



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIRAR (Sudan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 88: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (continued) (A/42/3; A/42/56-E/1987/7, A/42/57-E/1987/8; 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 (continued) (A/C.3/42/5)

1. Mr. BUDAI (Hungary) said that the vast majority of the world's population still did not enjoy all the rights embodied in the the United Nations Charter and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Social injustice and the wasting of material and intellectual resources for military purposes deprived mankind of means and possibilities for solving the social and economic problems of the modern world and creating the conditions of stability and wellbeing required for peaceful and friendly relations among nations.

2. The Hungarian delegation emphasized the validity and importance of the principles and objectives proclaimed in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development; its forthcoming twentieth anniversary should serve as an opportunity to assess its impact on the formulation and implementation of national policies and to examine ways of increasing the role of the appropriate United Nations organs, such as the Commission for Social Development, in realizing its objectives.

3. Hungary fully shared and supported the ideas and recommendations put forward and adopted at the World Assembly on Aging, the International Year of Disabled Persons and International Youth Year. The assessment of follow-up activities at both international and national levels indicated that one of the most important results of those international events had been the recognition that the young, the old and the disabled must be viewed as effective contributors to the development of society rather than merely as passive recipients of social benefits. There was no need to create new structures or programmes within the United Nations for co-ordinating activities concerning the International Plan of Action on Aging in view of the efficient action by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in that field.

(Mr. Budai, Hungary)

4. Hungary had always appreciated efforts within the United Nations to develop co-operation among States on crime prevention and criminal justice. It was in that spirit that it had participated in the Seventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders which had adopted the Milan Plan of Action. Response to the Plan's appeal to States to take concerted action to prevent crime by tackling poverty, inequality and unemployment, would contribute significantly to reducing crime and alleviating its consequences.
5. Hungary was in the process of modernizing its broad social welfare system which currently absorbed about a quarter of the national income. It was changing the economic structure so as to guarantee full employment, in particular for young people, women and disadvantaged groups. With the gradual aging of the population - the percentage of elderly in the total population was already about 20 per cent - it was important to strengthen the pension system and encourage social participation of the elderly. It was also necessary to pursue a social policy centred on the family rather than the individual.
6. As pointed out at the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, the creative power of the individual could never develop fully without more stable social security based on economic growth, which in turn presupposed a peaceful environment and the development of international co-operation in all important areas. The United Nations should play a major role to achieve that end.
7. Mr. LINDQUIST (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries and referring to agenda item 93, said that the International Year of Disabled Persons had been a resounding success in that it had created an awareness of the issues concerning disability among the public and in political circles. One of the important results of the Year had been the creation of a world-wide non-governmental organization of disabled persons, the Disabled People's International. The policies outlined in the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons were as valid and relevant today as they had been on their adoption in 1982. As a result of the International Year and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, disabled people now had a more powerful voice. Many nations had formed co-ordinating bodies as a basis for future work in that field.
8. However, at the mid-point of the Decade, it had to be admitted that not enough had been done. In fact, the situation of many disabled people might even have deteriorated during the past five years. Studies undertaken by the World Health Organization confirmed that, far from decreasing, the number of disabled persons in the world - about 500 million - might well increase in the near future. It was clear that the measures taken could not offset that increase.
9. The experts who had taken part in the Global Meeting held in Stockholm in August 1987 to review the progress made during the first half of the Decade had made a number of recommendations to the United Nations and to States Members. The Nordic countries considered that those recommendations were worth considering, in particular the recommendation that States Members should include projects for the

(Mr. Lindquist, Sweden)

benefit of the disabled in their development programmes financed by UNDP and UNDP should give them help and advice. The most interesting recommendations were those aimed at strengthening the work done by the United Nations in that field.

10. There was a discrepancy between the politically agreed goals established in the World Programme of Action and the resources set aside for the purpose. The situation was complicated by the financial crisis currently facing the United Nations, but the Nordic countries were convinced that it should be possible to improve the situation and proposed some measures to that end. In their view it was necessary to strengthen the capacity and competence of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to implement and follow-up the World Programme of Action. That was important not only for the disabled persons, but for the credibility of the United Nations and its Member States. The Nordic countries also strongly believed in the need for increased involvement of organizations representing disabled persons. They emphasized that the work done by the United Nations would greatly benefit from close and regular consultation with those organizations. Each body should be responsible for implementation in its own field of competence.

