

# General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

*Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE  
15th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 18 October 1991  
at 10 a.m.  
New York

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. AL-SHAALI

(United Arab Emirates)

later:

Mr. SLABY

(Czechoslovakia)

## CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 95: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room 192750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.3/46/SR.15  
23 October 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

AGENDA ITEM 95: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. IV, sect. D), 38, 77, 325, 344, 377, 439, 462, 491, 501)

1. Mr. KHOSHROO (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in accordance with the Islamic belief in the equality of men and women, Iranian women participated in a wide range of political, social, cultural and economic activities.
2. The Iranian Government's measures to eliminate discrimination against women in education had resulted in an increase in literacy among women from 29 per cent to 52 per cent between 1979 and 1989. Furthermore, female secondary-school graduates had slightly outnumbered male secondary-school graduates in 1988. The percentage of women at various levels of higher education ranged from 30 to 38 per cent.
3. In recent years there had been an outstanding improvement in the employment and professional advancement of Iranian women, as their representation had increased by 45 per cent in scientific and technical jobs and by 12 per cent in managerial and top-echelon administrative jobs. The number of women employed in the industrial sector had declined, owing to the wartime decrease in industrial activities, but over 35 per cent of public sector employees were women.
4. The Iranian Parliament had sought to create an even more supportive environment for female employees by enacting laws allowing women to work part time, prohibiting them from performing difficult and dangerous jobs and giving pregnant employees the right to perform light-duty jobs with no decrease in salary or benefits, as well as maternity leave of at least 104 days.
5. Special Bureaux of Women had been established in the Office of the President, the Judiciary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote the integration of women into economic, social and political affairs, to protect their legal rights and to intensify their participation in international forums. In addition, a special deputy for women's sports activities had been appointed, and a charter had been elaborated for the Social and Cultural Council for Iranian Women.
6. He hoped that the Committee, in working to enhance the status of women all over the world, would help Palestinian women in the occupied territories and women oppressed by apartheid to secure full enjoyment of their rights.
7. Ms. ANSELMINI (Italy) said that such events in Eastern Europe would probably necessitate eventual modifications to the European Economic Community's Third Plan of Action for Women, to which the Italian Government had pledged its support. The forthcoming establishment of a single European market and the restructuring of the production sector in Eastern European countries threatened to cause higher unemployment among women, and had already

(Ms. Anselmi, Italy)

resulted in a large number of migrant women, exposed to many forms of oppression and violence.

8. Women who exercised their right to equal participation in political life were faced with the paradox that, whereas women had their own characteristic approaches to working for the common good, they often adopted the values currently dominating the political world when they gained a measure of political power. The capacity of women to contribute towards strengthening the links between social justice and political necessity was thereby diminished. That problem should be addressed at the 1995 world conference on women.

9. In June 1990, Italy had enacted a law which provided a legislative basis for the existing National Commission for the Achievement of Equal Opportunity between Men and Women by determining its composition and purposes and giving it financial autonomy. The Commission, which represented many women's movements and associations, sought to eliminate all discrimination against women. It supported government policy on the subject and acted as a liaison between Italian society and institutions and between the regional and provincial commissions for equality.

10. In April 1991, Italy had enacted a law providing for equal opportunity in employment and career advancement, *inter alia*, by assigning to alleged perpetrators of discrimination the burden of proving their innocence. Moreover, a legislative basis had been provided for the existing Committee for Equality in Employment. In addition, laws had been drafted on measures to encourage women to assume economic responsibility in the areas of agriculture, trade, crafts and small and medium-sized enterprises.

11. The need for grass-roots participation made it essential that women should share common political values and objectives. Accordingly, the National Commission had sought to educate women on *de facto* discrimination through two initiatives: the publication and distribution of a guidebook on women's rights, which would form the basis for meetings and discussion groups, and the conduct of a survey on the public's reaction to images of women in the media and in advertising, which would help women to determine ways of changing discriminatory attitudes rooted in Italian culture.

12. Ms. DOHNAL (Austria) said that the United Nations should accelerate its efforts to improve the status of women by applying the principle of temporary positive discrimination system wide, particularly at decision-making levels. Her delegation was pleased with the current working method of the Commission on the Status of Women, under which three priority themes were discussed in depth at each session.

