



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 6.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/C.3/35/Add.19; A/35/286; A/C.3/35/7)

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AGENDA ITEM 83: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/35/428)

1. Mr. MBENNA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that document A/CONF.94/35 had the support of his delegation as a modest, but realistic, approach to ways of implementing the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women. His country had taken the Decade very seriously; it was using administrative and legislative machinery to guarantee and promote the rights and obligations of women. He wished only to emphasize that the promotion and guarantee of women's rights in all spheres of national life had always been part and parcel of over-all national efforts to eradicate injustices and irregularities derived from the three major enemies of mankind: disease, ignorance and poverty.
2. The problem of his and the other poor developing countries was that what they gave did not correspond to what they received in international trade. For that reason, his delegation supported fully the efforts to establish a new international economic order. The status of women, particularly in developing countries, would not change significantly if the world continued to operate on archaic structures which had no contribution to make to the majority of mankind.
3. He was happy to note that the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade took into consideration the plight of women refugees from Namibia, the women of South Africa, and Palestinian women. Likewise he considered that the Voluntary Fund for the Decade, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which his country had already signed, represented meaningful international efforts to enhance equality and development for women. His delegation would make a token contribution of TSh 15,000 to the Voluntary Fund at the forthcoming pledging conference on 6 November 1980.
4. Mr. HALFHUID (Suriname) expressed condolences to the delegation of Algeria for the loss of life and property caused by the earthquake which had struck Al Asnam. Turning to the items under consideration, he expressed his conviction that the abolition of the apartheid system and the exercise of the right of self-

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(Mr. Halfhuid, Suriname)

determination by the Palestinian people were prerequisites without which the women living under the apartheid system and in the occupied territories of Palestine could not achieve equality with men. Likewise, he was of the opinion that colonialism, foreign occupation and domination, and the economic underdevelopment which affected 800 million people, were serious obstacles to achieving equality of the sexes.

5. His Government was considering the possibility of acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as soon as possible. Although many women currently participated in all spheres of life in his country, remnants of inequality between the sexes persisted. In the past, a woman's reproductive function and role in the family had been considered an impediment to equal participation in the social process. Currently, education was free of any restrictions based on sex, and the Government was creating employment opportunities for women on an equal footing with men. Adequate health care was available for expectant mothers, while a programme of day-care centres was well under way. A review of legislation was currently being carried out to guarantee or promote equality of rights between men and women. His Government was committed to reaching, within the second half of the Decade, the ultimate goals of the Decade. The fact that for the first time in his nation's history two women had been appointed as members of the Council of Ministers augured well for the future progress of women in his country.

6. Ms. DE PADUA (Portugal) expressed the belief that the unequal situation in which women currently found themselves was not only a question of economic development, from which men and children, as well as women, stood to benefit. Among the causes of discrimination against women that still existed in both the developed and developing worlds were strong cultural factors, traditions, and an unequal and unfair division of work in society; they had to be faced together with the political or economic factors.

7. In her opinion, the Programme of Action adopted at the Copenhagen Conference had its flaws, but it also contained many positive measures. Her country had actively participated in drafting it, and had made a number of suggestions that had won general acceptance. Despite having voted in favour of the Programme, it had expressed reservations on some paragraphs, namely: paragraph 5, which contained general political elements that it did not consider relevant to the question under discussion in Copenhagen; paragraphs 76 to 82, which contained concepts not specifically concerning women; paragraph 87, which presupposed Government involvement in decision-making in the mass media, which was contrary to the concept of a free press; and paragraph 243, because one could not call on others to do what one had not done oneself.

8. Its national contribution to the World Conference, contained in document A/CONF.94/NR/22, described a family planning project currently under way in her country as part of the activities of the Decade. Another priority area in her country involving women was the changing of attitudes on sex roles. Experience had shown that changes in legislation, important as they might be, were not enough, and her Government, through its competent body, the Commission on the Status of Women, was implementing an information and education project aimed at developing attitudes of equality between the sexes. Her Government was also well

(Ms. De Padua, Portugal)

aware of the social value of motherhood and had recently adopted measures to assist women in that role.

