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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RITTER (Panama)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(continued) (A/C.3/42/L.10)

AGENDA ITEM 91: IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.3/42/L.11)

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)
(A/C.3/42/L.13)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the adoption of draft resolutions L.10, L.11 and L.13 by consensus at the preceding meeting did not constitute a precedent. In the light of comments made by a number of delegations, draft resolutions would henceforth be decided upon individually.

2. Mrs. MUKHERJEE (India), speaking in explanation of vote on draft resolution L.11, said that the words "the right of self-determination" appearing in article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights applied only to people under foreign domination, not to independent sovereign States or parts of a people or nation.

3. Mr. GIESDER (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking in explanation of vote on draft resolution L.10, said that, while it welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, his delegation still had reservations concerning the reference to migrant workers in the final preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 6 and 14. In his Government's view, no link could be established between migrant worker status and racial discrimination.

4. Mr. AMSELEN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote on draft resolution L.10, said that his delegation had not joined in the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus because of his country's well-known opposition to General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) which equated zionism with racism and which it considered to be a blot on the history of the United Nations and an insult to the people and State of Israel, a country in whose formation the United Nations had played a major role.

AGENDA ITEM 95: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued) (A/42/3, A/42/38, A/42/383, A/42/627)

AGENDA ITEM 96: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/516, A/42/528, A/42/597/Rev.1)

AGENDA ITEM 97: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/444)

5. Mrs. TAVARES DE ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that legal and social measures had been adopted in her country to promote equality of women in all areas. Starting in the 1960s, when the importance of women as an untapped human resource had begun to be recognized, women had begun to gain a clearer idea of their place in the community and to be taken into account in development policies and plans. By the end of the 1960s, 26 women had been appointed provincial governors.
6. As a result of International Women's Year and the United Nations Decade for Women, the Dominican Republic had taken a comprehensive action approach to women's issues. In 1982, a Department for the Advancement of Women had been established to co-ordinate programmes and projects for the advancement of women, implement the measures envisaged in the World Plan of Action and the Regional Plan of Action for integrating women in economic and social development, and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Most recently, it had organized a seminar on women's participation in politics, in which the country's main political parties had participated.
7. Unfortunately, many plans and projects for women had had to be suspended owing to the country's disastrous economic situation brought about not only by its external debt and debt service payments but also by the imbalance in terms of trade and the fall in commodity prices.
8. As a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, her country had submitted to the Secretary-General the report required under article 18. Her delegation had read with interest the report by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (A/42/597/Rev.1) and welcomed the Fund's tenth anniversary. The Fund provided invaluable support to developing countries in preparing and executing development programmes in favour of women.
9. She wished to emphasize the importance of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). As host country to INSTRAW, the Dominican Republic had always given the Institute the greatest possible support and co-operation. Nowadays, no society could do without women's contribution to all aspects of economic and social activity. The Institute's purpose was to remove the obstacles to women's full participation in the community and in society as a whole. Her delegation urged the international community to give the Institute the strongest possible support, including financial support at the next pledging conference.
10. Miss DIEGUEZ (Mexico) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to give priority to the advancement of women in the next programme budget, thereby helping to advance the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies throughout the United Nations system. Giving priority to women meant giving priority to solving the problems faced by more than half the world's population.

(Miss Dieguez, Mexico)

11. She noted from document A/42/528 that the Advancement of Women Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was the focal point for implementing the Nairobi Strategies. She also noted which bodies had established co-ordination centres and set five-year targets for implementing the Strategies, and that some of those bodies whose policies had a particular impact on the integration of women in development had yet to do so. International action must be matched by national action in individual member countries to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategies, which the Commission on the Status of Women had included as a priority item on the agenda for its 1988 session.

