



UN/DA COLLECTION

THIRD COMMITTEE  
23rd meeting  
held on  
Friday, 17 October 1980  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 30: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/35/3/Add.19; A/35/236; A/C.3/35/7)

- (a) WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN (A/CONF.94/35; A/35/220)
- (b) VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/35/523)
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AGENDA ITEM 33: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/35/428)

1. Mrs. SIPILA (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) introduced the reports on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women (A/35/523) on the International Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (A/35/94) and on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/35/428). The Voluntary Fund and the Training Institute reflected the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, especially in respect of women's full integration and participation in the development of society as equal partners with men - a goal for which considerable assistance was still needed in various fields, including technical co-operation, training and research.

2. The Voluntary Fund did not duplicate the work of other funding organizations: its funding was particularly suited to innovative or experimental work which, if successful, might later be funded from other sources, and for small projects which might not be acceptable to other funds. As indicated in paragraphs 3-12 of the Secretary-General's report, the Fund was increasingly being used for country-level projects, thus ensuring that special consideration was given to rural women and poor women in urban areas in accordance with the criteria set forth in General Assembly resolution 31/133 which had established the Fund in its present form. Country projects in support of women would work in the long run towards the inclusion of funding for women's needs in major development assistance programmes. Traditional funding sources tended to concentrate mainly on women's roles in such fields as health, nutrition and home economics, neglected women's responsibilities in the family and national development and gave low priority to women in the allocation of development resources. The situation was partly due to the scarcity of women among planners and decision-makers in aid agencies and Governments.

3. The special resources available from the Voluntary Fund were stimulating change and demonstrating the value of women's full involvement in development assistance activities. They were providing support in such important fields as energy resources, development planning and rural production. In 1980, 67 projects had

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(Mrs. Sipila)

been approved, bringing the total supported by the Fund to date to 155, which included a significant increase in the proportion of projects for the Asia/Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean regions. Since every project proposal submitted by a Government, non-governmental organization or regional commission was reviewed on its own merits, it was possible to respond adequately to special needs in the different regions and subregions.

4. The report explained the new agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which was intended to eliminate delays in transferring funds for approved projects and to allow the implementing agencies to work directly with a United Nations representative at country level. That agreement, together with the 1979 agreements concerning submissions and reviews of proposals from the countries through the UNDP Resident Representative's Office, gave the Voluntary Fund increased capacity to support country-level activities. In the current year, 7 out of every 10 approved projects were based on those agreements.

5. The posts for senior women programme officers at the regional commissions, referred to in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report, were extremely important to the work of the Fund. The Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Fund had advised that the two posts presently provided to each of the four regional commissions should not be supported after the end of 1981 unless the commissions themselves strengthened their women's programmes by assigning posts from the regular budget. To date, only ECLA had provided such a post and ECWA expected to do so before the end of 1981. Programme officers at the regional level to work for women at both country and regional levels, in the context of the New International Economic Order and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, were of crucial importance and there was an urgent need to find ways and means of strengthening regional women's programmes.

6. Estimates of the time required for the Voluntary Fund to incorporate women and men in all its development assistance support were a major factor in deciding whether the Fund should continue its work after the expiry of its mandate in 1985. Since there was little evidence of women's full integration in development programmes through the activities of other funding agencies, for example, through UNDP country programming, the future of support by the United Nations system for rural women and poor women in urban areas would depend largely on the activities of the Voluntary Fund today. However, its capacity to meet increasing needs depended on strong and sustained financial support during the second half of the Decade. The Secretary-General had anticipated expenditures of \$6 million in 1981 and \$10 million annually thereafter. She hoped that at the Pledging Conference for Development Activities to be held on 6 November, the developing countries might be able at least to make symbolic pledges to demonstrate their commitment to the work of the Fund, and that the industrialized and resource-rich countries would become major contributors.

