



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RITTER (Panama)

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

AGENDA ITEM 88: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (A/42/56-E/1987/7, A/42/57-E/1987/8; A/42/3, A/42/411; A/C.3/42/L.3)

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AGENDA ITEM 141: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES (A/C.3/42/5)

1. Mr. MINET (International Labour Organisation) drew attention to the importance attached by ILO to the social aspects of development to which reference had also been made during the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes.

2. ILO applied the recommendations of the 1986 International Labour Conference, primarily the recommendations concerning unemployment, training and equality of opportunity, to young workers. It provided Governments with advisory services to help them adopt comprehensive integrated and coherent strategies for dealing with the growing implications of unemployment among young people. It also carried out competitive studies on the employment situation of young people in countries with different levels of development and on the action taken by public authorities to integrate young people in the overall economic policy of their respective countries, with a view to raising the quality of the programmes for young people. In addition, the possibility of adopting new international instruments for promoting employment through the social security system, especially for young people seeking their first jobs, had been referred to at the most recent International Labour Conference.

3. ILO was energetically helping the authorities responsible for national policies to make their national training programmes as effective as possible and to initiate activities specifically geared to the needs of youth. For example, one project was designed to help the authorities in charge of rural training to devise an effective community-training system, and work was also being carried out on the informal urban sectors with a view to improving the skills of urban youth. Another of ILO's tasks was that of devising vocational training programmes for young women

(Mr. Minet)

from disadvantaged environments in both the rural and urban informal sectors. ILO was also concerned with the integration of second-generation immigrants.

4. The rise in a population's aging curve, resulting from the drop in the birth rate and increasing longevity, was affecting both urban and rural areas, as well as both developed and developing countries, and was often accompanied by the social and economic marginalization of the elderly. That problem was particularly acute in industrial societies where adaptability and performance were the dominant features. ILO was seeking to offset the detrimental effects of that phenomenon and, accordingly, the fourth ILO European Regional Conference, held at Geneva in September 1987, had recommended flexibility in the matter of leaving on retirement so as to respect the free choice of older workers.

5. He welcomed the appeal, issued at Stockholm by the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action at mid-point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, for countries to ratify the Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1983. The increase in the number of requests for technical assistance, submitted to ILO for the purpose of assisting, inter alia, in the development of vocational training and in the creation of gainful activities for disabled persons in rural areas, was a positive development. ILO also provided technical advisory services to Governments at their request in order to help them plan their vocational rehabilitation programmes and ensure that they responded more to the needs of the disabled, especially in rural areas which were traditionally more disadvantaged than the urban sector. Lastly, ILO was in the process of preparing new training programmes and manuals for promoting community-based vocational rehabilitation and guidelines for preparing disabled persons for jobs involving new techniques.

6. Mrs. BORGES (Uruguay) said that, while International Youth Year had given rise to important initiatives at the national, regional and international levels, as mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report (A/42/595), much remained to be done, especially in the areas of education, employment and health owing to the shortage of finance and skilled personnel.

7. Her Government attached great importance to youth problems and was seeking, under a project approved by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, to gain a better knowledge of their needs so as to formulate and implement policies for facilitating their integration into the development process. In addition to adopting specific measures, such as exempting firms employing young people under 30 years of age from paying social security contributions, her Government had established a national commission on youth and had decreed that youth constituted a priority group in matters of social policy, especially with regard to employment. It had also established a board composed of the ministers of education and culture, public health, labour and social security for the purpose of co-ordinating, at all levels, activities for the benefit of youth, collecting data on experiences in that field and preparing recommendations for formulating a youth promotion strategy. Following a series of meetings between public and private bodies, organized by the

(Mrs. Borges, Uruguay)

Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the interregional adviser on youth programmes and policies had come to Uruguay and had conducted a survey in the fields of his competence. In conclusion, she affirmed her country's full support of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report.