12. In Mexico, the National Programme for the Integration of Women in Development was intended to promote women's participation in the economic, political, social and cultural system on an equal footing with men; since 1974, a number of legislative reforms had also been undertaken to eliminate discrimination against women. Mexico's national strategy also sought to change traditional conceptions of the roles of men and women in society. All federal and state government departments were responsible for preparing and following up programmes in their own areas of competence, so that the strategy was being implemented throughout the public sector, through co-ordination between federal and state governments, through instruments of economic and social policy and through joint action by the public sector and private individuals. Although women now played a greater role in all areas of national life, ideological and cultural barriers still limited their participation at senior development policy-making levels. The Government was constantly reviewing obstacles to women's integration in national life and had always supported United Nations action to eliminate discrimination on grounds of sex.

13. Within the United Nations itself, Mexico had urged the Secretary-General to increase the number of women in senior posts while respecting the principle of equal geographical distribution. It acknowledged that, despite the financial constraints facing the Organization, efforts had been made to pursue the action programme on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat. It was important to promote and follow up that programme in order to achieve the targets set by the General Assembly, and her delegation therefore welcomed the work being done by the office of the Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women.

14. She noted that the Commission on the Status of Women had restructured its programme for its future sessions with a view to improving its monitoring and evaluation of the Strategies and focusing in depth on the main problems confronting women.

15. She noted from the report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/42/627) that the number of States parties had increased; that showed that most countries had the political will to achieve legal equality for women.

16. During the International Year of Peace, Mexico had undertaken a number of activities to implement the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting

(Miss Diequez, Mexico)

International Peace and Co-operation, in which women had called for an end to the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons.

17. She welcomed the report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (A/42/444). The programmes carried out by the Institute were remedying the lack of reliable statistics on women, about which her country had frequently expressed concern.

18. Mexico, like other Latin American and Caribbean countries, had received assistance from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which was celebrating its tenth anniversary, and noted with satisfaction the priorities assigned by UNIFEM to the region.

19. Mr. WOTI (Austria) noted the arrangements for implementing the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and said he was confident that, despite budgetary constraints, the Advancement of Women Branch would be able to carry out its difficult task. He hoped that the need for adequate resources as well as authority would be reflected in any resolution adopted by the Committee.

20. He welcomed the report on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (A/42/444), which brought out the importance of research, training and especially information as a basis for increased participation by women in development and the need for an integrated multidisciplinary approach to finding practical solutions. His delegation was particularly interested in the recent studies by a high-level consultative group on the need to link women with international economic policies, and on the effects of those policies on women. He emphasized the need for the full participation of women in social and economic development.

21. The Secretary-General's report on progress in the preparation of the first regular update of the world survey on the role of women in development (A/42/508) gave an idea of the magnitude of that task. Special attention would be given to the impact of macro-economic policies on women's participation in development. States Members should co-operate closely with the various agencies in preparing the update, given the impact of national economic adjustment policies on the economic situation of women.

22. Regarding the implementation of the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation, his delegation was particularly interested in the elaboration of institutional, educational and organizational measures to facilitate women's participation on an equal footing with men in the national decision-making process. Recent programmes in Austria had concentrated on updating legislation on equality between men and women, promoting women in the federal service, career planning for girls and training programmes to make women more self-assured. States should give the Secretariat clear guidelines concerning follow-up to the Declaration and his delegation therefore suggested that a symposium of key personalities might be held at Vienna to discuss women's participation in public life.

(Mr. Wotava, Austria)

23. In connection with the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, held at Vienna in September 1987, he noted that the Guiding Principles adopted at the consultation stressed that welfare policies should promote not only the concept of equality but also the social and economic structural changes needed to achieve it.

24. Mrs. DINGJAN-LAARAKKER (Netherlands) said that, as a delegate for the women of the Netherlands, her objective was both to represent women and to report back to the home front about what was happening and what decisions were being made at the United Nations. Women in the Netherlands wanted to know exactly what the United Nations was doing for women in the world.

25. Autonomy for women was one of the main concerns of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. It was clear that all parts of the world had their problems in that area, and those problems thwarted all aspects of women's development. Assistance must be given to women, who were often among the poorest of the poor and were responsible for their children and households, as well as for supplying all or part of the family income. It was worth while remembering that one subsection of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women contained recommendations on the construction of homes, housing, community development and transport.