7. Preparatory work for the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) had continued and the

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(Mrs. Sipila)

report of the first session of the Board of Trustees of the Institute (E/1980/23) had been transmitted to the Economic and Social Council at its spring session. Five publications in three languages had been prepared by the Institute as part of its contribution to the World Conference. The great need for research and training for the advancement of women had been emphasized at the Conference and several references had been made to INSTRAW's potential for responding to the needs. The administrative questions relating to installation of the Institute in the host country and the appointment of the Director were currently being worked out by the Secretariat. However, in order to meet the requests for research and training included in the Programme of Action and the resolutions adopted at the World Conference, the Institute's present resources must be dramatically increased. She hoped that generous contributions would be made to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Institute at the Pledging Conference.

8. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted and opened for signature, ratification or accession under General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979, had been signed to date by 30 countries and ratified by 8 - an unprecedented response in such a short period. The list of States which had signed and ratified it, should be brought up to date by the addition of Romania, which had signed on 4 September; Dominica, which had signed and ratified on 15 September; and Barbados which had ratified the Convention on 16 October. The texts of reservations by States at the time of ratification appeared in annex II of the report (A/35/428). The numbers of signatures and ratifications were evidence of the determination of States to bring the Convention into force as soon as possible. The next stage would be the establishment of the Committee envisaged in the Convention and the beginning of a new reporting system on the measures adopted by States Parties to give effect to its provisions.

9. Mr. DOMINGUEZ PASIER (Spain) expressed his warm appreciation to the Secretary-General of the World Conference for her presentation of the report on the Conference, and to the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs for her valuable statement at the Conference. The Copenhagen Conference had without doubt been one of the most important events of the year to take place under United Nations auspices. The Conference had been prepared with scrupulous care and most participants, including his own country, had submitted valuable information on national progress at various levels in legislation and practice.

10. There had been cynical attempts to over-emphasize the short-comings of the Conference and play down its positive results. Not only had the exchange of views on progress made in the different countries and targets still to be achieved been encouraging, but a considerable number of resolutions had been adopted, most of which constituted a basis for further efforts by Governments towards the advancement of women and valuable guidance for associations and groups. The Conference had also been the occasion for the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by a large number of countries. Lastly, the Conference had adopted a Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women which was full of practical

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(Mr. Dominguez Pasier, Spain)

recommendations. While it had unfortunately not been adopted by consensus, it was a document whose guiding principles had been accepted for implementation even by the countries which had not been able to support the whole document. His delegation, for its part, had been able to support the Programme of Action and had voted for it although, it had entered reservations concerning certain paragraphs and had abstained in the separate vote on paragraph 5 (A/35/428).

11. His delegation had included experts from Government departments concerned with culture, labour, health and education and from the Ministry of External Affairs. Its active participation reflected a new impetus in Spain in the past few years given to training women in all fields of endeavour and to the gradual elimination of all discriminatory measures persisting in civil, family and labour law. For example, the future divorce law was now in debate in the Spanish Legislature.

12. His delegation was profoundly grateful to the Government and people of Denmark for having organized the Conference and to the Secretary-General of the Conference for her able performance of a difficult task.

13. With regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, it was gratifying that after barely a year there had been 80 signatures and 6 ratifications. His country had signed the Convention at Copenhagen and it would shortly be submitted to parliament for ratification. The adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly had been one of the most decisive steps taken during the Decade towards the advancement of women on a universal scale. He hoped that, in accordance with its provisions, the Committee on its implementation by States would shortly be established.

14. He also expressed the hope that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women would start operations at an early date.

15. Mrs. ROSER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the first five years of the Decade for Women had achieved a good measure of success, even though much remained to be done. One of the most spectacular achievements was certainly the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Federal Republic of Germany, which had become a signatory to the Convention at Copenhagen, would do its utmost to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. It hoped that the Convention would enter into force at an early date and believed that it should serve as the basic framework for the attainment of equality between women and men the world over.

16. Another achievement in recent years was the recognition that equality for women in all aspects of life was a factor to be dealt with on many levels and in a variety of areas, and that the problem could not be solved by legislation alone but would require special supportive measures and changes in social structures and attitudes.

17. While the Federal Republic of Germany was not in a position to support the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade in its entirety, it would implement the practical parts of the Programme on the national as well as the international level. For example, the resolutions and the Programme of Action would

(Mrs. Roser, Federal Republic  
of Germany)

be published in the Federal Republic of Germany and all institutions concerned would be asked to take appropriate measures to implement them, in particular, in the fields of education, employment, and health. Her delegation believed that while women should participate fully in political life, there were a number of problems that concerned women exclusively and should therefore be dealt with separately. Her delegation hoped that those questions would in future receive the measure of priority they deserved.