13. The elimination of *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women involved both the setting of legal standards prohibiting discrimination and the implementation of those standards. She regretted that almost one third of

(Ms. Dohnal, Austria)

the Members of the United Nations were not yet parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and hoped that more States would ratify and implement that instrument. She also hoped that States which had subscribed to the Convention with reservations would adopt national policies allowing them to withdraw their reservations.

14. She endorsed the temporary implementation of quotas for affirmative action to narrow the gap between de jure and de facto equality. In Austria, initiatives had been taken to enable women to receive equal pay for work of equal value, to combine parental responsibilities with professional careers and to enjoy an equitable level of retirement income. It was essential for Governments to recognize that women's concerns were an indispensable component of all social, economic and political issues and activities.

15. Since women's rights were a human rights issue, her delegation recommended that the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) should participate in future preparatory meetings for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, as well as in the Conference itself.

16. The highest priority should be given to the dissemination of information on women's rights, particularly in developing countries. Women had an important role to play in shaping development policies and should therefore be fully aware of their rights and of ways of translating them into action.

17. Given the importance of the work of CEDAW, she regretted that a lack of financial and personnel resources had hampered its operation. Austria was ready to help facilitate the sharing of ideas on implementing the Convention and on drafting periodic reports of States parties by sponsoring, together with the Division for the Advancement of Women, the participation of representatives of least developed countries in training courses on the Convention. The long-term objective would be to establish a training centre on the Convention within the Division. In addition, she looked forward to the Secretary-General's submission of proposals to provide the Secretariat with additional resources for preparations for the 1995 world conference on women. Austria was honoured to have offered to be the host country for the conference and to participate in the Commission on the Status of Women, to which it hoped to be re-elected in 1992.

18. Mr. VILLAGRAN DE LEON (Guatemala), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, said that the occasion represented the first time that the five countries had made a joint statement on the item "Advancement of women" in the General Assembly.

19. The status of women, particularly in developing countries, continued to be a matter of international concern. Women's creative potential and productive capacity were not being fully utilized; moreover, they had not received enough recognition for their already enormous contribution to

(Mr. Villagran de Leon, Guatemala)

development. It was essential for the international community to implement fully the international instruments adopted since 1975 concerning the status of women, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had been ratified by the Central American States. Also essential was a comprehensive evaluation of progress in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and of the urgent situation of women living in rural and marginal areas and in conflict zones, or involved in mass migrations.

20. The integration of women in development would not come about merely by making women's issues a separate aspect of development planning and programmes or by adopting measures to compensate for the limitations of economic policies. Countries needed to recognize the crucial role played by women in development and the impact of that role on the economy. Such recognition would facilitate the advancement of women, including greater access to education and training and to concessional credit.

21. The Central American countries had made some progress in the advancement of women. Nicaragua had elected a female president in 1990; an increasing number of women held high-level government positions; national offices for women's issues had been established; efforts were being made to eliminate discriminatory legislation; references to traditional or subordinate roles for women were being removed from textbooks; and with the assistance of various United Nations agencies, workshops and seminars had been held to evaluate the situation of rural and urban women and women in special categories.

22. It was women who had suffered most as a result of the economic crisis of the 1980s, which had forced Governments to cut social expenditure drastically. In Central America, additional factors made the status of women a matter of even greater concern. The countries faced overwhelming economic difficulties. A large percentage of the population lived below the extreme poverty level. Dramatic differences between social classes were exacerbated by high unemployment. The Central American Governments needed to adopt measures to create employment, including those which would enable women to launch small and medium-sized business ventures.

23. Three countries in Central America had witnessed armed conflicts during the 1980s and a resultant polarization of their societies; that had adversely affected women, particularly in rural areas. The other countries of the region had had to face the social and economic consequences of an increased number of displaced and refugee women. Clearly, any steps towards a peaceful settlement of the conflicts would free women to participate more fully in development; the international community must therefore continue to support efforts to promote peace and social justice in the region.

24. Of particular concern was the situation of the indigenous populations of Central America, which lived primarily in rural areas and had traditionally suffered from discrimination and marginalization. Many women died because of

(Mr. Villagran de Leon, Guatemala)

lack of medical care, leaving homeless children who often turned to delinquency and drug abuse. The lot of the indigenous populations had to be improved gradually through far-reaching multisectoral and sectoral programmes, supported by political will.