9. With respect to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, she said that the number of ratifications in the first year was impressive. Her country had been among the first eight to ratify the Convention, which had been strongly supported by all its political parties and by public opinion. She did not expect that it would solve the problems concerning the situation of women, which, in her opinion, went beyond the mere enactment of legislation. However, she considered the Convention to be an important step towards the future of women in the world, and appealed to other countries seriously to consider the possibility of ratifying it.

10. Miss NAGA (Egypt) said that her country attached great importance to the role of women in social progress. Bearing in mind that women formed half the world population, they could not remain passive to the problems of development and social progress, allowing men to bear the burden alone. Since the Egyptian revolution of July 1952, women had been granted many rights, in addition to those guaranteed by Islam. According to the laws of her country, there was no discrimination on the basis of sex, origin, language, religion or doctrine, and the State guaranteed that women could reconcile their duty to the family and their duty to society. Women were participating in both national and local politics. Where education was concerned, 46 per cent, in other words, almost half the total number of students, were women. Women, particularly pregnant women, received special health care, and rural health centres had been established.

11. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference at Copenhagen for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women was positive and effective. Despite some of the criticism levelled at the Conference, no one could deny that the Programme contained pragmatic measures based on the needs of women in all parts of the world and at every level. The Programme merited the support of all Governments so that its contents could be applied nationally, regionally and internationally.

12. In any discussion of the participation of women in development, the sufferings of the women of South Africa and their Palestinian sisters in the occupied territories could not be passed over; the Egyptian delegation was therefore gratified that reference had been made in the Copenhagen Programme of Action to assistance to women in those regions. Egypt profoundly believed that the United Nations had an important role to play in that sphere, given the importance of its task of consolidating peace throughout the world.

13. It was for that reason that Egypt believed that it was necessary to reorganize the machinery and bodies dealing with the problems of women in the United Nations, adapting them to the economic, social, and political circumstances at present prevailing in the world, which were very different from those that had operated twenty years earlier. It was also necessary to have a close relationship between the United Nations bodies that dealt with problems of women and other bodies concerned with economic and social development, transfer of technology and

(Miss Naga, Egypt)

other such matters, so that women could participate fully and effectively in comprehensive and integrated development. Accordingly, the appointment of a liaison officer at the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna had the Egyptian delegation's full support.

14. As a demonstration of its special interest in the role of women and in keeping with the principles deriving therefrom, Egypt had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the course of the Copenhagen Conference, and hoped that it would enter into force as soon as possible.

15. Mr. OUSMANE (Central African Republic) said that agenda items 80 and 83 concerned the injustice and discrimination to which women continued to be subjected in all fields, despite the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and other pertinent provisions adopted during international conferences which recognized their equality with men. Considered and treated as inferior to those who denied them equality with men, women were frequently the victims of ill-treatment and degrading traffic and exploitation. It was that which had led the international community to convene in Mexico City, in 1975, a World Conference at which had been adopted a Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), whose principles and objectives the Government of the Central African Republic shared as they were intended to ensure the full and effective participation of women in economic, social and political life.

16. The delegation of the Central African Republic believed that the participation of women in the development of friendly relations and co-operation among States would help to eliminate racism, apartheid, and foreign occupation, domination and oppression. Accordingly, it had welcomed the organization of the international seminar on women and apartheid held in Helsinki from 19 to 21 May 1980. It would be very desirable if the recommendations adopted on that occasion were applied by the Members of the United Nations.

17. The Conference at Copenhagen, held in July 1980, midway in the United Nations Decade for Women, had examined and evaluated the progress made in the first half of the Decade and found that the majority of Governments had officially accepted the integration of women in development as an objective of the Plan of Action of the Conference in Mexico City. As far as the Central African Republic was concerned, the implementation of the Plan had encountered no difficulty. Central African women were already closely associated with and integrated into economic, social, political and cultural activity. They enjoyed without discrimination the same advantages as men and many of them were members of the administrative, liberal and technical professions. Because of the work they did in the home, they benefited from particularly advantageous health measures and in most of the rural areas of the country they could count on the necessary maternity care.