18. Since the adoption of the 1975 Plan of Action, her Government had initiated a number of specific projects for the advancement of women in developing countries and was trying to integrate women in all its development projects, taking into account the social and cultural conditions of its partner countries. As stated in the report of the Brandt Commission, a new international economic order would need men and women with a new mentality and a wider outlook to make it work, and a process of development in which their full capacities could flourish.

19. Mrs. HØRSTEM (Denmark) said that the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen was an important achievement. Recent appraisals of the conditions under which women lived all over the world had enabled women to define their demands for the future more precisely. It was difficult to envisage real improvements in those conditions unless there was progress in the development of a new economic world order. At the same time, it was difficult to imagine real economic and social progress unless men and women equally shared responsibilities and rewards. Those two aspects of development were closely interrelated. The recognition that the role of women must be seen not only in the context of the family but as a full and active member of society represented further progress.

20. Her delegation, among others, had been disappointed in the formulation of two paragraphs in the Programme of Action and had had to abstain on the Programme as a whole. She wished to emphasize, however, that its abstention had no implications for Denmark's support of all other parts of the Programme. On the whole, the Programme represented a most valuable contribution to the advancement of women all over the world and the Danish Government would be active in helping to implement it.

21. After Copenhagen, follow-up was obviously the main priority. At the national level, it was now the responsibility of Governments of all Member States to take appropriate steps for implementation. At the international level, her delegation had noted with great satisfaction that the important role of women in the development process had been reaffirmed in the text of the new International Development Strategy for the third United Nations Development Decade. One of the most important decisions to be taken by the General Assembly would have to deal with resolution 22 adopted at Copenhagen concerning co-ordination of issues relating to the status of women within the United Nations system. The failure to integrate women in the decision-making process was of great concern to her Government, as it must be to all. Effective measures must be taken to expedite that integration by staffing the United Nations at all levels, and particularly at the executive levels, with an equitable and fair number of women.

22. An essential part of the Programme of Action dealt with the dissemination of

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(Mrs. Nørthen, Denmark)

information and experience. In that connexion, the United Nations and the specialized agencies had a crucial role to play during the second half of the Decade. The Secretary-General of the United Nations had often stressed the importance of broad public support for the work of the United Nations and it was encouraging to note the active participation at Copenhagen of the observer delegations of non-governmental organizations and the inclusion in many Government delegations of persons from private or semi-official organizations who were directly concerned with the status of women.

23. The Copenhagen Conference had called for action to benefit the most disadvantaged, namely, women in extreme poverty, women in non-developed rural and agricultural areas, refugees and displaced women, disabled women and elderly women. The efforts of the international community should give priority to those groups and to young women, for the entire Decade might well be in vain if the international community did not succeed in providing the new generation with equal opportunities with regard to education and employment.

24. Another resolution worthy of mention was that on battered women and violence in the family, a phenomenon prevailing in all countries. Violence had to do with social backwardness and part of the cure was to abolish social inequality and to combat poverty.

25. While the first half of the Decade had not achieved the desired goal of a fair share for women in development, it had activated progress and it was to be hoped that the second half would see that progress gather momentum because of the growing political will to change the conditions of women. It was against that background that her delegation hoped that the Third Committee could reach agreement on resolutions now needed to translate the results of Copenhagen into action.

26. Mrs. SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic) said that since the establishment of the German Democratic Republic, the realization of equal rights for women had been a basic concern of the State and the State's efforts to achieve that end were fully consistent with the objectives of the Decade for Women outlined in the World Plan of Action.

27. Since the adoption of the World Plan of Action, the German Democratic Republic had made further progress in consolidating the social status of women, raising the living standards of families and systematically improving women's working and living conditions. The establishment of a socialist system had entailed the abolition of social conditions based on the exploitation and oppression of man by man and the denial of the rights of women. At the same time, the roots of the oppression and exploitation of other peoples and races had been extirpated. Basic human rights, including the right to participate in decision-making and active involvement in political and public affairs, the right to work, to education, to health protection and recreation were guaranteed to men and women alike. The national legislation of the German Democratic Republic guaranteed rights for women that went beyond those embodied in the relevant international instruments.