8. Miss BROSNKOVA (Czechoslovakia), referring to the Secretary-General's exhaustive report on the policies and programmes involving young people for maintaining the momentum of International Youth Year, said that the activities of United Nations bodies should be developed so as to ensure that the position of young people was improved and that they were also involved in processes leading to progress and the development of civilization, which implied that they should fully enjoy their human rights, particularly the rights to education and to work. Only when those rights were guaranteed could young people be actively involved in their country's affairs and play a part in achieving social justice.

9. However, the reality in that area was very disappointing, even in the most advanced Western countries. Only 20 per cent of children from working class families in those countries went on to institutions of high learning. Access to private schools, which provided a qualitatively better education, was still reserved for the wealthiest families. Young people, who constituted one fifth of the economically active population, accounted for 40 per cent of the unemployed, and in some cases even more. When asked what worried them most, young people ranked unemployment even before the threat of nuclear war or AIDS, which showed how serious that problem was. It was extremely important, especially in the developing countries, where young people made up a sizeable proportion of the population, to ensure that young people enjoyed the right to education and work, following the example of countries which had chosen the path of building a socially just society.

10. In most developing countries, young people were forced to live in poverty, inactivity and illiteracy, and there would be no change in that situation as long as fundamental questions relating to the socio-economic development of those countries went unresolved, as long as international economic relations were not restructured on a fair and democratic basis, as long as there was no reduction in military spending, and as long as countries continued to live under a colonial or racist yoke or in political terror.

11. Her country shared the view to the effect that implementation of the guidelines for further planning and activities for the benefit of youth must be focused on the solution of the specific problems of young people. While United Nations bodies should promote action-oriented activities within their respective spheres of competence, it was for Governments alone to set their socio-economic objectives taking into account the urgent needs of young people. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, for its part, had a role to play in the follow-up of activities, in accordance with resolution 41/97.

12. The Czechoslovak authorities were actively working to ensure that young people participated in the social and economic affairs of the country. Education was free of charge and school enrolment was compulsory for 10 years. The Constitution

(Miss Brosnakova, Czechoslovakia)

effectively guaranteed young people enjoyment of the right to work. As part of the current restructuring of all spheres of Czechoslovak society, the authorities were paying special attention to young people and expected them to take an active part in social affairs and in the decision-making process, especially with regard to issues of direct concern to them.

13. Peace was a prerequisite of progress. In that area, young people had a leading role to play, with the assistance of the United Nations, in promoting international détente, social progress and the development of co-operation among nations. In that connection, the influence of the mass media was an important factor. The media must stop presenting young people with a model of a superficial and selfish life-style at a time when millions of people, especially young people, were dying of hunger, when enormous sums were being spent each year on military hardware, when the threat of nuclear war continued to hang over the world, and when thousands of people were dying in regional conflicts.

14. Her delegation intended to submit a draft resolution on the rights of youth which would emphasize the rights to education and employment. If those fundamental rights were not respected, the objectives of the International Youth Year would be nothing more than an empty appeal, and a growing number of young people would continue to seek solutions in drugs, crime, suicide and prostitution. Her delegation was prepared to work together with other delegations in seeking the ways and means of making life for young people joyful and creative.

15. Mrs. POC Yanine (Democratic Kampuchea), speaking on agenda item 90, said that the International Youth Year had made both Governments and the general public more aware of the situation of youth and their role in shaping the future of mankind. In pursuing the objectives of the International Youth Year, a special effort should be made to encourage the participation of young people in the quest for peace and development and to ensure the equality of young people in the enjoyment of all social, economic, cultural and political rights, with special emphasis on the situation of young people who were the victims of racial discrimination, as in Namibia and South Africa, or foreign occupation, as in Afghanistan and Kampuchea.

16. Young people in Kampuchea were suffering not only from material and spiritual deprivations, but also from the policy of "Vietnamization" pursued by the occupation forces. The occupying forces were attempting, from the primary schools up, to stamp out all vestiges of Khmer culture and to indoctrinate young people into accepting Vietnamese expansionism and the idea of an "Indo-China Federation". As early as the autumn of 1984, the army of occupation had begun to force hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean, young and old alike, to work on the construction of roads, the clearing of forest areas, the laying of mines and the construction of anti-infiltration barriers along Kampuchea's western border. The occupation authorities required all Kampuchean citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 to perform five years of compulsory military service and forced women and men under the age of 60 to serve in the so-called "self-defence" units with the obvious aim of using them as cannon fodder in their attempts to annex the country.