11. With regard to accessibility of documents produced by the United Nations system and the participation of disabled persons in the Organization's work, the Nordic countries considered it important that the Department of Information should be made aware of the problem and that all ways and means of improving the situation should be explored. No one should be excluded from representing his or her country by reason of disablement. Similarly, the United Nations should not discriminate against disabled persons in recruiting experts, regardless of the extra costs involved.

12. The Nordic countries attached the greatest importance to recognition of the human rights of disabled persons, but they were not convinced of the need for another convention because the human rights of all persons were already set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights. What was important was to ensure that the rights enshrined in the Covenants also benefited disabled persons. The Commission on Human Rights might consider measures to that end. The results of its work could serve as a useful basis for finding ways and means of ensuring that disabled persons enjoyed their human rights.

13. He had been encouraged by the seriousness with which the issues concerning disability were being dealt with at the current session of the General Assembly. It was a sign that the world community intended to continue and increase its efforts to ensure the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons. The Nordic countries looked forward to continuing their active participation in that work.

14. Mr. EMBAS (Malaysia), speaking on agenda item 90, said that young people constituted one fifth of the world population and were therefore the main resource for the future. Malaysia welcomed the follow-up activities to International Youth Year as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/42/595).

(Mr. Embas, Malaysia)

15. The Government of Malaysia had continued to strengthen its social and cultural programmes by increasing opportunities for education, encouraging greater participation by the people in development and fostering the growth of a national culture. The youth training and guidance division of the Ministry of Youth and Sports instilled a sense of loyalty to their country in the young people and organized programmes to promote technical training and the development of leadership and business potential. The youth solidarity division of the Ministry encouraged a sense of values and programmes were carried out with that objective. Youth co-operatives helped young people to take an active part in various branches of the economy, such as the hotel industry, marketing, housing and transport.

16. Turning to agenda item 89, he pointed out that in urban centres the extended family unit was gradually being replaced by the nuclear family, which posed a new challenge for the existing socio-economic infrastructure in developing countries, where more than half the world's elderly resided. His delegation therefore urged that the United Nations should intensify its efforts to promote the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna should be strengthened so that it would be better able to discharge its functions, including the administration of the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. Malaysia had taken part in the study on the aging of the population initiated by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and looked forward with interest to the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action to be undertaken by the Commission for Social Development in 1989.

17. Mrs. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that it was high time social questions ceased to be treated as humanitarian matters, or as relating only to marginal groups, or from the purely economic point of view, and were recognized as problems of development. Social policy and economic development were inextricably linked, which meant that social problems could not be solved unless world economic relations and the situation of the developing countries improved.

18. The Yugoslav Government commended the Secretary-General on his efforts in the social and humanitarian fields and his decision to strengthen the Organization's capacity by placing responsibility for social policy and social development with the United Nations Office at Vienna.

19. The Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, recently adopted at the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, represented an important document which provided a framework of action for States Members and the Secretariat for the 1990s and beyond.

20. His delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's excellent report on the question of aging (A/42/567). While the situation described was alarming, the proposals contained were interesting, particularly those concerning the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on

(Mrs. Nikolic, Yugoslavia)

Aging in 1989, an inter-agency meeting on aging to consider the need for a system-wide medium-term plan and the budget for 1990-1991, an international conference on aging and the practicability of drafting a declaration on the rights of the aged.

21. Implementation of the International Plan of Action in Yugoslavia had continued on the basis of the national plan of action adopted in 1985. New legislation had been adopted on the basic rights to pension and disability insurance. A number of scientific and research projects and meetings had been organized on the social and political aspects of aging in rural areas. Research had been undertaken on means of making buildings more accessible to the handicapped with a view to adopting relevant regulations.

22. As stated in paragraph 25 of document A/42/567, the Government of Yugoslavia had indicated its interest in establishing a United Nations-related centre for training and research on aging to be located within the Institute for Social Policy at Belgrade which had been dealing with aging-related questions for over 30 years.