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(Mrs. Saelzler, German  
Democratic Republic)

28. The first half of the Decade for Women had been marked by efforts to carry out the decisions taken by the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR at its ninth Congress. As a result, women had become increasingly involved in the process of social production and were able to exercise fully their civic rights and duties, both at work and within the family. The degree of women's participation in political affairs was clearly reflected in the increasing number of female deputies in the people's representative bodies at all levels, which had risen from some 33,000 in 1958 to over 73,000 in 1979. The demand set forth in paragraph 88 of the World Plan of Action for equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers and their integration in the labour force in accordance with internationally accepted standards had been fully implemented in the German Democratic Republic, as had the demand formulated in paragraph 101 of the World Plan of Action for the creation of conditions enabling working mothers to reconcile their duties towards the family with their careers and social activities. Since the establishment of the German Democratic Republic, the number of working women had risen year by year and full employment for both men and women remained assured. Currently 87 per cent of all women and girls of working age were gainfully employed or were pursuing their studies. They accounted for 50.2 per cent of the country's total work force.

29. A number of additional measures had been put into practice in the GDR in order to protect working women. Pregnant women and mothers with young children enjoyed the special care of the socialist State. Maternity leave was fixed at 26 weeks and during that period gainfully employed mothers drew an allowance equal to their average net earnings under the social security scheme. The number of live births in the German Democratic Republic had increased from 181,798 in 1975 to 235,166 in 1979. With the improvement of medical care for mothers and the children, there had been significant declines over the same period in infant mortality, the stillborn rate and the maternal death rate. All working mothers as well as all women over the age of 40 were entitled to one fully paid day off each month. The official working hours for mothers with two or more children under the age of 16 had been reduced to a weekly total of 40 hours without loss of pay and those mothers also had two to five days more vacation time than other working people. Another important step was the establishment of crèches, kindergartens and after-school centres and the planned increase in such establishments. More than 60 per cent of all children under three years of age could be admitted to crèches and all children whose parents so wished could go to kindergarten from the age of three until they entered school. Schools ran after-school centres for pupils in the first four grades which were attended by 78 per cent of the children concerned. The services of child care facilities were free of charge; parents were merely required to pay a small fee towards the cost of meals.

(Mrs. Saelzler, German  
Democratic Republic)

30. The enjoyment of equal educational opportunities by all members of society, irrespective of sex, called for in paragraph 67 of the World Plan of Action, was guaranteed by law and had been a reality in the German Democratic Republic for many years. Education was free and there were no tuition fees for studies at universities, colleges and vocational schools. Equal participation in vocational training and education enabled girls to realize the right to learn a profession guaranteed in article 25 of the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic, a demand listed in paragraph 81 of the World Plan of Action. Women had access to all trades and professions with the exception of those from which they were barred for medical reasons and in order to protect motherhood. Some 99.2 per cent of all girls who left school and did not attend advanced training facilities learned a profession.

31. Those examples illustrated the commitment of the Government of the German Democratic Republic, the parties, the trade unions and other social organizations to the realization of equality for women and the full guarantee of their rights.

32. However, aware that the policy aimed at guaranteeing their security and a happy future for their children could be successful only in conditions of peace women and mothers were greatly alarmed at the political course pursued by the aggressive circles of imperialism, whose policy of nuclear arms build-up, military adventurism and confrontation was designed to undermine the results of the policy of détente. Women in the German Democratic Republic therefore supported all activities of their Government, of the socialist community of States and of all peace-loving forces in the struggle for the preservation of world peace, a halt in the arms race and disarmament. They had subscribed to a Declaration of the people of the German Democratic Republic in support of the significant peace and disarmament initiative launched by the Soviet Union in 1979, on the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the German Democratic Republic: 96 per cent of the citizens over 14 years of age had signed the Declaration, thus demonstrating their full agreement with the peace policy pursued by the Soviet Union and its allies.