(Mrs. Poc Yanine, Democratic Kampuchea)

17. In order to ensure the survival of their national identity and the independence of Kampuchea, young Kampucheans considered it their sacred duty to take part in the national resistance under the leadership of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Like all other young people in the world, young Kampucheans had the right to live in peace in an independent and sovereign country. As soon as that objective was achieved, they could turn their energies to the economic and social development of the country in a democratic society where human rights would be fully respected. They were firmly committed to the establishment of a liberal parliamentary régime. They were convinced that only political, diplomatic and economic pressure brought to bear by the international community on the occupation authorities could, together with the national resistance in Kampuchea, bring about a political settlement based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular resolution 42/3 and on the eight-point peace plan proposed by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. They believed that only in an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea could they fully participate in the economic, social and cultural development of their country in close co-operation with all young people in the world.

18. Mrs. ASHTON (Bolivia) said that the economic outlook was becoming increasingly bleak, as evidenced by recent events in the financial markets: the result was a climate of uncertainty throughout the world. In recent years, world economic growth had been sluggish and there had been a sharp reduction in social expenditures. The developing countries, which were hobbled by the crisis, curtailed lending by private banks, the stagnation of official development assistance and the external debt, were facing very serious social difficulties that undermined their development efforts.

19. The recent Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, which had highlighted the devastating impact of the world economic crisis on the social situation in developing countries, had adopted a set of guidelines on social welfare policies and programmes. In the context of the principles set forth in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (1969), there was a need for bold new approaches that took into account the impact of the external economic situation and restrictive economic policies on the living conditions of people in developing countries.

20. To compensate for the shortage of social services, which was made still worse by the adverse effects of falling export prices and the economic restrictions it had had to apply, her Government had set up a social emergency fund in 1986. The purpose of that fund was to provide assistance to the segments of the population most severely affected by the crisis and unemployment in such areas as health and food, to promote highly labour-intensive community-level social projects and programmes, to encourage communities to provide their own social facilities, to support educational and technical training programmes so as to create a skilled work force, and to contribute to retraining and social rehabilitation programmes for marginal groups that had fallen victim to the drug trade.

(Mrs. Ashton, Bolivia)

21. Her delegation noted with interest that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had begun to prepare for the inter-agency meeting on aging, and endorsed the idea of a medium-term plan extending to all United Nations bodies. Like the Dominican delegation, it believed that the rights of the elderly should enjoy the same protection as those of other vulnerable groups. Despite a shortage of resources, the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging continued to help a number of Governments. In her country, for example, in co-ordination with the National Solidarity and Social Development Council and with technical co-operation from ILO, it would fund a programme of training in income-generating craft occupations for 140 elderly people.

22. Bolivia thought it very useful for countries to exchange information on their experience in carrying out the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and welcomed the results of the world meeting of experts recently held in Stockholm. A signatory of the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, it had set up a national commission for the disabled which, despite the country's budgetary constraints, was continuing to work in collaboration with other non-governmental organizations.

23. Although the circumstances of the young in different parts of the world had common features, there was no doubt that young people in developing countries faced much more serious difficulties than those in developed countries. Because of the economic crisis and urban migration, the young were disproportionately affected by unemployment and more and more of them were having to cope with poverty and hunger.

24. The drug traffic, which corrupted consciences and morals, ruined the health of young people, restricted their productive capacity and claimed many victims among the young. It was vital for the national committees established during the International Youth Year to add to their programmes of action public education campaigns on the dangers of drugs and the need to eradicate them.

25. The United Nations programme on crime prevention and criminal justice, including the holding of periodic congresses, had had positive results. It was, of course, Governments which bore primary responsibility for the implementation of the Milan Plan of Action. The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control had also done good work in studying such questions as economic crimes, corruption, the balance that must be struck between crime prevention and crime control, and the protection and treatment of victims. Her country was troubled by the financial difficulties confronting the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, and hoped that, in co-operation with the relevant multilateral bodies, the Institute would find means of funding its proposed activities.