23. With regard to agenda item 90, her delegation had noted from the Secretary-General's report (A/42/595) that, notwithstanding the many follow-up activities for International Youth Year at the national, regional and international levels, there remained a number of issues which deserved special consideration. Her delegation supported the recommendations in the report, particularly on the need for a comprehensive review of the global situation of youth to be undertaken every four years by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

24. In order to build on the momentum of International Youth Year, the youth organizations in Yugoslavia had focused their activities on creating conditions for full participation of young people in decision-making in the communities where they lived, studied or worked, as well as in society in general.

25. Yugoslavia fully supported the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The report of the global meeting of experts in Stockholm had concluded that little progress had been made in implementing the World Programme of Action for Disabled Persons. Member States must therefore emphasize the importance and fulfil the objectives of the Decade.

26. In Yugoslavia a wide range of activities had been carried out under the World Programme of Action and during the Decade, particularly during the Week of Disabled Persons observed from 6-12 December each year.

27. In the course of preparing for the Stockholm meeting, the service for support and technical co-operation in the rehabilitation of disabled persons in the Institute for Rehabilitation of Ljubljana University had organized, in co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the European regional meeting of experts whose recommendations for the establishment of a European regional plan of action for the second half of the United Nations Decade was an important contribution to the work of the global meeting of experts in

(Mrs. Nikolic, Yugoslavia)

Stockholm and to implementation of the objectives of the Decade in Europe. The service was also co-operating with the Centre in a number of other projects for developing countries.

28. Her delegation fully supported the recommendations concerning the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/53 adopted at its first regular session in 1987.

29. Mr. OSMAN (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on agenda item 90, said that the issue of youth was of particular interest to Brunei Darussalam as youth were the greatest source of wealth for the country as well as for others. Young people were both a source of inspiration and hope for the future and a vulnerable social group susceptible to unhealthy influences and the ever-changing trends of modern society. Brunei Darussalam therefore supported efforts aimed at promoting the participation of young persons and their right to education, vocational training and to work with a view to directing their energies towards nation-building.

30. As a member of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam continued to participate actively in various programmes involving youth and in efforts to inculcate in young people a better understanding of the cultures of other countries and a spirit of tolerance. Only thus would the future generation be able to cope with economic and social change without losing its national identity. Greater regional co-operation among youth could minimize the risk of conflict between States.

31. Brunei Darussalam was formulating a new policy in line with the needs and aspirations of the Government, of youth and of the nation as a whole. In the meantime, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Youth and Sports, established in 1974, remained responsible for organizing and administering programmes relating to welfare, youth and sports; for planning and developing sports with the objective of building a strong and united community; and for guiding and developing youth organizations. The Ministry acted as adviser and promoter and provided a wide range of facilities, services and grants. Brunei Darussalam hoped that International Youth Year would have a lasting impact and was prepared to share its experience in that field with other countries and to learn from their experience.

32. Mr. HALLIDAY (Canada), speaking on agenda item 89, emphasized that his country supported the principles laid down by the United Nations on the issue and gave high priority to the needs of the aged in all respects. Recently Canadian senior citizens had been able to participate directly in the decision-making process at the federal level thanks to the appointment of a Minister of State responsible for bringing issues on the subject to the attention of the public and for advising the Federal Government on the best way of dealing with their needs. Canada had also taken a number of steps to benefit the group. Each year, under the "New Horizons" programme, Canada subsidized almost 2,000 projects planned and directed by the aged. In addition, it had made a comprehensive survey of the demographic structure of the country and its implications for economic and social planning covering a three-year period. That survey had shown that the aged enjoyed better health,

(Mr. Halliday, Canada)

increased longevity and better training and that they were capable of playing a very active and important role in society. On the completion of the survey in 1989, Canada would be in a position to prepare innovative programmes and services in response to the new needs of an aging population, thus enabling them to lead productive, independent and dignified lives. Those results could also contribute to the work of the Vienna Centre on the same theme.

33. Moreover, far from neglecting the problems of youth, Canada was engaged in implementing the relevant United Nations guidelines. At the federal level, the Minister of State for youth affairs was responsible for supervising the interests of young people and for keeping them informed of the action taken for their benefit. In addition, in order to increase their participation in the decision-making process, the Federal Government had established the Canadian Youth Foundation and had provided it with a budget of 1 million Canadian dollars for conducting research in that field and disseminating the findings to young people. In order to strengthen the role of youth in economic life, his Government was greatly concerned with their employment prospects, particularly for the one third who did not complete their secondary education; it was bent on enhancing their qualifications and skills. It had also taken important steps at the national level to combat drug abuse and drunk driving by young persons.