33. The experience of the German Democratic Republic confirmed that women represented a great social force and that their participation in the process of progressive renewal represented a vast material and spiritual potential for the development and shaping of social conditions. During the process of the country's development, the political, economic and social rights of women had been increasingly substantiated. Women knew that they could exercise their basic human rights in conditions of full equality and without any kind of discrimination.

34. Mrs. LITVIKOVA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that some gains had been made in improving the status of women as a result of the many years of effort by the enlightened sectors of the public and the international women's movement. The holding of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and the opening for signature of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, of which the Soviet Union had been one of the

(Mrs. Litvinova, Ukrainian SSR)

initiators, had considerably strengthened the basis for international co-operation among States in improving the situation of women.

35. Despite the attempts of a certain group of States to prevent the adoption of effective and specific measures, the participants at the World Conference had formulated and approved a Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women and adopted a number of important and useful decisions. Nevertheless, the formulation of measures was not in itself sufficient to achieve the goals of the Decade; a willingness on the part of States to take practical action in implementing them was necessary.

36. The achievement of equality between men and women and the equal participation of women in economic and social development, in accordance with paragraph 48 of the Programme of Action was already an important achievement of socialism. The decisions of the World Conference aimed at the final elimination of discrimination against women throughout the world had been warmly received and approved in the Ukrainian SSR.

37. The social policy of the socialist State of the Ukrainian SSR aimed to create conditions enabling women to enjoy legal equality with men and combine participation in productive work and public activity with motherhood which, in Ukrainian society, was recognized as an honoured social function of women. The State paid constant attention to further improving the health, conditions of work, everyday life and leisure of women. Comprehensive plans for the further improvement of the State system of education for the younger generation, creating equal social conditions for the development of all children without exception, were being worked out and implemented. The Ukrainian SSR had an effective system for monitoring observance of the constitutional rights of women, which came under the authority of a permanent commission of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR concerned with questions of the labour and living conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children. Similar commissions had also been established in the provincial organs of power, the soviets of people's deputies, and had broad powers, such as the power to monitor the work of ministries and departments and their local organs in implementing existing legislation on the protection of women's rights. They also made recommendations to State bodies and public organizations. The trade unions, which were responsible for monitoring compliance with the legislation on women's work, played a major role in protecting the constitutional rights of women.

38. As active participants in public and political life and the management of the State, women were represented in the organs of power at all levels - from the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR to local authorities - and participated directly in formulating, discussing and adopting all State laws and decisions. Thirty-six per cent of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR were women, and over 80 per cent of the members of local government authorities were women. Women constituted 52 per cent of the labour force: every woman in the Republic could obtain work in any sector of the economy in accordance with her vocation, education and abilities. In the Soviet Ukraine there was full literacy

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(Mrs. Litvinova, Ukrainian SSR)

and secondary education was compulsory for all children. Women could be found in positions of responsibility in many walks of life and there were no restrictions affecting women's rights in respect of work, remuneration or promotion.

39. In the current complex international situation, millions of mothers who had welcomed the onset of détente had once again become concerned about the fate of their children and about the future of the world. The preservation of peace and the strengthening of the security of the peoples were directly related to the goals of the Decade for Women, for without over-all efforts aimed at preserving détente as the dominant trend of world development, the hopes for a better and peaceful future, and hence for attaining equality for women and a happy life for their families and children, could not be achieved. Her delegation could not but express concern about the military preparations of certain States and the continuing arms race. It shared the fears of the participants at the World Conference about the plans of NATO to deploy medium-range missiles in Western Europe. In view of the situation, the Governments and the socio-political forces of all countries, including women needed to concentrate on strengthening peace, confirming the principles of peaceful coexistence among States with different socio-economic systems, halting the destructive arms race and solving the most crucial problem of the times, that of averting the danger of thermonuclear war. The Soviet Union's proposal on measures to reduce the military threat served that goal; those measures were specific and could be implemented given the political will to do so.