25. Other pressing problems included high infant-mortality rates, malnutrition, extreme poverty, and absence of basic health services. There was a need for educational programmes which, while taking cultural differences into account, would provide women in the most vulnerable sectors with advice on such matters as family planning, child care and diet and would help raise awareness about the rational use of natural resources.

26. The countries of Central America recognized that the United Nations had played a fundamental role in drawing attention to the issue of women and development. Technical cooperation should be increased and measures adopted which would allow women to participate in all phases of technical-cooperation programming. The full range of women's contribution to development should be acknowledged, thus allowing women to participate equally in development activities, which should be carried out with due consideration for the particularities of the country involved. The United Nations should include more women's issues in its operational activities for development, in an integrated and multidisciplinary framework.

27. With the world moving towards a new era of friendly relations, development was more crucial than ever, as was the participation of women in that process. Peace and development were linked inseparably. It was therefore a matter of urgency to attain the objectives set forth in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries.

28. He hoped that the 1995 world conference on women would be a powerful force in improving the condition of women and incorporating them fully in development.

29. Ms. McLENNAN (United States of America) said it was becoming increasingly clear that, of all systems of government, democracy offered the best chance for men and women to develop their potential. The relationship between democracy, individual growth and economic development underscored the importance of respect for the human rights of men and women alike. In her statement to the Third Committee, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women had noted that democracy did not lead to the advancement of women but rather that without the advancement of women, there would be no democracy.

30. Elimination of de jure and de facto discrimination against women would certainly contribute to the integration of women in development. The gap

(Ms. McLennan, United States)

between de jure and de facto status of women was well documented. Even more alarming was the extensive legal limitations on women's rights in some countries, often in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, even where women were protected by law, there was widespread disregard for their civil and political rights. Enforcement of the law required continuous cooperation between Governments, organizations and individuals and constant monitoring by national and international bodies.

31. Through its Department of State, her country collected information on human rights conditions world wide, published as country reports, which were available to the international community. Her country thereby helped to promote respect for the integrity and dignity of the individual and to encourage international condemnation of human rights violations.

32. The most pervasive form of abuse was domestic violence against women. In countries without legal prohibitions against abuse, the problem frequently went unreported. In countries with such prohibitions, enforcement was often lax.

33. Abuse against women was often grounded in cultural patterns and compounded by poverty. Tradition, however, did not condone the abridgement of rights and freedoms universally recognized as sacrosanct.

34. Her Government was particularly concerned about physical abuse such as dowry deaths, genital mutilation, spouse abuse and forced sterilization, and about the denial of equal protection under the law, abridgement of property rights and involuntary servitude. A key element of her Government's foreign policy was to pursue bilateral and multilateral efforts to eliminate human rights violations and to promote reform of the institutions responsible for such abuses. Her Government was also endeavouring to foster democracies and impartial judiciaries as a means of safeguarding individual liberties.

35. Her country had worked very hard over the years to eliminate discrimination against women and had made progress in many areas, including voting rights, education and access to basic services. Women's health issues were receiving more attention, and the National Institutes of Health had established in 1990 the Office of Research on Women's Health. Since the early 1970s there had been growing public awareness of and sensitivity to rape victims. There had also been some progress in training law-enforcement and health-care professionals to assist those victims in a more sensitive manner. Her Government had enacted legislation to ensure the timely payment of child support to divorced women with children. However, enforcement of those laws remained inadequate. Research from the 1970s and the early 1980s had indicated that even with alimony and child-support payments, women could expect a 25 to 30 per cent drop in their standard of living after divorce, while their former spouses experienced no such decline.

/...

(Ms. McLennan, United States)

36. Under United States law, employers were prohibited from discrimination on the basis of gender and from paying women less than men for equal work. Women in her country had begun to enter fields that had once been considered the province of men. Nevertheless, a great number of women continued to be occupationally segregated and jobs held by women generally paid considerably less than those held by men.

37. Women continued to be underrepresented in middle- and upper-level management in both the private and public sectors; that had given rise to the notion of an invisible "glass ceiling" which prevented women from being promoted to high levels. Federal anti-discrimination enforcement efforts had in the past focused primarily on discrimination related to hiring and firing. Recently, however, the Government had begun to pay particular attention to understanding and eliminating the "glass ceiling". To that end, it had carried out a series of pilot studies to identify employment practices that limited the promotion of women and minorities. Several bills had been introduced in 1991 in the United States Congress with a view to setting up a government commission to investigate issues and make recommendations.