26. The continuing process of urbanization as a result of the shift of population from rural areas towards cities gave rise to an increasing number of slums, aggravating the situation of many women who were already living in wretched conditions. A project on information and communication to promote the role of women in human settlement activities had been initiated as a result of a proposal by the Netherlands at the 1987 meeting of the Commission on Human Settlements in Nairobi.

27. Since 1975 the subject of women and development had been receiving particular attention in the Netherlands, where an action programme aimed at integrating women structurally and consistently as active participants in the development process had recently come into being. The programme was designed, inter alia, to improve the organization of women and increase their involvement in decision-making at all levels; improve women's working conditions; encourage exchanges of information and communication, as well as education and training activities; and combat physical violence and sexual abuse. The Netherlands would use its influence with multilateral institutions to ensure that women's interests and needs were taken into account. In selecting consultants to work on development projects, more attention would be given than previously to expertise in the field of women and development.

28. Physical violence, sexual abuse and traffic in women were growing problems. Governments should give careful attention to the valuable recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. At the Nairobi Conference in July 1985, the Netherlands delegation had drawn attention to traffic

(Mrs. Dingjan-Laarakker,
Netherlands)

in women and sex tourism, calling for greater awareness of those phenomena, ways of combating them and assistance for the victims. The Netherlands Government was actively seeking ways of involving its embassies abroad in the fight against sexual violence and traffic in women, and was also concerned with the phenomenon of fake marriages, through which traffic in women was often perpetuated.

29. Her delegation hoped that the special discussion on violence against women within the family and society, to be initiated at the 1988 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, would lead to an effective international policy. The growing problem of violence in the family, which reinforced women's inferior status and prevented them from participating fully and equally in economic, social, cultural and political activities, deserved the strongest possible condemnation. Projects under way in the Netherlands to assist battered women and children, as well as rape victims, had proved effective in helping forestall family violence.

30. Her delegation recognized that the January 1987 session of the Commission on the Status of Women had made a constructive contribution to integrating women's concerns into all planning and programming activities of the United Nations system. She hoped that the Commission would retain an active, practical and non-politicized working style. She expressed her delegation's satisfaction with the action taken by the Economic and Social Council concerning the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development and system-wide co-ordination for the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

31. She congratulated the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on a decade of work for the advancement of women. UNIFEM's role in promoting women's interests in development planning at the national level could be strengthened. Its strategy of intervention on behalf of women should be reinforced and broadened from its current selective approach to overall application in all the countries concerned. Especially where the ongoing activities of other development agencies still failed to deal with the issue of women and development, UNIFEM's function of sensitizing policy-makers and planners remained of the utmost importance. The Fund could count on her Government's continued support.

32. Employment was a major factor in enabling women to run their own lives. The Netherlands had taken steps to legislate for equal pay and equal treatment for women, as well as to facilitate child care and make the labour market more accessible to women of all ages.

33. It was important for women to be represented in decision-making posts, both within the United Nations system and elsewhere. Her delegation had welcomed the appointment of women to the posts of Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Under-Secretary-General for Public Information and Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. She hoped that many women would follow in their footsteps to the policy-making level.

34. Mrs. SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic) said that, since the proclamation of the International Women's Year in 1975, United Nations Member States had made continuous efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure their involvement in all spheres of social life on an equal footing with men. The reports thus far submitted to the United Nations, including information given orally by representatives in the Third Committee, showed clearly that progress in implementing equal rights for women had been universal but that different countries had very different rates of development. Many countries would take a relatively long time to achieve the objectives laid down in the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000. Her country knew from its own experience that, besides legal regulation, questions such as education, employment, medical care for women and their children and growing involvement in decision-making were of universal importance for successfully implementing equal rights for women.

35. The overriding objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, namely, equality, development and peace, were as relevant as ever. That was especially true of the safeguarding of peace, which was a sine qua non for equality and development. Women were aware that war and conflict impeded improvements in their status and they therefore attached great importance to maintaining peace and strengthening international co-operation. In that regard, women looked forward with high hopes to the conclusion of an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles.