34. Turning to agenda item 93, he believed that the resolutions to be adopted on the subject should define clearly the objectives to be attained between now and the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The rapid expansion of the "Disabled People's International" movement had been one of the main successes of the Decade. The final report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights violations of which disabled persons were the victims was awaited with interest. The Canadian Constitution basically granted disabled persons the same rights as other citizens. Aware of the importance of information in developing attitudes, Canada invited the United Nations Department of Public Information to place emphasis on its general programmes on the situation at the mid-point of the Decade. The positive results achieved by the Department in the promotion of equal treatment for women gave grounds to hoping for similar results in the case of the disabled. The Decade should be given new life through an international information programme and a strengthened Secretariat assisted by an advisory committee, which would make it possible to make better use of the resources and skills of both the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Generally speaking, international organizations and specialized agencies should take greater account of the needs of the disabled, both in their activities and in their plans and budgets.

35. While not minimizing the importance of prevention and reintegration measures, his delegation stressed the need for direct and concrete action on the part of the disabled themselves and their associations in the organization of rehabilitation services and the adoption of social, political and economic measures to ensure their independence in the communities. He drew attention to the significant contribution made by disabled persons to Canadian society, particularly in scientific research, political life, social services, international development and business. In 1986, the House of Commons Permanent Committee on the Condition of

(Mr. Halliday, Canada)

the Disabled, in order to ensure that the Government applied the principles which it advocated, had sent to all ministerial and administrative departments, and to the Speaker of the House, a questionnaire on the situation of the disabled in each department and the measures envisaged in that regard. The Speaker of the House had made an in-depth inquiry into the buildings and personnel under his authority and had made several recommendations for improvement of the situation. That initiative was now taken as an example in other ministries, as well as in the private sector. His delegation hoped that that type of measures would lead to the elaboration of an appropriate international instrument aimed at eliminating discrimination with regard to the disabled which would extend the efforts made in that area far beyond the end of the Decade. The United Nations itself should ensure that its various departments took that group of persons into account in turning their activities and the recruitment of their personnel.

36. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland), speaking on agenda item 94, said that criminality was a matter for great concern. It spared no country and merited the mobilization of all efforts and all skills. He drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General (A/42/453) and read out paragraph 3 (f) of economic and social resolution E/1987/53, which, in fact, recommended the computerization of criminal justice information services. Such an advance would not, of course, resolve the problem of criminality, but Poland was prepared to support such action by the Secretariat. It had already offered financial and substantive support to the Helsinki Institute on Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, for the organization in May 1987 in Poland of a seminar for experts from Western and Eastern Europe on computerization of criminal justice information. That meeting, which had been characterized by a spirit of close co-operation, had resulted in the adoption of several very interesting recommendations, which would be submitted to the tenth session of the United Nations Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, as a preparatory body for the eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to be held in 1990. After stressing the quality of the work of the Helsinki Institute in all its areas of competence, his delegation drew attention to the fact that, in 1981, Poland had established a committee to co-ordinate the activities of the various law enforcement agencies and structures and to draw up recommendations and guidelines on penal policy. The creation of that body, which had been necessitated by the intensification of criminality in late 1980, had contributed to a noticeable reduction in the crime rate, both in relative and in absolute terms. The committee was currently engaged in establishing a system of uniform statistics for judicial bodies.

37. In 1935, Poland had enriched its measures for assistance to victims of crime by establishing a new institution: the Crime Victims Assistance Fund. Where there was no possibility of the victim's receiving compensation from the offender or an insurance company, the Fund paid financial assistance to victims, both Polish and foreign, of crimes committed in Polish territory. It also sought to protect potential victims through information activities. In 18 months, the Fund, whose total budget was gradually being increased, had already assisted 27 people; 32 others were awaiting the review of their applications.

38. Mrs. KUMI (Ghana), turning first to agenda item 88, said that the unfavourable economic situation of the developing countries was due to a dual series of problems: on the one hand, the fall in commodity prices, the complexity of standardization rules, currency fluctuations; and, on the other hand, unfavourable climatic conditions. Since social development was a corollary of economic development, those conditions had led to the development of the migration of young persons to urban centres (leaving the rural areas to old people and poverty), increasing illiteracy and inadequate health care. In that discouraging context, any United Nations action to remedy the situation was highly commendable.