26. Her delegation believed that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be strengthened so that it could give countries assistance in the field of social welfare. In order to bear fruit, social policies required a precise diagnosis of problems and a firm resolve to find solutions.

27. Mr. AL-HAKEEM (Oman) said that, since Sultan Qabous had come to power in 1970, there had been considerable economic development in his country. The basic infrastructure had been set in place, and the aim of the third five-year plan (1986-1990) was to diversify the economy. The Sultanate was also proud to be a founder member of the Gulf Co-operation Council and to have set up at home a State Advisory Council affording citizens an opportunity to take part in the country's planning and development.

28. On the question of aging, his country, faithful to the teaching of the Koran and the hallowed principles of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, traditionally devoted particular attention to the elderly. The social assistance programme launched by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 1972 benefited all categories of disadvantaged persons: the elderly, the handicapped, widows, divorced, single or impoverished women, orphans - and the aged, among others, could obtain accommodation under that programme.

29. Since 1970, furthermore, his Government had given high priority to all activities, including community development programmes, that encouraged the participation of young people and prepared them for their future responsibilities within society. Every year since 1976, seminars for young people had been held in the Sultanate. One had been devoted to the role of women in economic and social development. To encourage sport among the young, the Sultan had had a magnificent Olympic sports complex built. For young Omanis, the International Youth Year had provided an opportunity to take part in exchanges with young people from other countries, in the Gulf and elsewhere, and in a variety of artistic, cultural, recreational and sporting displays in various parts of the world.

30. Following the proclamation of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, a national committee on the welfare of the disabled had been established. That committee was helping to facilitate participation by disabled persons in promoting progress within the country. A rehabilitation centre had been set up, with vocational training workshops where the disabled could learn skills such as carpentry, bookbinding and the manufacture of cleaning articles.

31. He commented that crime had attained considerable proportions throughout the world, and that regional and international co-operation must be developed to enhance the efficiency of crime prevention and strategies and policies concerned with criminal justice.

32. Mr. BOLD (Mongolia), speaking on agenda item 88, said that the international community had declared its interest in development and social justice not only in the Charter of the United Nations but in a large number of declarations and programmes. It was now accepted that only by enhancing co-operation among nations would it be possible to deal with problems in the field of social development and humanitarian affairs. To safeguard the credibility of the United Nations, there must be solid guarantees that recommendations and decisions in that area would be followed up and actually put into effect.

(Mr. Bold, Mongolia)

33. For its part, his country was doing all it could to apply at home the social development strategies spelt out in international instruments. It was also seeking to alert the international community to social problems, and had been the author of a number of draft resolutions on the subject which had been adopted by the General Assembly.

34. At the national level, Mongolia was currently working to increase productivity so as to be able to continue raising the material well-being and cultural level of its population. In recent years Mongolia's national income had risen at an average rate of 5 per cent annually and its gross industrial output by more than 6 per cent annually. Once a backward country, plagued by the social consequences of its feudal and semi-colonial past, Mongolia had succeeded in eradicating the exploitation of man by man, poverty and illiteracy, because it had chosen a non-capitalist path to development. It had taken systematic steps to achieve economic independence, by exercising sovereignty over its natural resources, and to grant its citizens every right, including the right to work, to education and to medical treatment, by expanding the State and co-operative sectors and establishing a centralized planning system.

35. Mongolia had taken careful note of documents A/42/57, concerning national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress, and A/42/56, concerning the co-operative movement. The latter, in particular, demonstrated that co-operatives were becoming increasingly aware of the need to integrate more women and members of other social groups in their activities.

36. Although each State had the right to choose the system it deemed would best ensure its economic and social development, exchanges of experience between countries in that field could be extremely useful. Accordingly, his delegation requested the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements to organize the interregional seminar requested in General Assembly resolution 38/25 within the resources allocated for sectoral and regional advisory services. In order to simplify and expedite the submission by Governments of reports on their national experience, it would be useful to draw up a questionnaire or a set of general guidelines.