36. Further continuous development presupposed the maintenance of peace. Women in her country had reiterated their commitment to peace at many events connected with the International Year of Peace and International Women's Day, and had reaffirmed their solidarity with women who were still struggling for their equal rights. At a meeting during the Olaf Palme Peace March held several weeks earlier, some 10,000 women from the German Democratic Republic, together with women from the Federal Republic of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Sweden, had called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe. That meeting had proved impressively that women from countries with different social systems were well able to work together for the implementation of women's rights, if they attached the highest priority to the right of humankind to live in peace.

37. Her delegation appreciated the valuable work being done by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women. The work of those two bodies must now be adapted to meet growing demands. Her delegation therefore supported the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1987 on enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

38. In her country, equal rights for women were guaranteed by the Constitution and had become a practical reality. To help women combine parental duties and housework with employment, her Government had adopted a long-term social welfare programme. Her delegation believed that, through the constructive and committed action of all Member States, it was possible to overcome obstacles to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and declared its readiness to participate actively in the pursuit of that goal.

39. Ms. CLARK (New Zealand) said that New Zealand had been the first country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1893; since then, other measures had been enacted to protect women's rights and prohibit discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status. Laws in themselves did not change mental attitudes, or necessarily deliver justice, however. Her delegation welcomed the outcome of the January 1987 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women; the agreement reached on the structure for future sessions would make it possible to give more attention to substantive issues, rather than technical or procedural matters. The designation of certain subjects as priority themes offered a logical way of tackling the otherwise overwhelming agenda presented by the Forward-looking Strategies while ensuring that each topic received sufficient in-depth attention.

40. Her delegation welcomed the seminar on National Machinery for the Advancement of Women and believed that such seminars were a very valuable part of the Commission's work. The replies of Member States to the questionnaire sent out indicated that the important thing in individual countries was not the format of national machinery but whether it had access to power; at the same time, it was clear that the very existence of national machinery had in many instances brought about changes beneficial to women.

41. New Zealand had made considerable efforts to develop effective machinery to improve the status of women. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, established in 1985, had been identifying the priority concerns of women in New Zealand and at the same time planning an effective Government response; in some cases, it co-ordinated action by non-governmental organizations or individuals. Various programmes of positive discrimination and consciousness-raising had indicated that efforts must be continued. It was believed that women were the best judges of what policies and programmes were most useful to them and their input was encouraged.

42. It was also important to remain responsive to that constituency in the international arena, and non-governmental organizations had a particularly valuable role to play in that respect. Organizations such as the International Council of Women had an information network and membership that far surpassed that of any official intergovernmental organization; such non-governmental organizations could make a vital contribution to consideration of the Forward-looking Strategies, particularly in the Commission on the Status of Women. They could energize United Nations programmes and provide essential input into such priority themes as the problems of rural women and access to information about peace and non-violence.

43. Her delegation hoped that the Secretariat would undertake thorough preparatory work on the other two priority themes for 1988, which were substantive issues, unlike the theme of national machinery which was a technical issue.

44. Mr. NENEMAN (Poland) said that effective implementation and monitoring of the Forward-looking Strategies could be ensured only through harmonization with the strategies and programmes of action of all relevant organizations of the United Nations system. The United Nations system had given priority to the effective mobilization and integration of women in development programmes and activities. His delegation welcomed the plans of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP to co-operate

(Mr. Neneman, Poland)

closely in that regard, co-ordinate their programme planning and harmonize actions related to women in operational activities for development.

45. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Convention were playing a significant role in combatting prejudice and traditional barriers against women. It was regrettable that many countries had still not become parties to the Convention. If all Governments accepted the standards set by the Convention and transformed them into internal legislation, that would be the single most important step towards universal elimination of discrimination against women.

46. Poland consistently supported all activities and programmes within the United Nations system aimed at achieving the further advancement of women. It would implement all the recommendations contained in the Forward-looking Strategies and also the provisions of the Convention. Although Polish legislation complied in all respects with the principle of equal rights for women and men, there was still much scope for ensuring de facto equality in all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life. Poland's newly established Government Office of the Commissioner for Women's Affairs was co-ordinating the implementation of measures and formulating appropriate programmes and strategies, including measures to improve the situation of the most vulnerable groups.