39. Turning to agenda item 90, she drew attention to the efforts made by her country to halt the exodus of the young to urban centres, particularly the establishment, in a number of small towns, of service centres that made seed, fertilizers and agricultural machinery available to young farmers. The gradual mechanization of agriculture would, undoubtedly, bring back young people to the land. Agricultural co-operatives and joint enterprises were also encouraged. Those measures were coupled with the modernization of structures by electrification, pipe-borne water, the establishment of health care centres and transport services. Rural banks were also established to grant soft loans to farmers. In the long term, it was intended to give priority to housing for youth in rural areas.

40. With regard to juvenile delinquency, her Government had placed the emphasis on promotional rather than correctional measures. Reform homes concentrated on vocational training for delinquent youth in order to facilitate their eventual reintegration into society.

41. In the area of education, the Government was placing greater emphasis on vocational training for all students so that, when they completed their studies, they would be able to choose between self-employment and employment in the public sector. It was hoped that such compulsory vocational training would reduce unemployment and the risks of hooliganism. In Ghana, the International Youth Year had helped create an awareness of the specific needs and aspirations of youth.

42. Turning to agenda item 89, concern for young people and the aged went hand-in-hand in her country; it was traditional for parents to take care of their children during childhood and children to take care of their parents in old age. The Government had also established a National Committee on Aging, with branches in the regions, to ensure that old people were assisted through regular social welfare agencies. Old people had access to recreational materials in urban community centres and also benefited from medical assistance and, in some cases, free medical care. In its eagerness to improve the lot of old people, Ghana had participated actively in the December 1986 Conference on Aging and looked forward to the day when the United Nations Programme on Aging would be established.

43. Turning to agenda item 94, her delegation welcomed the long-awaited establishment of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) and also the successful outcome of the Seminar on Planning for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Context of

(Mrs. Kumi, Ghana)

Development, held at Addis Ababa in June 1987, in which Ghana had been privileged to participate. Crime prevention was essential to social development if human values and moral development were to be promoted.

44. Turning to agenda item 141, her delegation was satisfied that the Guiding Principles that had emerged from the Inter-regional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes held at Vienna in September 1987 took due account of the social repercussions of economic restructuring in developing countries, which was often carried out to meet the conditions imposed by some international financial institutions. The emphasis on the need for a new educational system that responded to the current developmental needs of third world countries was also significant. Young people must acquire skills that opened up new avenues of employment other than working for the State, which had thus far been the biggest employer in almost all developing countries, making it extremely difficult for governments to lay off public servants in times of resource constraints.

45. Her delegation supported the strengthening of the role of the United Nations, especially the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in the area of social development.

46. Mr. DAMM (Chile), referring to agenda item 88, said that in describing Chile's experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress, he hoped to show delegations the real nature of the situation in Chile, which had so often been misunderstood and misrepresented. The aim of the social reforms undertaken in Chile was to establish a modern, stable democracy and to reinforce the fundamental freedom of individuals by promoting national solidarity, guaranteeing the right to private property and giving each citizen the possibility of choosing freely his system of social and medical insurance and the type of education he wanted for his children.

47. Chile's social and economic structure was based on private enterprise and the right to property and Chile had tried to limit the size of the State apparatus. Over the years, and particularly between 1970 and 1973 when whole sectors of the economy had been nationalized, the State had become an overgrown, unproductive bureaucracy motivated only by short-term political interests and so unwieldy that it had shifted individual initiative. Chile was now working optimistically to extricate itself from the social and institutional chaos that had ensued. It had encouraged private enterprise and foreign investment and promoted individual liberties in order to reap all the benefits of a free market. Having brought inflation under control and diversified and increased production, Chile now had an economic growth rate of around 6 per cent. Its foreign trade had increased by 8 per cent and had diversified, enabling the country to integrate more fully into the world economy and resist the latest international economic crises.

