY (Ghana) said he regretted that the efforts of United Nations bodies in the social development sector had met with considerable frustration. The world had witnessed a growing deterioration in living conditions in the developing countries, where one third of the population lived in unimaginable poverty, and drug abuse, alcoholism, crime, prostitution and AIDS had become major problems.

25. His delegation supported the proposal that the Secretary-General should explore the feasibility of convening a world summit for social development to formulate a more coherent programme to strengthen the capacity of people to participate in international social development and to explore possible sources of financial support. It was essential to encourage a more in-depth evaluation of the possibilities for improving social conditions offered by the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes (A/46/414). The Secretary-General's conclusions focusing on family and community-oriented approaches in achieving the objectives identified by the Guiding Principles therefore needed pursuing.

26. Social development programmes and policies could be more effective; harmonized if based on the best available data concerning the needs of those most directly affected, and his delegation therefore endorsed the work begun on establishing a global information network. Emphasis was being placed on enhancing the implementation of the Guiding Principles through regional consultations, and efforts must be directed towards sustaining and developing those consultations that had already begun. The results should be analysed and disseminated widely to all regions to serve as guidelines.

27. With regard to youth, his Government had developed viable youth programmes, including the requisite structures for programmes at both national and international levels. Accordingly, it welcomed the Economic and Social Council's decision to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group of the Commission for Social Development. As a member of the Commission, Ghana looked forward to contributing to the work of the ad hoc group.

28. The activities of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had heightened awareness for the problems and potentials of disabled persons. Ghana's disabled population was estimated at 1.4 million, a very high figure for a country with a total population of 14.5 million. In cooperation with disabled persons' organizations, the Government had put programmes in place that focused on rehabilitation and included vocational training, training in self-care activities, the provision of technical aids, orthopaedic devices and social counselling.

29. His delegation commended the decision by the Commission for Social Development to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group funded by voluntary contributions to elaborate standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. Ghana was one of three African countries chosen to sponsor the meetings of the working group. With regard to national coordinating committees on disability, it was to be hoped that the

(Mr. Kotey, Ghana)

Commission's appeal to the United Nations and its specialized agencies to assist Member States, particularly the least developed countries, in establishing and strengthening them would not go unheeded. Such bodies could contribute to efforts to shift the focus of the Organization's disability programmes to concrete action.

30. On the question of ageing, his delegation called for implementation of the "Principles for Older Persons" recommended by the Commission for Social Development, and endorsed the efforts being made to develop an operational strategy for 1992 to 2001.

31. With regard to the family, his delegation shared the view that a system-wide coordinated approach and actions for the International Year should include activities of non-governmental organizations. In preparing programmes at the international level, Ghana proposed for consideration the effect of urbanization on families, particularly in the developing countries. That focus would highlight the problems that family systems faced as a result of rapid technological advances. Due attention should also be paid to the situation of migrant families.

32. Ms. SEMA^FUMU (Uganda) said that the relaxation of tensions between East and West had provided the international community with a unique opportunity to tackle the world's pressing socio-economic problems. In many developing countries, the prevailing inequitable economic order continued to undermine Government's ability to maintain existing levels of social development. Structural-adjustment programmes had led to cuts in the already meagre resources allocated for social services. International efforts to address the socio-economic crisis must not be limited to cosmetic programmes for alleviating the social impact of structural-adjustment programmes on the poorest of the poor. The growing recognition of the human being as the centre of all development should lead to a balanced approach that promoted both economic growth and social progress.

33. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation should give adequate attention to the situation in developing countries, including an in-depth analysis of the impact of structural-adjustment and poverty-alleviation programmes. The scant attention given to the AIDS problem in the draft framework of the 1993 Report was a matter of serious concern for her delegation. The AIDS pandemic in Uganda had had a grave socio-economic impact whose ramifications had not yet been fully determined. Her Government had created the Uganda AIDS Commission to plan and coordinate AIDS prevention and control on the basis of a multi-sectoral approach. Uganda hoped that the 1993 Report would give due attention to the AIDS pandemic and called upon the international community to increase support for its efforts.

34. The work of the United Nations in improving quantitative and qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living should give priority to improving social databases in developing countries. Paragraph 37 of the

(Ms. Semafumu, Uganda)

Secretary-General's report (A/46/137-E/1991/40) suggested that more attention could be given to indicators on freedom. Uganda hoped that consideration would be given to the pitfalls of the freedom index contained in the UNDP Human Development Report, 1991.