40. Those who had spoken about items 80 and 83 of the agenda, including representatives of those delegations which had not supported the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women, had had to recognize that the life and status of women was intricately linked with socio-political phenomena and processes both within their countries and at the international level. The World Conference had not failed to express its solidarity with the peoples of South Africa and Namibia, whose difficult situation was aggravated by the criminal policy of apartheid. It had expressed its anger and indignation about Israel's actions in the occupied Arab territories and against the Arab people of Palestine. The documents of the World Conference cited reliable instances of the pernicious influence of that policy on the situation of women. Her delegation shared the concern and indignation of the participants at the Conference, expressed in resolutions 18, 19 and 46, about the gross and mass violations of human rights by the military Fascist dictatorships in Chile, El Salvador and Bolivia.

41. Like all the socialist countries which consistently and unswervingly supported the struggle of peoples for their national liberation, the Ukrainian SSR unconditionally supported those decisions of the Conference and hoped that they would be approved in the resolutions of the General Assembly.

42. Her delegation also hoped that the draft declaration on the participation of women in strengthening international peace and security and in the struggle against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression and all

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(Mrs. Litvinova, Ukrainian SSR)

forms of foreign domination, proposed by the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, would be adopted at the current session. It believed that the process of the public mobilization of women should extend equally to all three basic goals of the Decade for Women, equality, development and peace, and should also take into account questions of employment, education and health. Her delegation hoped that an ever-increasing number of States would become involved in implementing the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade.

43. Mrs. HUSSAIN (Pakistan) said that the efforts of mankind to achieve a just and equitable social order for men and women had been reflected in the designation of 1975 by the United Nations as International Women's Year, the establishment of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and adoption of several resolutions by the General Assembly pertaining to the rights of women.

44. The comprehensive appraisal of the progress achieved in the advancement of women towards equality, development and peace that emerged from the World Conference in Copenhagen were a tribute to the painstaking efforts of the United Nations Secretariat and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mrs. Lucile Mair, and to the many thousands of women and non-governmental organizations from all the Member States of the United Nations that had undertaken studies, prepared background papers and discussed problems at that Conference. Pakistan pledged its wholehearted support for the realization of further progress.

45. Although the religion of Islam made women equal participants in the Islamic social order, distortions in tradition and customs had kept Islamic womanhood enslaved. However, with the disappearance of the vestiges of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, the suppressed, impoverished and downtrodden peoples of the world were awakening and Islamic women could only be an important beneficiary of the march of mankind towards a just and equitable world order.

46. Pakistan was endeavouring, within its limited resources, to improve the condition of women. Efforts had been made to involve women in various spheres of national life and provide equality of opportunity for women, mainly through constitutional provisions and legislative action. Now, however, the emphasis was being shifted to operational and institutional measures for the advancement of women. Pakistan had created a women's division in 1979, which had sponsored a national programme consisting of 28 projects specially designed to provide women with training in skill development, nutrition, health education, adult education and employment. In the current financial year, 40 million rupees had been allocated to the women's division to expand those programmes to include day-care centres, working women's hostels and training institutes. The women's division had held three national conferences in an attempt to create consciousness of women's issues and problems and to encourage the exchange of ideas.

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(Mrs. Hussain, Pakistan)

47. Pakistan had taken special measures to improve the condition of rural women. In order to develop and involve women in programmes which would improve the quality of their family life, increase family income and provide community-oriented health facilities, a federal programme had been launched in 1970. It included the establishment of 1,472 industrial homes in various areas of the country to provide employment to women. Seventy-seven socio-economic centres for women had also been functioning as demonstration centres in the country. They provided training to women in the production of marketable handicraft items, and a project to train instructors in carpet-weaving and other rural crafts had been set up as a joint venture of the International Labour Organisation and the Government of Pakistan.

48. The National Education Policy of Pakistan aimed at achieving universal enrolment of girls at the elementary level by 1992. During the next five years, about 30,000 female teachers would be recruited for primary schools, 5,000 community schools would be established, enrolment of girls at the secondary level would be increased from 400,000 to 650,000, and eighteen new vocational institutes would be set up.

49. In the field of health care, a national basic services unit had been established to undertake important tasks such as policy implementation, operational research and communication, and a project was being designed to educate 500,000 village women. In addition, a national population planning programme had been designed as an integral part of the over-all development strategy to reduce the crude birth rate from an estimated level of 50 per 1,000 to 40 per 1,000.

50. In Pakistan, women enjoyed political rights on equal terms with men. Women were eligible to stand for election to the senate, national assembly, provincial assembly and local council. Recently, 450 women councillors had been elected to the local councils.