18. In order to combat illiteracy, special emphasis had been placed on education for girls and on the establishment of social, cultural and educational services in rural population centres, including various schools for handicrafts and technical training, with advice and assistance from various United Nations bodies. In addition, legislative measures had been adopted to prevent pressure being applied to young female students to abandon their studies.

(Mr. Ousmane, Central African Republic)

19. Yet, despite the positive attitude of Governments and of the international community, many difficulties had prevented the attainment of the objectives of the Plan of Action of the Mexico City Conference, and therefore the Conference at Copenhagen had adopted a Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women to foster the adoption of measures which would integrate women into all aspects of development programmes, particularly in the employment, health and education sectors, and would also guarantee their participation in political decision-making and in activities on behalf of international co-operation with a view to the strengthening of peace. In that regard, the fact that 81 Governments had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women gave good grounds for hoping that the objectives and strategies of the World Plan of Action adopted in Mexico City would be fully realized.

20. Mrs. SEMICHI (Algeria) said that the year 1980, halfway through the United Nations Decade for Women, had been marked by the important occasion of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Copenhagen. That meeting had provided an opportunity to assess the impetus given by the Mexico Conference to a world initiative seeking to overcome the errors of the past and to give women the authentic role to which they were entitled in modern society. In that connexion, it was to be expected that the United Nations, in defining the principal objectives of the Decade - Equality, Development and Peace - would adopt a new approach to the problem, reflected in a number of specific recommendations on measures to be applied at the national and international levels. Those measures had been stressed in the World Plan of Action adopted in Mexico City in 1975 and, in more specific fashion, in the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade adopted a few months earlier by the World Conference at Copenhagen.

21. Undoubtedly, the hopes of the Decade had been checked by a decline in the international effort on behalf of the effective integration of women. It was also true that, although existing economic, social and cultural barriers, in the countries of the third world especially directly impeded the advancement of women, the lack of progress was attributable to the fact that each of those countries was confronted with urgent and grave problems that were simply the reflection of the crisis through which mankind was passing at a truly crucial juncture in world events. From that very crisis had arisen the almost universal aspiration for the establishment of a new international economic order, which constituted the best hope for the integration of women into a system based hitherto on unjust social, economic and political foundations.

22. In adopting the Programme of Action, the Copenhagen World Conference had made it clear that the fight against inequality between men and women was as complex as the fight against under-development, and consequently involved the need for structural reforms in existing international relations. Equality between men and women was based on the essential premise of establishing an order designed to remove the great scourges of imperialism, colonization, neo-colonialism, zionism, racial discrimination and apartheid. The international community, by approving the proclamation of the Decade, was really dealing with the three great aims of equality, development and peace.

(Mrs. Semichi, Algeria)

23. Her delegation accordingly supported the Programme of Action agreed on by the Conference, which was to be submitted to the General Assembly for adoption at the current session. The implementation of the Programme internationally would help to improve the living conditions of women everywhere in the world, but in particular the living conditions of women in southern Africa and Palestinian women; they undoubtedly needed special attention in view of the political restrictions they were suffering, in common with the peoples to which they belonged.

24. Her delegation had studied with interest the Secretary-General's report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/35/428), and was gratified that the Convention, adopted little more than a year earlier, had been signed by a large number of countries and ratified by several.

25. Mrs. FLOREZ PRIDA (Cuba) said that it was well known that the Copenhagen Conference reflected the mandate embodied in General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX), of 15 December 1975. In the resolution the Assembly had endorsed the Programme of Action and the proposals adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico in 1975, and decided to conduct periodic reviews and evaluations of the progress made in implementing the objectives of the Decade: equality, development and peace. With the Copenhagen World Conference having been convened in pursuance of that resolution and the Programme of Action and relevant resolutions adopted, the Committee was working to ensure that the General Assembly took a decision in line with the results of the Copenhagen Conference.