37. Mrs. AL-TURAIHI (Iraq), referring to agenda items 83 and 141, recalled that the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (resolution 2542 (XXIV)) had highlighted the link that existed between economic and social development and the need for a real development strategy. The economic crisis of the 1980s had affected the developing countries very adversely, causing a sharp decline in the prices of raw materials and a decrease in those countries' export earnings, which in turn had resulted in a marked slow-down of their economic development. The world economic situation had never been as bad. More than 34 million people, in 87 countries, were suffering from hunger and the gap between the industrialized countries and the developing countries was widening all the time. Those difficulties could not be resolved unless there was a genuine international determination to work out methods of action. It was essential, in particular, for the developing countries to make their production serve their own economic development.

(Mrs. Al-Turaihi, Iraq)

38. In paragraph 60 of its report (E/CONF.80/10) the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes referred to the problems facing many countries, particularly developing countries, in the area of social welfare. The report highlighted the need to draw up social welfare policies based on consultation and to review them periodically to ensure that they continued to be appropriate.

39. Because of its own political orientation, Iraq had always attached the utmost importance to developing human resources and enhancing the well-being of its population. Following the July 1968 revolution considerable progress had been made in the area of social security. Article 10 of the Constitution of Iraq contained a provision which stated that social security was the foundation of society. Iraq's social achievements included education, which was free to all since 1974, and the launching in 1978 of a compulsory literacy campaign. In addition, all Iraqis receive free medical treatment and medication. Many maternal and child welfare centres had been established and immunization programmes for children had been carried out throughout the country. Communications had been developed and electricity and water supply networks had been extended throughout the country. Finally, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances created by the war, Iraq was continuing its efforts to raise the standard of living of its inhabitants.

40. With regard to the question of disabled persons, she had read very carefully the document of the Stockholm meeting and the two reports of the Secretary-General on that issue (A/42/551 and A/42/561). She had been particularly interested by the suggestions made in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the document concerning evaluation of the implementation of the World Programme of Action (A/42/561). Iraq had always attached great importance to the question of disabled persons and it had organized numerous information activities on their behalf. Her Government had taken specific steps to assist the disabled, in particular by making it easier for them to move around, enhancing their welfare and taking steps to assist their reintegration in society. The cost of treatment for the disabled was borne by the State. Iraq had also enacted laws guaranteeing the disabled the right to work and, in July 1987, it had started to implement a programme to improve and develop vocational training services for the disabled.

41. Lastly, she drew attention to the need for co-ordination of social development programmes. It was necessary to bear in mind that the real objective of social welfare was to ensure the well-being of the individual while ensuring social justice. She expressed the hope that the current financial crisis of the United Nations would not jeopardize the social programmes which were under way and in that connection she stressed the need for States to demonstrate the necessary political will.

42. Mr. DIOP (Senegal) speaking on item 88 of the agenda, said that his Government had communicated to the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/23, the experience it had acquired in the field of far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress. In that connection, his Government hoped that the Pyongyang Declaration and Plan of Action

(Mr. Diop, Senegal)

on South-South Co-operation, adopted at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference of Non-aligned Countries, held from 9 to 13 June 1987, would be issued without delay.

43. With reference to document A/42/56-E/1987/7, he highlighted the importance which Senegal gave to the co-operative movement in its development policy. In Senegal many social groups - farmers, workers, women, young people and the disabled - were organized in co-operatives.

44. His Government attached particular importance to the question of aging and had encouraged the establishment of private associations of the retired and of the aging within the national co-ordinating bodies. Members of those organizations, who had a great deal of experience in all walks of life, participated in numerous national training programmes and, in particular, were sponsoring a national network of schools for parents. Numerous measures had been taken on behalf of the aging; ad hoc assistance, elimination of the income tax on retirement pensions, partial exemption from the tax on accommodation, possibility for retired widows of over 45 years to keep their pension if they remarried and so forth. A "National Senior Citizens Day" had been instituted in order to make the public aware of the questions of the aging. With the support of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, a new national policy would be implemented in that area in the months to come. A meeting of African experts was soon to be held at Dakar to study practical ways of establishing an African society for social gerontology. His Government was also expecting a technical mission from the United Nations which would help it to draw up a policy on the aging and to make preparations for the meeting of African experts. The support provided by the United Nations organizations was decisive in that area and should be strengthened.