38. Her country would continue its efforts to eradicate both de jure and de facto discrimination against women. It had co-sponsored a draft resolution at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women aimed at improving the procedure for considering communications concerning the status of women, most of which concerned allegations of human rights violations against women. Since the current procedure was inefficient, the Commission and the Economic and Social Council were being deprived of an invaluable source of information about the effects of discrimination on women's lives. The Commission had decided to postpone a decision on revising the communications procedure until its 1992 session and, in the interim, her delegation would encourage all interested parties to discuss how the procedure could be strengthened.

39. In its 1991 Human Development Report, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had demonstrated a strong link between human development and human freedom. It had also made explicit the connections between human development and economic progress. The report had expanded the scope of development to include human freedoms, human rights and non-coercive, informed choice in all areas of development and had defined the basic objective of development as enlarging the range of human choices. Her Government applauded the work done by UNDP and endorsed the new, broader definition of development. It hoped that the issues of human rights and equality between men and women would be integrated into the work of an increasing number of bodies in the United Nations system.

40. Her Government also supported the conclusions of the World Development Report to the effect that progress in economic development coincided with investment in people, improvement of the climate for enterprise, and the opening up of economies to international trade and investment. She also noted



(Ms. McLennan, United States)

the wide range of activities being carried out by the United Nations system for the integration of women into development, an outstanding example of which was the publication The World's Women: Trends and Statistics. It was widely recognized that the involvement of women of all ages in the development process was a critical factor in achieving broad-based sustainable economic growth. For its part, her country would continue to ensure that women participated in economic development by giving them the tools, skills and resources to combat poverty. In addition, it believed that elderly and ageing women could play an important role in social change and should be encouraged to participate in all aspects of development.

41. Her Government was committed to improving the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions and urged Member States to support United Nations efforts to increase the percentage of women in professional positions by nominating more women candidates, encouraging women to apply for vacant posts and creating national rosters of women candidates.

42. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey), referring to the report of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (A/46/325), welcomed the broadening of INSTRAW's field of action and the strengthening of its catalyst role, and commended the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on the progress of its activities and the reformulation of its terms of reference and objectives. His delegation appreciated the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women and hoped that its resources would be increased. Turkey had taken an active part in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women for the past three years. It would participate as an observer when its membership expired at the end of 1991. Turkey was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and was pleased to note that ratifications now numbered 109. His country would be taking an active part in preparations for the 1995 world conference on women and was already planning a number of national study and evaluation meetings and two international conferences, on evaluation of the status of women in economic and social development and on women and the environment.

43. Turkey had set up a department on the status and problems of women, under a ministry headed by a woman, which was responsible for drawing up national policy and mobilizing resources for integrating women in development, improving their level of education, participation in agriculture and industry, legal protection and health and social care.

44. At the second session of the Economic and Social Council in 1991 Turkey had introduced resolution 1991/64, on behalf of the sponsors, welcoming the initiative taken by a group of First Ladies to convene a Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women in Brussels in February 1992, and appealing for continued support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development in cooperation with other United Nations organizations.

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

45. Drawing attention to the general elections to be held in Turkey on 20 October, he said there were many more women candidates than in past elections. A woman had just been appointed as spokesman of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Government spokesman was also a woman.

46. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (A/46/439), he noted that discrimination against women still existed in every country, whatever its level of development, and that the slow progress in implementing the Strategies was largely due to economic, political and other priorities. Turkey had just launched a campaign to overcome obstacles in education, employment and health. Current projects, some of them drawn up in cooperation with international institutions, were aimed essentially at women in the less developed areas of the country.

47. In Turkey, women's access to all levels of education and training and their participation in development were established principles. A special department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security dealt exclusively with women's employment, and a quota was reserved for handicapped women in all sectors. A service for elderly women was responsible for increasing the number of retirement homes and clinics. A research and education centre for women had just been established in Istanbul University. A library of women's works with an information centre had also been opened. His delegation welcomed the publication of The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics and commended the organizations and services which had produced it.

48. Mr. Slaby (Czechoslovakia) took the Chair.

49. Mrs. BIRAUD (France) said that there was still a long way to go before the objectives of the Nairobi Strategies were achieved. Discrimination was still firmly entrenched. Her delegation therefore welcomed the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Two of the main objectives of the involvement of women in development were to reduce poverty and to generate income. France was increasing its contribution to UNIFEM, and as a result of its Director's recent visit to France, her Government was cooperating in training women to set up enterprises and in promoting action on domestic violence.