48. In the social sphere, priority had been given to the poorest segments of the population, in order to provide them with basic health, education, housing and social welfare services. As the World Bank had recognized in its September 1986

(Mr. Damm, Chile)

report and as the following statistics indicated, the Chilean Government's efforts had succeeded: social spending now accounted for 60 per cent of the national product as against 23 per cent in 1973; the infant mortality rate had been reduced from 65.8 per thousand in 1973 to 19.5 per thousand in 1985; 95 per cent of the population now had access to drinking water as against 69 per cent in 1973 and 75 per cent, as against 36 per cent in 1973, had sanitation services; and 96 per cent of children received eight years of basic education.

49. Such progress had required tremendous efforts on the part of all Chileans but everyone believed in the final goal, which was to establish a society in which people were free not only to choose their representatives and be elected but also to save, invest and spend, obtain an education, unionize, move around, express opinions and decide where and when to work. In that undertaking, the Chilean people asked only that no one interfere in their affairs or oppose the free and sovereign decisions they took concerning their future.

50. Mr. FRIEDRICH (Federal Republic of Germany), speaking on items 89, 93, 94 and 141, said that in facing new social challenges at a time of reduced financial resources, it was particularly important that Governments work together, using the possibilities offered by the United Nations Secretariat. The recent concentration of all social activities in the United Nations Office at Vienna had already borne fruit. His delegation hoped that the Office would be strengthened further so that it could prepare the report on the world social situation and monitor the implementation of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

51. One example of the renewed spirit of co-operation was the Inter-regional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes held at Vienna in September 1987, which had enabled delegations from over 90 Member States and numerous non-governmental organizations to hold a fruitful exchange of views and had adopted by consensus the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the New Future. The Guiding Principles contained a broad spectrum of action-oriented proposals to be carried out at the national, regional and interregional levels, as well as recommendations for avoiding duplication of work which took account of the limited financial resources available. At its spring 1989 session, the Commission for Social Development would have the task of reviewing the implementation of those recommendations. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the Guiding Principles by consensus.

52. Having organized from 1970 to 1980 its own decade for disabled persons, his country had supported wholeheartedly the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Since 1983, it had been working to help disabled persons participate actively in the discussion of questions of concern to them; numerous organizations fostering self-reliance had been established and public buildings and mass transportation had been better adapted to the needs of disabled persons.

(Mr. Friedrich, Federal
Republic of Germany)

53. The Federal Republic of Germany attached particular importance to international co-operation in that field, especially with developing countries. For a number of years, his country had been supporting projects which concentrated on the prevention of disability, the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, the establishment of workshops and the training of personnel for rehabilitation and therapy. The Federal Republic of Germany appealed to all the industrialized nations to provide additional funds for assisting the disabled in third world countries. The Global Meeting of Experts, held at Stockholm in August 1987, had carried out a comprehensive analysis of the national and international achievements of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, and had put forward a number of proposals aimed at improving the situation of the disabled. His delegation feared that some cost-intensive recommendations (the establishment of a secretariat, a series of technical meetings and the convening of a world conference) might prove unrealizable at a time when the United Nations was going through a period of austerity. His Government found it difficult to support the proposal to draft an international convention on the disabled. The existing human rights instruments guaranteed to the disabled the same rights as to other persons. It was important first to ensure that those instruments were implemented. The same considerations also applied to the idea of a declaration on the rights of the aged. His Government was opposed to the idea of creating a new fund for the disabled within UNDP, as it would only weaken the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. On the other hand, his Government fully supported the appeal by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna to have the trust funds for the disabled, youth, social defence and aging remain at Vienna under the responsibility of the experts of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. As his Government was of the opinion that those funds were very useful, it had recently made available \$US 50,000 to the Trust Fund for Aging, as a contribution to the construction of a home for elderly people in Uganda.

54. The Federal Republic of Germany was pleased to note that a congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders would be held in 1990. It supported the efforts made since the latest Congress, at Milan, to streamline work and concentrate discussions on a few important items.

55. Miss PULIDO-SANTANA (Venezuela), speaking on items 89 and 94, said that Venezuela supported the International Plan of Action on Aging. While it was the industrialized countries that were primarily affected by the phenomenon of aging, sooner or later the developing countries would experience similar demographic trends. They must therefore prepare to face the consequences of increased longevity. The United Nations had done immense work on behalf of the aged, with the assistance of Member States and non-governmental organizations.