35. The reports by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the various programmes in the social field indicated modest levels of implementation. It might be worthwhile for the Commission for Social Development to review all such programmes in order to make recommendations on ensuring that future exercises were more effective and meaningful. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the shift in focus from awareness-raising to action in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/46/366). The Organization should continue to give special attention to the disabled in developing countries, who faced additional obstacles as a result of the economic situation. Uganda, which had an estimated 1.7 million disabled persons, was taking a number of measures to realize their potential. The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda had received considerable support from the Government and the international community.

36. As to the Secretary-General's report on preparations for the International Year of the Family (A/46/362), her delegation looked forward to the results of the study entitled "Families in conditions of extreme poverty", which should include practical recommendations on improving their situation. Uganda supported the recommendation of the first ad hoc inter-agency meeting on the preparation of a technical paper on such issues as conceptualization, typologies, structures and functions concerning the family. The paper should follow a balanced approach taking account of differences in political, economic, social and cultural situations.

37. In spite of considerable constraints, the work of the United Nations in promoting social development had been commendable. Her delegation supported the efforts to strengthen the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna and hoped that that would not be done at the expense of other sectors of vital interest to developing countries. Those efforts should go hand in hand with measures to strengthen social units in the regional commissions in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of the Organization in that field. Lastly, her delegation fully supported the initiative to convene a world summit for social development, which could give great impetus to global efforts to promote social progress.

38. Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe) said that the social cost of political change and economic adjustment had led to deterioration in quality of life in many parts of the world, especially the developing countries. More than 1 billion people did not enjoy the World Bank's "acceptable" standard of living, the majority of them being in the developing world, especially sub-Saharan Africa. That situation resulted from interacting economic, social and environmental factors, to which had been added the marginalization of the African continent

(Ms. Zindoga, Zimbabwe)

over the past two years, and "donor fatigue". It was time for the United Nations to play a role in reversing that trend and making the universalization of world social development a reality. If the emerging era was to be based on peace, justice, stability and cooperation, social problems should be accorded high priority, and the consultations on a possible world summit for social development were a step in the right direction.

39. Regarding the concerns of specific vulnerable groups in society, Zimbabwe welcomed the wide support by Member States for the drafting of standard rules for equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, and the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group for that purpose by the Commission for Social Development. Her delegation was concerned, however, that the guidelines prepared by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs on key disability issues had not been adequately incorporated into national disability programmes because of lack of advisory services, and urged the international community to contribute to the success of the Decade of Disabled Persons and to help national institutions for the disabled in the areas of capacity-building and sustainability.

40. The dramatic increase in unemployment among youth, especially in Africa and other parts of the developing world, was often accompanied by an increase in crime. Zimbabwe was attempting to curb both unemployment and crime by establishing vocational training centres to equip high school graduates for the labour market. Fair distribution of resources was imperative to safeguard vulnerable groups such as women and children. Despite the impetus of the 1990 World Summit for Children, the day-to-day life of millions of children had not yet improved. Women continued to be denied equal opportunity in training and employment, and in Africa and other developing countries, they bore the brunt of harsh economic realities and social evils. To fulfil its commitment to improving the status of women, her Government had embarked on a massive adult literacy campaign, the majority of whose participants were women. Her delegation was also pleased to note that the preparations for the International Year of the Family were well under way.

41. Mr. QUATTARA (Mali) said that the outline of the world social situation presented by the Secretary-General in his interim report (A/46/56-E/1991/40) showed major disparities between the developed countries, where standards of living continued to rise, and the developing countries, where poverty was deepening. The developed countries devoted more than half their public expenditure to the social sector, while the developing countries allocated to it a relatively small portion of their resources. Though they attached great importance to the social sector, their efforts had suffered setbacks from enormous economic problems, and required support through international solidarity. The current positive trends in international relations and growing mobilization to address social problems augured well for future international cooperation. Mali endorsed any action by the international community to resolve social problems, particularly the proposed world summit on social development.

(Mr. Ouattara, Mali)

42. The Government of Mali took into account the needs and concerns of all segments of society in its development planning. It took particular interest in the future of youth, and welcomed the preparation of a draft world youth programme of action; it believed that priority should be given to health, malnutrition, illiteracy, education and training, employment, rural migration, AIDS, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and integration of young women. Mali emphasized employment issues in particular, because of the growing number of young job seekers. The Government had therefore begun activities to promote entrepreneurship. The elderly, for their part, played a respected role in Malian society, where their memories were important to the predominant oral tradition. His delegation supported the activities on ageing outlined in the report (A/46/361).

43. It commended the international community's efforts for the integration of disabled persons. His Government's policy on the disabled had the goal of helping them to become independent and live from the fruits of their labour. He listed several associations for the disabled in Mali, in addition to the West African Federation of Disabled Persons' Associations, headquartered in Bamako.