50. The fallacy that raising the level of general development would bring about advancement of women had been exposed. Indeed, without the advancement of women there could be no development; real equality for women was the consequence of their success, not the prerequisite. Hence the importance of training in all fields and at all levels for women of all ages and at all levels of society.

51. The contribution of elderly women would be studied by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1992. The fact that older women were among the poorest was largely due to their limited resources, the inequality between the sexes

(Mrs. Biraud, France)

in professional life and the heavy burden of unpaid work in the home. The increasing number of old people, most of them women in developing countries, affected employment, the family, health, ways of life, society as a whole and all generations. People referred to "an ageing population", its "low productivity" and its "lack of imagination". In fact, however, old people could be very active. Women could look after themselves far longer than men could and were thus less of a burden on society. They could also look after other members of the family. Indeed, that period of their life meant increased, rather than freedom from, family responsibilities.

52. Peace was a priority theme for women, nationally, internationally and in day-to-day life. Women - particularly single women, refugees and handicapped women - had long been the victims of violence. Her delegation was keenly interested in the work of experts on that subject and France was working on action to help victims, which was aimed at violent men as well as women victims. The aggression which often begot violence could be channelled into beneficial directions; it was a matter of concern to all, not only the victims, since it could compromise progress in democracy and civilization.

53. Referring to the 1995 world conference on women, she noted that costs would be kept to the minimum - an all too familiar situation for women - but hoped that the restrictions would not be too stringent. As to the situation of women in the Secretariat, strong political will was called for, and if measures were not taken soon, both on the recruitment of women, especially at high level, and on the promotion of existing women staff, the United Nations would be deemed guilty of discrimination.

54. Mrs. LISSIDINI (Uruguay) noted that, even after 10 years, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was still not universally in force. Cultural patterns persisted which ignored or minimized women's contribution to development and perpetuated their stereotyped role. The goals of the Nairobi Strategies were far from being achieved. Discrimination against women was particularly serious in the light of women's multiple role in educating, training and caring for human resources. Undervaluing women's work, both financially and socially, was bad for productivity and economic growth. The advancement of women should be viewed as essential to the achievement of equality between all human beings and an investment in economic, social, cultural and moral progress.

55. Her delegation supported the efforts of UNIFEM to achieve full integration of women in development, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, where poverty had sharply increased in the past decade as a result of the economic crisis. According to figures produced by regional organizations, there would be 53 million women on the Latin American and Caribbean labour market by the year 2000, and it was vital that that should be accompanied by equality of earnings and a fairer sharing of home chores. To that end, INSTRAW's work was important in helping to make women's work more visible and hence its effect on development more fairly assessed. Her

(Mrs. Lissidini, Uruguay)

delegation supported the recommendations of CEDAW at its tenth session (A/46/38, para. 1) concerning the quantification of unpaid work by women in family enterprises and in the home.

56. Discrimination fed on ignorance and lack of information, and education was therefore vital for both men and women. In that connection, she stressed the importance of the work of the United Nations Department of Public Information. Consideration should be given to increasing broadcasts on matters concerning women. She noted that there were more programmes in English than in Spanish, French and Arabic, despite the world's large Spanish-speaking community, mostly women, who could usefully be given information on United Nations activities for the promotion of women. Publications were important in identifying obstacles to women's advancement and ways of overcoming them, and public information campaigns, international seminars and meetings could help women advance towards decision-making levels.

57. Her delegation was concerned that the recent unprecedented political changes and the great advances in science, technology and culture had not benefited women, who now suffered double discrimination: as women, and as disabled, young, old, migrants or refugees. Her delegation therefore fully supported the holding of a world conference on women in 1995.

58. Uruguay had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had adopted a number of national measures to implement it, including a law prohibiting all forms of discrimination in the field of work, the appointment of a committee of women to deal with ill-treatment and violence, and a national network for advice and guidance on the promotion of women in the economic, social, political and cultural fields. Those measures, along with the activities of the Women's Institute, which promoted the adoption of legislation and other measures, and the Women's Forum, in which a number of non-governmental organizations participated, were part of the national effort to implement the Nairobi Strategies.