26. She considered that the work done in Copenhagen by the vast majority of delegations had been constructive and thoughtful, that the Programme of Action adopted was most constructive, and that the resolutions adopted dealt with and responded to the crucial problems of the times. Although some discordant voices had made themselves heard, it was the anachronistic tone of those voices, their intransigence, the way they ignored the wishes of the majority and their inability to face facts that had struck a false note in the concert of nations at Copenhagen and was continuing to do so in the General Assembly.

27. Her delegation would have welcomed the achievement of consensus in Copenhagen, and a successful outcome of the lengthy negotiation. That that had not been the case was due solely to those who had wanted the spirit of compromise to be manifested unilaterally, those who had wanted it to be the vast majority which yielded, while those few countries claimed the right to have the last word in an attempt to make their wishes prevail.

28. It had been said that what certain countries wanted was that the Conference should not be politicized. Her delegation did not understand what that meant. What it was very clear about was that the Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women had no option but to reflect, study and draw conclusions about all the problems that were affecting women throughout the world. What that Conference could not have done was to act as if women were divorced from the problems of

(Mrs. Florez Prida, Cuba)

their countries and their times, unaware of the opposition between war and peace, non-participants in the efforts to establish the new international economic order, insensible to the tragedy of Palestinian women, heedless of the sufferings of the women of South Africa and Namibia, and ignorant of the sufferings of refugees, migrant workers, women living under colonial oppression and women who were fighting at the side of their own peoples to conquer undevelopment and economic dependence.

29. Those who had spoken in Copenhagen about frustration, discouragement, disappointment and wasted time, and what had been termed "attempts to politicize the Conference" were forgetting, deliberately or otherwise, that to tackle the problems of contemporary women in the context of existing realities was just as political as to approach the question from the viewpoint of women divorced from the economic, political and social reality of the countries in which they lived. Both approaches were political, but undoubtedly the best policy was to face the problems and the realities.

30. The Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen was in a continuous line with the Declaration and World Plan of Action adopted at Mexico in 1975. Her delegation hoped that, as some delegations had stated, their abstaining in the vote on the Programme of Action as a whole would not prevent them from applying the recommendations it contained or from striving to improve the status of women in their countries.

31. In recent months, Cuba had made notable progress in the task of ensuring full equality for women both in law and in practice. In the legal field, Cuba had long since proclaimed the equality of women in its Constitution, which made the Family Code a statutory instrument and implied a change in the traditional way of dealing with the problems involving spouses, a change which amounted to equality between men and women, to which other Cuban legislation was also conducive.

32. More recently, the National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba established an Office for Women's and Children's Services. The Federation of Cuban Women included about 94 per cent of the female population over the age of 14 and was a strong force in the country's life. To quote Fidel Castro, Cuban women and their organization had made a revolution within the Revolution. In March 1980 the Federation of Cuban Women had held their Third National Congress, during which they had made a critical and objective analysis of their work programmes and undertaken new tasks, including that of ensuring that all housewives with the necessary ability should be educated up to the ninth grade. Cuba had achieved the goal of abolishing illiteracy for all women capable of learning to read and write almost two decades earlier. Internationally, the Federation of Cuban Women maintained excellent working relations and exchanged experience with the vast majority of women's organizations and groups throughout the world, particularly in developing countries.

33. Her delegation considered that the United Nations system provided excellent opportunities for all States to see that their programmes and the programmes of their agencies played an important part in the second half of the United Nations



(Mrs. Florez Prida, Cuba)

Decade for Women. Cuba had high hopes of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which had its headquarters in the Dominican Republic, a developing country, and trusted that the operational arrangements could be agreed on with the host country without delay. Cuba would indicate in due course the contribution it could make in the form of scholarships and training, but it would certainly be able to grant at least 30 scholarships for training at the university and intermediate technical levels. It offered to make available the knowledge and experience of a number of advisers, teachers and training staff in the preparation of the Institute's plans and objectives.