56. Venezuela was seeking to implement programmes relating to the medical, social, economic, legal and cultural fields, as recommended in the International Plan of Action, and to establish, inter alia, gerontology centres providing the aged with shelter and all the necessary services. Assistance was also provided to the destitute elderly through senior citizens' clubs and through a system of pensions and social security benefits.

(Miss Pulido-Santana, Venezuela)

57. Venezuela considered it very useful to exchange ideas and experience, and welcomed the forthcoming regional meetings such as the fourteenth international congress on gerontology. It supported the proposal by the Dominican Republic that the Commission on Human Rights, through the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and in co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, should begin work on a draft declaration on the rights of the aged.

58. With regard to item 94, Venezuela believed that the activities and work programme of the United Nations in the vital area of crime prevention and criminal justice deserved the full attention of the Third Committee. During the session of the Economic and Social Council, Venezuela had endorsed the recommendations relating to the work programme, and had agreed that it would be possible to implement the programme only if the necessary human and financial resources were allocated. Venezuela would like UNDP to support the relevant regional institutions in that field, particularly the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The work of the Institute was of benefit not only to the countries of the region, but also to other regions of the world.

59. Her delegation hoped that preparations for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the provisional agenda of which had been adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its latest session, would progress without difficulty, and that the documentation would be distributed on time. Venezuela requested the Secretary-General to allocate the necessary resources to that end. The Eighth Congress was of particular importance to Venezuela because it would deal with criminal activities on an international scale, including the traffic in drugs, which posed well-known dangers.

60. Miss TAN (Singapore), speaking on item 89, said that during the International Youth Year, it had been recognized that young people were agents for development, not merely passive beneficiaries of it, and that they held the key to a better future and a better society.

61. As a country without natural resources, Singapore considered its greatest asset to be its population, two thirds of which were under the age of 30. That was why her Government had invested heavily in the training and education of youth, through simple, pragmatic and cost-effective programmes. At a young age, children were taught to live in harmony with others, regardless of race, language, creed or culture. Singapore was convinced that if the State could cultivate peaceful values among its young citizens, they would be able to coexist in peace with the people of neighbouring countries. In that regard, her Government, in co-operation with the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), supported programmes which enabled the youth of the region to meet, work together and experience their neighbours' way of life. That led to better understanding and closer relations between peoples.

(Miss Tan, Singapore)

62. Turning to agenda item 89, she said that with an increasing aged population, society would have to make provisions for the elderly which could significantly affect its development potential. Some countries might find it difficult, given financial constraints, to implement programmes to improve the lot of the aged. Instead of adopting a policy of State welfare spending to assist the aged and the disabled, her Government had promoted a policy of voluntary assistance by private citizens and organizations to allow taxpayers to choose how much they wanted to contribute, thus enabling citizens to relate more directly to the needs of the less fortunate, and helping to nurture a more compassionate society. That policy was also better for the dignity and self-respect of the recipients of assistance. Her Government had sought the co-operation of business firms in Singapore; it was convinced that their involvement would promote a more positive attitude towards them and enhance their image. Her Government had also implemented a compulsory savings scheme (the Central Provident Fund), which provided post-retirement financial security, as well as a source of funds for the purchase of homes and for medical services.

63. The problem of the aged was not solely a financial one. A concerted effort by the relevant authorities was needed to solve the social and psychological problems so that the elderly would become an asset instead of a burden to society.

64. With regard to item 93, she said that during the next five years, Singapore would be focusing on the vocational training and employment needs of disabled persons. Instead of imposing on employers legislation, which might penalize disabled workers, her Government preferred to take greater advantage of employers' good will and understanding. In 1988 the Council of Social Services was to launch an employment programme for the disabled, help them to obtain pre-employment and on-the-job training and would provide loans and grants to those wishing to start small businesses. Disabled people could also avail themselves of the variety of housing, transport, social and recreational services provided by voluntary welfare organizations.

65. Mrs. GEBRE-EGZIABHER (Ethiopia) said that in view of the tasks ahead and the current global economic situation, the international community would have to redouble its efforts to accelerate social progress. For that reason, Ethiopia was glad that the General Assembly had adopted the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future.

66. With regard to agenda item 93, her Government, despite its limited resources, had taken measures not only to protect the rights of the disabled, but also to offer them training and employment opportunities so that they could become productive members of society.