59. With regard to women's participation in the United Nations Secretariat, she regretted that the target of 30 per cent for 1990 had not been achieved and urged that efforts should be redoubled to achieve the objective of 35 per cent by 1995, including 25 per cent at the D-1 level and above.

60. Mr. KOTFY (Ghana) said that despite the slow progress in implementing the Nairobi Strategies, it was encouraging that, since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the international community had set in motion a chain of activities aimed at eliminating traditional forms of discrimination and stereotypes. His delegation commended the decision of the Commission on the Status of Women to focus in future on selected themes, examining problems and issues and recommending remedies to Governments and to the international community. His delegation hoped that the Commission would endeavour not to give a blanket interpretation to those themes, ignoring the fact that women lived under different conditions in different parts of the world.

(Mr. Kotey, Ghana)

61. A recurrent theme was the need for education and training for women, particularly in the rural communities of the developing countries. His delegation shared the view that national and international programmes would be useless if women, the beneficiaries, lacked the training and skills to appreciate or implement them. Formal and informal education would help people to realize their full potential and a well-designed educational programme for rural women would provide the training that would ensure them regular and adequate incomes, thus helping to break down the poverty barrier and establish a climate of equal treatment for women and men.

62. On the question of women and the environment, to be discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women and the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in June 1992, his delegation shared the view that women, as teachers of children and providers of basic needs in the family, particularly in developing countries where environmental degradation was most apparent, had a central role to play in environmental issues. The international community must therefore try to make full use of women's knowledge and experience in land utilization, water management, sanitation and food. At the same time, since environmental degradation, particularly in the rural areas of the developing countries, derived from poverty, developing countries must be helped to undertake programmes designed to meet the basic needs of poor rural dwellers, particularly women, and to protect the environment.

63. Ghana welcomed the decision to hold the world conference on women in 1995 and agreed on the need for regional meetings prior to and in preparation for the conference with the participation of public and private sectors, including non-governmental organizations and, of course, women.

64. In Ghana the agricultural sector still provided employment for the majority of people, and government programmes over the past decade had been directed towards rural development and improvement of productive capacity. Women had been encouraged to undertake income-generating projects, such as the production of food crops and the building of storage silos. Ghana welcomed the support given to those projects by the United Nations and other bodies, in particular UNIFEM and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

65. The National Council on Women and Development had been greatly helped by local non-governmental organizations, in particular the 31 December Women's Movement. In December 1991, Ghana's First Lady, who was President of the Movement, would be hosting an international forum on health sponsored by the World Health Organization.

66. Mrs. KALEMA (Uganda) said that the world conference on women in 1995 would provide a good opportunity to review and appraise progress made in implementing the Nairobi Strategies and to focus on increasing women's participation in development. However, a large percentage of women in the

(Mrs. Kalema, Uganda)

world remained underprivileged and subject to discrimination, especially in developing countries, where they were doubly disadvantaged because of their gender and the poverty and indebtedness of their countries. During the restructuring of the United Nations, attention must remain focused on social issues relating to women in order to achieve the desired goals.

67. Uganda called on all countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in order to ensure its universality and effective implementation. She highly commended CEDAW and the Commission on the Status of Women for the excellent work that they had carried out. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies (A/46/439) gave due attention to the role of women who had to overcome multiple obstacles to attain equal status. The efforts made by UNHCR, UNIFEM, ILO and WFP were commendable and Governments should be mindful of their obligations in that regard. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for the activities of the specialized agencies in helping developing countries in that field and the enormous work undertaken by the Division for the Advancement of Women.

68. Uganda noted with satisfaction the work carried out by INSTRAW and expressed appreciation to the donor countries, particularly the Nordic countries, for their support for the Institute. The underrepresentation of women in the Secretariat, particularly in senior-level and decision-making posts, gave rise to serious concern. It was hoped that during the process of correcting that imbalance, the representation of women from developing countries would be seriously taken into account.

69. Preservation of the environment was essential for sustainable development. In developing countries, environmental degradation resulted from poverty and underdevelopment and affected women the most. By assisting developing countries in halting environmental degradation, the international community would also be helping women by raising the living standards in those countries. Environmental protection must be based on development, which could be achieved only through assistance based on the transfer of resources and technology.