51. Despite all those laudable efforts, much ground remained to be covered to meet even the limited objectives of an equitable distribution of skills, knowledge and facilities among men and women. Therefore, the women's division planned to set up a network of multi-purpose women's centres to impart training and knowledge to women and encourage them to engage in income-generating activities. Simple technology and innovative tools were being devised to enable women to reduce time consumed in household chores. Village-level women's committees had been proposed for settling disputes, motivating work and creating awareness of rights and duties among women. The approach of the Government of Pakistan was to consider women as citizens, equal to men, who must play a vital role as agents of change and contribute significantly to the struggle for equitable economic development and the establishment of a just and democratic social order in the spirit of Islam.

52. She drew the Committee's attention to General Assembly resolution 34/161, which requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to "make recommendations concerning measures which could be undertaken by Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to assist women refugees, taking into account the requirements of the regions concerned". While expressing her solidarity with the women refugees of Palestine, she reminded

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(Mrs. Hussain, Pakistan)

the Committee that there were over one million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, more than half of them women and children. It was the duty of the community of nations to ensure that suitable conditions of peace and security were established for the people of Afghanistan which would allow the refugees to return in dignity to their motherland.

53. Mrs. SOW (Guinea) said that the rights enjoyed by women in Guinean society were an irreversible gain which had resulted from their participation in the struggle against colonial domination. The proclamation of 9 February as Women's Day in Guinea in memory of the martyrs of colonialism was a testimony to the decisive participation of women in the struggle for liberation.

54. Guinean women were organized from the village to the national level; 19,458 elected women presided, along with men, over the destiny of the nation. The interests and health of mother and child were protected in labour legislation which provided 14 weeks of maternity leave without suspension of contract. Marriage was also under the control of the State, which required civil marriage in the presence of the President of the Women's Committee of the village or neighbourhood. Exorbitant dowries had been reduced to a token amount and forced marriage had been abolished. Laws prohibiting polygamy and governing divorce tended towards stabilizing the family as the basic unit of society. However, because of the African mentality, which accorded a major role to the child and the continuation of the line, one deviation from monogamy had been provided for, namely, in case of the medically recognized sterility of the wife. Where polygamy had been practised before the promulgation of the law, the status quo had been maintained. In the case of divorce, the custody of the children was assured by the mother until they were seven years of age.

55. The rights of women in Guinean society were guaranteed and protected in accordance with a political philosophy which postulated the principles of fairness and solidarity as a basis for the political and moral unity of the nation. Thus, girls and boys were offered the same opportunities for education, which was co-educational, free and compulsory until the baccalaureate.

56. Because of traditional prejudices and colonialism, the majority of women had not been able to attend school. To correct that problem, the revolutionary State had created "centres de promotion féminine" (women's advancement centres). Women also participated in productivity through handicrafts, cottage industries and market-gardening. In rural areas, where women comprised 90 per cent of the labour force, communal farms offered new sources of employment for women.

57. The number of salaried women had increased considerably since the colonial period. They now had access to all the trades, and were no longer condemned to be secretaries, teachers, midwives or nurses. Like many other States, Guinea had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but efforts still had to be made to comply with the Plans of Action of Mexico and Copenhagen. To that end, Guinea proposed to implement several projects.

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(Mrs. Sow, Guinea)

58. The Guinean woman was involved, together with other women of the world, especially those of South Africa, Namibia and Palestine, in the fight for individual dignity and against tyranny. Guinean women maintained cordial relations with women's organizations of many countries. Guinea welcomed the creation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and hoped, through the Institute, to develop a new dynamic co-operation with all regional and national organizations.

59. Mrs. GERÉB (Hungary) said that the proclamation of International Women's Year and the Decade for Women was a very significant contribution of the United Nations to the cause of social justice and progress and to the achievement of the objectives laid down in the Charter. Women accounted for more than half of the world's population and attention to their problems and the search for solutions were therefore of concern to mankind as a whole. In that connexion, the most important achievement of the First Half of the Decade was the recognition that the equality of women could not be achieved in isolation from the development of society as a whole. Women constituted an enormous underutilized resource and should be more involved in the political, economic, social and cultural development of society.

