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INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 34/151 of 17 December 1979, the General Assembly, inter alia, decided to designate 1985 as "International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace". It also decided to establish an Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, to be composed of 23 Member States appointed by the Chairman of the Third Committee on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and requested the Secretary-General to convene three sessions of the Advisory Committee in the period 1980-1985 so that it might formulate, for consideration by the Assembly, a specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year, based on a draft programme prepared by the Secretary-General. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene the Advisory Committee in 1980 and to submit a report on its first session to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. The Secretary-General drew the attention of Member States, non-governmental youth organizations, United Nations agencies and offices, including the regional commissions, to resolution 34/151 with a view to obtaining suggestions on a specific programme of measures and activities for the preparation and observance of the International Youth Year. The Secretary-General took that opportunity to suggest that the International Youth Year should be seen not as a one-time event, but as one step in a long-term planning and development process in the youth field, as explained in paragraph 7 below.

3. The replies received so far support the Secretary-General's view that the International Youth Year should be seen as such a single step. Moreover, the replies reiterated a number of suggestions already summarized in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Secretary-General's report (A/33/257 and Add.1) and paragraph 9 of his report (A/34/468 and Corr.1). Essentially, there was a widespread feeling that the preparatory work for the International Youth Year should entail (a) better knowledge of youth problems and aspirations in the 1980s.

* A/35/150.

(b) increased operational projects and programmes in co-operation with Member States and with youth organizations at the national and local levels, (c) increased co-operation between the United Nations system and non-governmental youth organizations in the preparation and celebration of the International Youth Year, and (d) international action initiated to enhance awareness of the problems of youth unemployment and to promote measures for their effective solution. It was also felt that the success of the International Youth Year would largely depend on the extent to which young people and their organizations were able to participate directly in the preparation and celebration of the International Youth Year. The Geneva Informal Meeting, a grouping of international youth non-governmental organizations, should be encouraged to participate in the preparation and the celebration of the International Youth Year.

4. At its first regular session in 1979, the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme Matters) of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination discussed the International Youth Year. It was agreed that if the Year was to have full and positive impact on public awareness of the situation and needs of youth, it would be necessary for the organizations of the system to co-ordinate their activities relating to the Year and to ensure that such activities would be in line with the goals and programmes of the Year as elaborated by the General Assembly. The Committee believed that the effectiveness of the system to contribute to the implementation of the Secretary-General's report on the International Youth Year (A/34/468 and Corr.1) would be greatly enhanced if procedures were adopted at an early stage by which agencies of the system might identify which of their activities related to the Year and how those activities might be harmonized to help achieve its goals.

5. In a letter dated 5 May 1980 (A/34/855), the Chairman of the Third Committee informed the Secretary-General that the disagreement among the regional groups on the distribution of seats prevented him from appointing the 23 members of the Advisory Committee and that, unless he was informed of an agreement reached among the regional groups, the appointment of the Committee would have to be taken up by the Assembly at the thirty-fifth session.

6. In these circumstances, the Secretary-General believes that the first session of the Advisory Committee should be convened as early as feasible in 1981, in order that it may begin the preparation of a specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year, and that the report of the Committee on its first session be considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

7. The Secretary-General is of the opinion that the International Youth Year should be seen as a step in a long-term planning and development process and not as a one-time event. The first step of this process should be the selection of long-term objectives and the preparation of a programme of implementation having 1985 as its target. In 1985, in addition to the activities organized to celebrate the International Youth Year, an evaluation of the programme might take place, leading to a revision of long-term objectives. Such a strategy would, however, be meaningful only if Governments agreed to adopt it as their own strategy and to establish their national goals and plans accordingly. A similar approach might be applied at the regional and interregional levels.