45. Senegal's policy in favour of young people was designed to develop and revitalize youth associations and to promote popular educational activities, the organization of socio-educational leisure, the implementation of community development activities and the socio-economic integration of young people. In a desire to maintain the progress achieved in the International Youth Year, the Government of Senegal had established a national committee responsible for following up the activities begun during the Year and to plan new activities.

46. The general principles of Senegalese policy for the social promotion of disabled persons was based on a global approach. It was aimed at ensuring that the disabled achieved individual and collective autonomy, equality of opportunities and full participation in national development. The Government had established machinery for socio-economic reintegration supported by collective projects and based on the integrated approach. Senegal supported all proposals designed to increase substantially the participation of Member States in the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons with a view to responding to the growing demands for financing, mainly from the developing countries. It was also necessary to enlarge the circle of non-governmental organizations which were taking part in the financing of reintegration projects.

(Mr. Diop, Senegal)

47. Turning to item 94 of the agenda, his delegation supported the recommendations designed to improve United Nations activities in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and to strengthen regional and interregional co-operation as well as technical co-operation projects and advisory services in that field. The African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders needed the support of the United Nations and UNDP, in co-operation with OAU and ECA. Finally, attention should be drawn to the preparations for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

48. Turning to agenda item 141, his delegation supported the measures recommended by the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes. A large number of problems facing the African peoples were preventing them from obtaining enriching experience in the field of self-centred and self-sustaining development, as defined in the Lagos Plan of Action. The Government of Senegal would continue to support United Nations action in that field. The African States and the United Nations should associate in their activities the African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (CAFRADES), which had been established under the auspices of OAU.

49. Mr. VITO (Albania), speaking on item 90, said that his delegation was glad that for years the United Nations had been devoting special attention to the problems of youth. The young generation played a determining role within society. They were naturally concerned with progress and always ready to struggle for the ideals of liberty and independence as well as for progressive social change.

50. In many countries of the world, young people were a prey to injustice, oppression and racial discrimination. Many of them were disenchanted and gave themselves up to vagabondage, alcoholism and drugs. They suffered the consequences of the economic, political and moral crisis which was afflicting most of the countries of the West and East. In the capitalist countries, millions of young people were unemployed or the victims of fierce exploitation. Billions of dollars were now being spent for the production of murderous weapons while resources allocated to education, health and other social services kept diminishing. According to UNESCO statistics, out of 300 million illiterate people in the world today, about a half were young people. The situation of young people had become even worse as a result of the policy of aggression and military, economic and ideological expansion followed by the super-Powers and the other imperialist Powers. However, in many countries, thousands of young people were struggling, with weapons in their hands, for national and social liberation, while in the four corners of the world millions of others were opposing oppression and imperialist pillage, protesting against racial and social discrimination, the arms race and neo-colonialist exploitation, and thus making a valuable contribution to the preservation of peace, freedom and real democracy.

51. In Albania, young people enjoyed quite different conditions. Under the law they were guaranteed employment and education and active participation in social life in all fields. Young Albanians experienced neither famine, poverty nor political and economic dependence on foreign Powers, nor the heavy burden of

(Mr. Vito, Albania)

illiteracy and ignorance, nor unemployment. Confident in the future, they were working with zeal in building the socialist fatherland. Young Albanians were healthy and devoted to the defence of the revolution and socialist victories. His delegation was convinced that the progressive young people of the world would continue their struggle for the noble ideas of liberty, social justice and progress. In that struggle they would always have the support of the youth of Albania.