70. In implementing the Strategies, Uganda had made remarkable progress in improving the status of women, ensuring equality between men and women and promoting women's participation in national development. The Ministry of Women, Youth and Culture had been strengthened and was carrying out seminars and training programmes for women leaders on gender-related issues and provided advice on projects to promote the economic integration of rural women. It was her Government's practice to appoint women to high-level decision-making posts. In an effort to redress the disproportionately low enrolment of female students in institutions of higher learning, the Government had introduced the policy of preferential recruitment. Uganda had taken measures to increase women's access to credit and training in bank management. The participation of women from all sectors of society in

(Mrs. Kalema, Uganda)

drafting the Constitution of Uganda was perhaps the most significant development.

71. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia) said that her delegation was deeply concerned that CEDAW continued to experience difficulties in the timely consideration of the reports of States parties. The strengthening of substantive and technical support for CEDAW, as recommended by Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/25, was consistent with the high priority that should be accorded to that Committee. Her delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts by CEDAW to rationalize its procedures and take into account the States parties' diverse cultural background and social and economic systems. Efforts to promote legal literacy on the part of women were an important component of promoting de facto equality. Indonesia was conducting a campaign to provide women with information on their legal rights and on labour and marriage legislation.

72. In implementing the Nairobi Strategies, although progress had been made in eliminating *de jure* discrimination against women, *de facto* discrimination still existed in all countries. That situation must be addressed and efforts to eradicate gender-based discrimination should be increased. The priority themes to be considered at the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women were particularly relevant. Her country looked forward to the convening of the world conference on women in 1995, which would speed the implementation of the Strategies.

73. National mechanisms, which were essential in implementing the Strategies and the Convention, must be strengthened, and the technical assistance to countries wishing to establish or enhance such mechanisms was important for success. Indonesia had enhanced its national machinery over the past year. Provincial governments were committed to providing increased resources for the advancement of women and were studying the situation of women at the provincial level. Trained staff and access to modern communication equipment were equally important for strengthening national machinery. Accordingly, steps were being taken to institutionalize gender analysis training in the Department of the Interior.

74. With regard to the status of women in the Secretariat, her delegation was disappointed with their representation at senior levels. Indonesia appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to remedy that imbalance and hoped that progress could be made. She commended the work of INSTRAW in improving statistics, indicators and data on women, particularly elderly women. Its new programme on women, environment and sustainable development was of growing importance. Indonesia appreciated the important activities being carried out by UNIFEM, particularly programmes that had a positive impact at the grass-roots level. UNIFEM was an effective instrument of advocacy and a source of catalytic action in behalf of women in developing countries. Indonesia, in its efforts to promote full equality for women, had benefited from that organization's programmes.

75. Mr. KÖNIG (Commission of the European Communities) said that the Commission was considering legislation on the protection of pregnant women at work, women who had recently given birth and women who were breast-feeding. That proposal laid down measures relating to leave, employment rights and healthy working conditions. The Commission had also drawn up legislation and a code of conduct for protecting the dignity of women and men at work. Its aim was to provide guidance on taking measures to promote awareness of the problem of sexual harassment and recommend steps to prevent it.

76. The Commission had put forward a proposal to undertake measures in four essential areas relating to child care: the provision of services for children of working parents, education and training, leave arrangements for employed parents, and arrangements to make the workplace more supportive of the needs of parents.

77. The Community was carrying out the NOW Initiative, which related to vocational training and employment for women in order to improve their integration into the labour market, in particular in the less developed areas of the Community. In order to ensure the success of the projects undertaken, the Commission had financed a specific network of national coordinators responsible for project follow-up, organized information seminars with the participation of women's organizations and published relevant brochures and leaflets.

78. The Community had continued to develop a Europe-wide women's studies programme, which had been fully institutionalized in a number of universities and research centres so that the situation of women could be considered from a global and multi-disciplinary perspective. The existing data bank on women-related studies would be distributed to national centres.

79. Under its new guidelines for financial and technical cooperation with developing countries in Latin America and Asia, the Commission sought to ensure that the changes brought about by projects were not detrimental to the situation of women and that specific measures were adopted to involve women on an equal footing in decision-making, production and social activities. The Community provided ongoing assistance to ensure that a gender analysis was included in all phases of development projects so that women's needs were taken into account.

80. The Community sought to encourage women to play a more active role in aid operations, thereby increasing their technical, economic and management capacity and strengthening their social role. Its strategy was twofold: to increase women's productivity and earnings by giving them greater access to extension services, loans, technology and natural resources, and to develop human resources through long-term investment to promote literacy, education, health care and family planning.