47. Women in Poland represented over 45 per cent of the public sector labour force; they were predominant above all in the services sector, which in general had been lower paid than other branches of the economy, although efforts were being made to eliminate those disparities. Special measures had also been taken to bring more women into well-paid, traditionally male occupations. Conditions were being created to enable women to combine professional work and participation in public life with maternal and family obligations, through the development of child care centres and the provision of better household services and facilities. Although substantial progress had been made over the past decade in changing the stereotyped roles of men and women in the household, further changes were required to ensure that husbands participated more in housework and child rearing. The Commissioner's Office was encouraging educational authorities and the mass media to promote such changes and the so-called "partnership marriage". Broader participation of women at higher, decision-making levels of State authority and management should also help solve the problems facing women in Poland. The Office of the Commissioner was monitoring research studies on the working and living conditions of women in Poland and their participation in public life, and a special data bank was to be established on the social and occupational situation of women. There would also be closer co-operation with the Legislative Council and lawyers' organizations concerning changes in the labour code to protect women's work.

48. The maintenance of international peace was of primary importance for the status of women; the lack of significant progress in disarmament negotiations, the outbreak of new armed conflicts and the re-emergence of neo-colonialism, foreign domination and occupation, racism and apartheid all hampered the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Women had a

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significant role to play in preparing children and young people for life in peace and promoting a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among peoples irrespective of their political outlook, race and religion. Polish women had been active at international congresses, seminars and meetings to promote international peace and security.

49. Mrs. SANTHOSO (Indonesia) said that Indonesia had become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women because of its strong commitment to securing full and equal rights for women at all levels of participation in development. Its Constitution guaranteed equality between men and women.

50. Her delegation was fully aware of the constraints under which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was operating; the possibility should be considered of permanently holding sessions of that Committee in Vienna, so as to overcome the backlog.

51. The reservations entered to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should not be perceived as undermining it; the right of each country to have reservations was an integral part of the Convention itself, and the reservations should be viewed as valuable input for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in finding ways and means of adapting the Convention so that it became an acceptable instrument for the advancement of the status of women through progressive change.

52. It was encouraging to note that progress had been made within the United Nations system in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies, and that the specialized agencies had taken action to strengthen their focal points and elevate several women to decision-making positions. Although it was aware of current constraints, her delegation was concerned, however, that the targets for the percentage of women in professional and decision-making posts had not been met. It appreciated the progress made by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs on the cross-organizational programme analysis which, when completed, would facilitate monitoring of the system-wide medium-term plan for women.

53. It was encouraging that continuing measures were being taken to improve the system-wide procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategies, including standardization of the format for reporting to the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Strategies and the integration of such procedures within regular programmes of work. Her delegation was in favour of continuing the five-year cycle of review and appraisal, and also of holding annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women until the year 2000.

54. Indonesia had always supported the United Nations Development Fund for Women because of the critical role it played as a catalyst in bringing women into the mainstream of development and its support for projects which were in line with national and regional priorities. It looked forward to the preparation of the

(Mrs. Santhoso, Indonesia)

Master Plan for Asia and the Pacific, which should take into account the experience gained in the African and Latin American regions. It hoped that the feasibility study on the advancement of the status of women in fishing villages in central Java, Indonesia, would soon be completed as it would greatly help Indonesian policy-makers in developing future programmes.

55. Her delegation noted the recommendations of the INSTRAW expert working group meeting on "Measurement of Women's Income and their Participation and Production in the Informal Sector" and supported the emphasis placed on the use of statistics and indicators when considering development plans, programmes and projects for technical co-operation. It looked forward to substantial results from the expert group meeting in 1988. It appreciated the support given to the national training workshop for users and producers of data and indicators on economic activities of women in formal and informal sectors, held in Jakarta in October 1987; the objective of the workshop had been to create awareness among policy-makers, with regard to the integration of women in development activities, of the need for gender-specific statistics and indicators on women. That could be achieved by monitoring the economic activities of women in the formal and informal sectors in their capacity as users and producers of data. The large attendance at the workshop and the involvement of INSTRAW, UNDP, ESCAP and UNICEF had been a successful demonstration of inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.