52. Mrs. MAKNOUN (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on items 89, 90 and 93 of the agenda said that providing for the material comfort of the young was not enough. They must also be protected against corruption and immorality. Television programmes, movies, theatres, clubs, printed matter and so on were all responsible, directly or indirectly, for the social values which were the cause of the rise in the rate of crime, suicide, addiction and other social disorders among youth.

53. On the issue of the aged, the Iranian delegation believed that the moral support and love of family members were their most important needs. Unfortunately, the life-style of today did not allow the family members from different generations to live together. Therefore, the lack of communication and understanding between the young and the old became greater every day. The Islamic laws now being practised in the Islamic Republic of Iran constituted the only answer for such social problems. Moral and ethical training of young people both in and out of school had reduced the generation gap.

54. Alcoholism, drug addiction and irregular sexual contacts were sources of physical and mental deficiencies, including disabilities. That was not the case in Iran. There, it was the struggle against the dictatorship of the Shah and the chemical weapons used in various Iranian cities during the war imposed on Iran which had produced a number of disabled persons. The condemnation by international public opinion and the adoption of preventive measures to combat such inhuman acts as the use of chemical weapons against innocent people would no doubt help to reduce the number of disabled people. Many programmes and activities had been undertaken in the last two years on behalf of disabled persons by the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly with a view to informing the public of the causes of disability.

55. In that respect, it was regrettable that there was no precise information or statistics on the various types of disabilities in the various countries. Her delegation hoped that the competent international organizations, in particular WHO, would collect data on that subject. She also proposed that those organizations should sponsor annual conferences and meetings during which countries might exchange experience and submit proposals with a view to solving the problems of the disabled and improving their situation at the world level.

56. Mrs. KHAMA (Botswana) said that the acceleration of economic growth was an imperative for her country. Botswana was seeking to provide a decent standard of living for its people which was increasing at the rate of about 3.4 per cent per year. Although Botswana was known to have achieved notable successes in the

(Mrs. Khamn, Botswana)

economic field - its per capita national product had quadrupled since independence - its future was still precarious to the extent that it continued to suffer attacks from South Africa.

57. The acts of aggression committed by South Africa and its strategy of economic destabilization conducted against its neighbours had cost them billions of dollars and irreplaceable human lives. That state of affairs had given rise to the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference which was seeking to reduce the economic dependence of the countries of the region with respect to South Africa. At that Conference, Botswana had played a leading role. One of the main fields in which the Conference had taken action was that of transport and communications. The reason for that was the damage caused by South Africa to the infrastructure in those two sectors. In a region devastated by war where displaced persons had to be constantly resettled and medical supplies brought in, transport played a capital role.

58. The Government of Botswana, concerned above all to achieve social harmony in the country, was endeavouring to promote employment and provide every inhabitant with decent living standards. Accordingly, it was continuing its efforts to provide basic standards of health care, water supply and education throughout the nation. If those efforts were to be successful, however, it was necessary for the international community to join with the Governments of southern Africa in establishing peace and economic stability in the region. Likewise, social justice in the developing countries, in southern Africa in particular, would continue to be an illusion if the imbalances in the international economic order were allowed to persist. Unless the transfer of resources from the developing to the developed countries was reversed, all the efforts of the former to develop their economies would be futile.

59. Mrs. NYMAN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, namely Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and her own country, described those countries' experience in promoting the co-operative movement. That movement was currently an integral part of the economic and social structure of the Nordic countries, whose inhabitants showed a spontaneous tendency to join together by sector of activity in order to defend their interests. The social benefits of co-operatives were numerous. By facilitating the marketing of goods and access to credit, co-operatives had raised living standards for their members and permitted underprivileged population groups, such as women, youth, the disabled, the elderly and the unemployed, to become more active in society.

60. Although the Government had the main responsibility for creating a favourable framework for the development of the movement, co-operative activity depended primarily on the active participation of the members. Since the beginning of the 1960s, the Nordic countries had contributed to the development of the co-operative movement in some 40 countries. In that regard, it was necessary to mention the importance of education, of which the Nordic countries were fully aware. As stated by the Secretary-General in document A/42/56, Sweden and Norway had funded two educational projects. Also noteworthy was the International Co-operative

(Mrs. Nyman, Finland)

Alliance (ICA), in which producer and consumer co-operatives participated. The Alliance administered a number of projects that assisted the co-operative movement in developing countries.