44. No social policy could succeed without giving priority to family issues. A coherent family policy could serve as a counterweight to the fragmentation of social programmes. His delegation welcomed the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family. Social well-being - a priority for all peoples - could only be achieved in a climate of peace, justice and solidarity.

45. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia), referring to the interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation (A/46/56-E/1991/6) expressed her delegation's serious concern regarding the right to development, which should be adequately reflected in the 1993 Report. Joy over the easing of East-West tensions had been tempered by anxiety that emerging market economies would receive assistance at the expense of the developing countries. North-South polarization remained unresolved and a source of instability with no place in a new world order. While developing countries must ensure that their economies were responsive, the external economic environment must also lend itself to sustainable development. Moreover, social development would lead to future economic growth through improved education and literacy, adequate health care and shelter and reduced poverty. Accordingly, the description of improved quantitative and qualitative indicators in document A/46/137-E/1991/40 was welcome, as it would give decision makers better insight.

46. Turning to the question of ageing, she noted that one of the draft global targets was integration of ageing into mainstream development in the 1990s, which was necessary to avoid marginalizing the elderly and to retain their lifetime wealth of knowledge and skills. In Indonesia, improved health care had been translated into increased life expectancy and had made the question of ageing an important factor in long-term development planning. Her

(Mrs. Syahrudin, Indonesia)

Government had availed itself of advisory services of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development in coordinating activities related to health research and social development issues. It had also arranged the celebration of the International Day for the Elderly on 1 October.

47. Her delegation also welcomed the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/46/360). Among the priority issues identified for inclusion in the draft world youth programme of action, she stressed education and employment, particularly non-formal and vocational training necessary to provide employment skills. Its importance had been underscored by International Literacy Year, which had emphasized that widespread illiteracy seriously hindered development. Forty-two per cent of Indonesia's population was aged 15 or younger, and it was a national priority to provide that future generation with the means to contribute to development and to their own personal security.

48. Her delegation looked forward to the preparation of a long-term strategy to ensure the continuation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and to the preparation of a manual on national disability legislation in developing countries. In Indonesia, the approach to integrating the disabled had been primarily at the community and grass-roots level. That issue should be approached as an integral aspect of national development. The disabled themselves must be integrated into the planning process and given the means to avail themselves of society's benefits.

49. The progress made in preparations for the International Year of the Family despite limited resources was commendable. Her delegation hoped that the perennial issue of scarce resources to implement social programmes would be resolved, so that the international community could address with conviction the aspirations of the world's poor, illiterate and underdeveloped.

50. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda) said that General Assembly resolution 45/428 had requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report for the forty-fifth session on the situation of the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Her delegation was disappointed that the report was not yet available and hoped that it would be distributed in good time for consideration under item 94 (b).

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

51. Mr. ARCILLA (Philippines) said that his delegation took strong exception to the manner in which its statement on the world social situation had been cut short by the Chairman the previous week. The Philippines was fully aware of the agreed time-limit on statements in the Committee and did not in any way question the authority of the Chairman to apply the rules of procedure. At the same time, his delegation was also aware of the practice of granting extensions to the 15-minute time-limit. Such an extension had been given and the representative of the Philippines had been allowed to continue her

(Mr. Arcilla, Philippines)

statement. If she had then exceeded the extended time period, it would have been more appropriate for the Chairman to bring that to her attention rather than to stop her abruptly and call upon the next speaker. That had infringed on the sovereign right of the Philippines to be represented in the Committee. Furthermore, representatives of sovereign States in the United Nations should be more considerate of the feelings of others.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee itself had agreed on the 15-minute time-limit for statements. It was his duty to ensure that that procedure was followed.

53. He recalled that on the previous Friday, a number of delegations had proposed postponing consideration of item 96, on narcotic drugs, because of the delay in distributing the relevant documentation. He had received written confirmation that the report in document A/46/480 would be available on 29 October. On the basis of consultations with delegations, he suggested that the report should be introduced on Thursday, 31 October, and that the general debate on the item should start on Monday, 4 November.

54. Mrs. AGUILERA (Mexico), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, said that in a spirit of compromise she would accept the Chairman's suggestion concerning item 96. Nevertheless, that should in no way be considered a precedent for dealing with similar situations by reducing the number of meetings originally allocated for consideration of an agenda item. The current situation had been caused by a failure to ensure the timely distribution of the relevant documentation. That was the responsibility of the Secretariat, which had not provided a satisfactory explanation for the delay. She hoped that that problem would not recur and would be taken into consideration when deciding on the date for submitting the draft resolution on item 96.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.