67. With respect to item 89, she observed that as a result of better health care, the number of aged persons was bound to increase, and it would therefore not be prudent to rely on the traditional economic and psychological support systems for the medium and long term, even if respect for the aged and support of the elderly by the immediate and extended family had remained cherished values of Ethiopian

(Mrs. Gebre-Egziabher, Ethiopia)

society. All civil servants, members of the military and police forces, and employees of State-owned firms and industries were already entitled to retirement benefits. In order to support national endeavours in that area, Ethiopia hoped to see greater bilateral and multilateral assistance to developing countries from donor Governments and organizations. It also hoped for increased contributions to the Trust Fund for Aging and the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. It considered it timely and useful to draft a declaration on the rights of the aged. Lastly, it considered that most of the recommendations emerging from the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons were essential to the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

68. Ethiopia naturally gave priority attention to young people, who made up 40 per cent of its population; without the participation of young people, it would have taken longer to achieve land reform and the eradication of illiteracy. Ethiopia also recognized the role young people played in the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation. Aware that young people likewise played an indispensable role in the development of the country, Ethiopia was establishing institutions of higher learning and vocational training schools. Her Government had helped to set up a youth organization to which it extended financial and other assistance.

69. That being so, Ethiopia was happy to note that follow-up activities to the International Youth Year were continuing at all levels. It had maintained the National Co-ordinating Committee in order to ensure the implementation of the guidelines for further planning and follow-up.

70. Turning to item 88, she endorsed the conclusion set forth in the Secretary-General's report (A/42/56) to the effect that co-operatives were an invaluable institution for promoting social and economic development and achieving a more equitable distribution of income. The same conviction had prompted Ethiopia to include an article on that subject in its new Constitution. Recent years had seen a dramatic increase in the number and types of co-operatives in Ethiopia. The Government was encouraging and supporting the voluntary establishment of farming, handicrafts and services co-operatives through legislation, training courses, and financial and management support, and was exerting every effort to make them autonomous and self-supporting as soon as possible. Contrary to the reports appearing in the Western media, membership in those co-operatives was voluntary. Currently, only 3 per cent of the peasantry were organized in co-operatives, holding 1.1 per cent of the arable land. Ethiopia none the less intended to increase those percentages, for it was convinced that co-operatives could make better use of financial, material and human resources and increase productivity without unduly stifling individual initiative and benefit.

71. With regard to agenda item 94, her delegation hoped that the seminar organized by the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders would contribute to integrated planning for crime prevention in African countries.

72. Mrs. ROKKE (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries on agenda item 94, said that the Economic and Social Council had adopted two important resolutions concerning the future work of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Resolution 1987/53 contained recommendations aimed at strengthening the work of the United Nations in that field. The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, consisting of highly qualified experts, had already achieved impressive results. That Committee had helped Governments to develop guidelines, standards and model legal instruments and promoted the application of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. The Committee had likewise dealt with extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions, the independence of the judiciary, alternatives to imprisonment and the social resettlement of prisoners. It had thus contributed to the implementation of human rights standards. The Committee had also shown itself to be better able than other United Nations bodies to avoid political disputes.

73. It was remarkable that the Committee had been able to obtain such results with the limited resources available at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. In that regard, the great number of vacant posts in the field of crime prevention at the Vienna Centre was a source of concern. The Nordic countries appreciated the Centre's efforts to make more efficient use of the resources available and its search for ways to obtain more assistance from scholars and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. They suggested that more use should be made of the network of United Nations institutes for crime prevention and criminal justice. The Nordic countries, which were among the major contributors to the United Nations Trust Fund for Social Defence, hoped that it would be possible further to intensify technical co-operation activities in that field, particularly within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme. In that field as in others, it was crucial that projects should be tailored to the genuine needs of the recipient countries.

74. In its resolution 1987/49, the Economic and Social Council had approved the provisional agenda for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. It was important that the agenda for those congresses should focus on a more limited number of subjects and strive for practical results. The five-year interval between the congresses was satisfactory and there was no need to prolong their duration.

75. The Nordic countries hoped that the Special Commission established by the Economic and Social Council to improve the work of the United Nations would take those two resolutions fully into account and would harmonize the tasks to be performed by the United Nations in the crime prevention sector with those of other sectors of the social field in order to prevent waste of time and effort.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.