61. She endorsed all the conclusions drawn by the Secretary-General in document A/42/56. The work done within the United Nations system was encouraging and should be continued. As stated in conclusions (g) and (i), the importance of the training, educational and informational aspects of the co-operative movement deserved emphasis, as did the opportunities which the movement provided for the involvement of disadvantaged population groups in the development efforts.

62. Mr. CHAKMA (Bangladesh) said that the youth of his country, a group that represented one fourth of the total population, was particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of the current economic situation. Young people were particularly affected by unemployment. Accordingly, the Government of Bangladesh had set up a Ministry of Youth Affairs to monitor the programmes and activities pertaining to youth.

63. Internationally, Bangladesh had always associated itself with initiatives aimed at finding solutions to the problems of young people. Thus it had been a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 34/151, which had designated 1985 as International Youth Year. His delegation, while it welcomed the many activities undertaken at all levels within the framework of the Year and its follow-up, considered that youth programmes required continued advocacy. In that connection, it fully supported the Secretary-General's recommendations in the document A/42/595.

64. To assist disabled persons, his Government had entrusted to its Ministry of Social Welfare the implementation of a number of projects designed to enable disabled persons to develop their potential. His delegation felt that the developing countries required additional resources in order to strengthen their action with respect to disability prevention, the rehabilitation of disabled persons and the equalization of opportunities for them. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons could play an important role in that regard.

65. The question of aging was not a major social problem in Bangladesh, where life expectancy was below 50 years and where persons over 45 years constituted only 16 per cent of the total population. Nevertheless, the Government was concerned about the question and wished to profit from the experience of countries in which aging was a problem.

66. He reiterated his delegation's full support for the recommendations on the functioning of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, as contained in the report of the Economic and Social Council.

67. Miss BYRNE (United States of America) said that the proportion of the United States budget devoted to social spending, or more than \$361 billion, was proof of the importance which the United States Government attached to social welfare programmes. Equally as important as government programmes were the activities of voluntary associations. In the United States, private initiative was an important factor for social action in every sector: youth, the disabled, the aged and the family.

68. The individual freedoms enjoyed by young Americans provided the best guarantee, not only of economic growth, but also of true social development. The need for such freedoms constituted a self-evident truth which United Nations resolutions and decisions must recognize.

69. There were many paths to social development, and it was therefore pointless to recommend a single global strategy for social development. Such was the lesson which had emerged from the recent interregional consultations on social policy held in Vienna, whose final document had been too vague to provide Member States with concrete guidance on social policy.

70. The United States strongly supported the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. President Reagan himself had proclaimed the National Decade of Disabled Persons, 1980-1992. Her delegation urged the Department of Public Information of the United Nations to provide greater publicity for the United Nations Decade in order to encourage voluntary activities on the part of private groups and individuals to aid the disabled.

71. The United States also strongly supported United Nations activities with respect to aging. However, in order to implement the Plan of Action on Aging effectively and within United Nations budgetary constraints, existing activities must be strengthened rather than duplicated. In that context, she challenged the soundness of certain proposals submitted to the Committee, including the idea of proclaiming an international year of the family. Likewise, her delegation would abstain from participating in the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, which had been adopted at a time when opinion regarding social development had been very different from opinion at the current time. If there was one lesson to be learned from the experience gained over the past 18 years, it was that no Government could alone provide social welfare programmes on the scale suggested in the Declaration. In short, the Declaration on Social Progress and Development contained misleading language and most certainly could not be held up as a prescription for social progress and development. The tendency to confuse ideas and use words which sounded well but led nowhere had also been apparent at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which was why the United States had decided not to be a participant.

72. She congratulated the delegations of Malta, the Dominican Republic and Austria on their successful sponsoring of a single draft resolution on aging, and expressed the hope that the sponsors of the many resolutions on youth would follow their example.