60. Her delegation hoped that the decisions adopted at the Copenhagen Conference would be unanimously approved by the General Assembly at its current session. The Conference had taken a firm stand regarding the strengthening of international peace and security, the continuation of détente and the halting of the arms race, recognizing that those factors were closely related to, and interacted with, social progress and the elimination of discrimination and inequality. It was clear that the negative tendencies emerging in international relations threatening peace and security affected women as mothers and wives most severely. That was precisely why it was indispensable for women and their organizations to take a more active part in the struggle for the consolidation of international peace and security, for the peaceful co-existence of States with different social systems and for the development of political, economic, social and cultural relations among States.

61. At Copenhagen, Member States had expressed themselves in favour of the right of peoples to self-determination, the final liquidation of the remnants of the colonial system, the frustration of neo-colonialist aspirations and the elimination of racial discrimination and apartheid. The decisions taken on those issues had been fully justified as a basic precondition for the assertion of human rights, without which the attainment of women's equality was an illusion.

62. The Conference, motivated by concern for the situation of women in developing countries, had called for the establishment of a new international economic order involving, inter alia, a democratic restructuring of international economic relations, a reshaping of inter-State economic relations on the basis of mutual benefits and equality, an end to international exploitation and the assertion of national sovereignty over natural resources.

63. The goal of equality of women and men could not be achieved overnight. It was

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(Mrs. Geréb, Hungary)

not easy to challenge traditions and customs that went back hundreds and often thousands of years. Furthermore, the prospects were contingent on the content and the direction of economic and social development in individual countries. Any tendency to legalize the exploitation of the majority of the population by the minority, namely the capitalist way, obviously could not contribute to substantive progress in the field of women's equality. The socialist system, even if it had not yet solved all problems, had over the space of a few decades done much more for women's equality than the capitalist system had ever been able or would ever be able to accomplish.

64. The Programme adopted at the Conference was a realistic one and provided a good basis for both international organizations and Governments in drawing up plans of action, with the participation of mass organizations such as trade unions, youth movements and, of course, women's organizations, for the achievement of the objectives adopted.

65. Her delegation believed that the practical exercise of the right to work and the creation of the necessary conditions and equal opportunities for women in the labour force constituted a basic condition for the equality of women. Closely related to that was the implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work. Her delegation was aware of the complex problems of working women and of the fact that they could not fully exercise their rights without health care, cultural amenities, education facilities and so on.

66. In that connexion, she wished to draw attention first to the danger, particularly for women, arising from the mounting rate of unemployment in the developed capitalist countries. Secondly, the burdens arising out of the dual role of women as workers and mothers should be eased through action in the fields of family planning, family welfare, care of mothers, family allowances and so on. Thirdly, women's involvement in public affairs essentially meant participation of masses of women and their representatives in the making and carrying out of decisions in all matters of society. That meant that a higher proportion of women must be present in decision-making bodies. Fourthly, strenuous efforts were needed to combat anachronistic ideas and prejudices held by men and women, which had an adverse effect on the exercise of equal rights by women. Finally, the creation of legal safeguards in Member States for women's equality was an indispensable precondition for the attainment of the objectives of the Decade because those safeguards provided the basis for continued efforts to translate women's equality into practice.

67. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions on agenda items 80 and 83 should be Wednesday, 22 October at 6 p.m.

68. It was so decided.

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AGENDA ITEM 67: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/35/L.3, A/C.3/35/L.8/Rev.1 and A/C.3/35/L.10)

AGENDA ITEM 74: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/C.3/35/L.7 and A/C.3/35/L.13)
- (b) FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
- (c) STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (A/C.3/35/L.4 and A/C.3/35/L.9)
- (d) STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE SUPPRESSION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF APARTHEID (A/C.3/35/L.5)

AGENDA ITEM 66: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (continued) (A/C.3/35/L.11)

AGENDA ITEM 75: IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (continued) (A/C.3/35/L.6 and A/C.3/35/L.12)

69. Mrs. SANTANDER-DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Afghanistan, Mali, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Sao Tome and Principe had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.5. Jordan and Yemen had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.7.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.