34. Another of the Committee's responsibilities at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly was to prepare a Declaration on the role of women in the strengthening of international peace and security and in the fight against colonialism, racism, apartheid, occupation and all forms of foreign domination. Her delegation welcomed the statement by the representative of the German Democratic Republic that that delegation was prepared to submit a draft declaration for general consideration. It was hardly necessary to dwell on the growing longing and need for peace, or on the urgency of stopping the arms race and achieving disarmament.

35. The developing countries had achieved some of their aims at Copenhagen, in that the Conference had led to the adoption of a Programme of Action embodying essential objectives and recommendations, and that the resolutions adopted included measures conducive to achieving the goals of the Decade. Her delegation was confident that the General Assembly would endorse the recommendation to convene in 1985 a World Conference to review the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, and would do all it could to ensure that the results of the review were encouraging.

36. Mr. KHALIFA (Sudan) said that the purpose of the Copenhagen Conference had been to assess the progress achieved during the first half of the Decade. The Conference had reaffirmed the objectives of the Decade, which could be achieved only within a just international order. His delegation supported the resolutions adopted by the World Conference and the views it had expressed regarding the need to give humanitarian, political and legal support to South African women and Palestinian women in the occupied territories and outside them. His Government was gratified by the humanitarian appeal made by the UNHCR for increased aid to refugees, a substantial majority of whom were women and children, who had special problems; he pointed out that Sudan had the highest refugee population in Africa.

37. Development required equal participation of women in political, social, economic and cultural life. The economic changes brought about by development had benefited the women of his country. An increasing number of women were participating in political life and holding seats in the National Assembly and in local assemblies, in which by law 20 per cent of the seats were reserved for women. The number of professional women was also increasing. Sudanese women enjoyed full rights in the sphere of development and other social spheres, and complete equality with men. Women, freed from obstacles and prejudice, had duties as well as rights, and both were recognized and guaranteed by law. Women received the same pay as men for equal work. They were likewise entitled to

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(Mr. Khalifa, Sudan)

retirement pensions, annual leave and maternity leave, and to unpaid leave for the purpose of accompanying their husbands on postings abroad without loss of seniority on their return. Female enrolment at all levels of education was rising dramatically.

38. His delegation believed that the important role played by women in all aspects of life deserved recognition and supported the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which it intended to ratify. It also attached importance to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, in which it would soon be participating.

39. Mrs. KARPENKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that her delegation considered that the Copenhagen Conference had achieved its main purpose, namely, to stress the interdependence of the three objectives of equality, development and peace. The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade would require increased efforts at the national, regional and interregional levels if those objectives were to be put into practice.

40. Her delegation held that the Programme of Action was an important step towards guaranteeing real equality and increasing international co-operation based on equality, justice and peace. The long-standing aspirations of women could only be met if there was peace. The strengthening of peace and concord, together with the struggle against foreign intervention, respect for self-determination and independence, the cessation of the arms race in order to consolidate détente, the establishment of the new international economic order and the expansion of co-operation among States were objectives that would encourage the social, economic and cultural development of countries and improve the status of women.

41. Her delegation wished to draw the attention of the international community to the peace proposal submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the General Assembly; the adoption of that proposal would be advantageous to everyone, and particularly to the Programme of Action.

42. In her delegation's view the analysis, in the documents of the Copenhagen Conference, of the roots of inequality, namely, the injustice and repression to which millions of human beings were being subjected, was correct. There could be no talk of eliminating women's inequality while entire peoples were enduring social injustice, poverty, apartheid and racial discrimination. Those phenomena could not be eliminated without first eliminating their causes. The elimination of discrimination against women should occur simultaneously with the economic and social changes required to bring about a better life for everyone, and measures to that end should be taken at all levels, particularly the national level. Her delegation supported the proposals on that subject in the Programme of Action, together with the need for special assistance to be given to South African and Palestinian women and their peoples.

43. Her delegation fully endorsed the resolutions adopted at the World Conference, particularly those relating to the role of women in development, to the strengthening of international peace and security, to the elimination of

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(Mrs. Karpenko, Byelorussian SSR)

colonialism, racism and all forms of foreign domination, to the imposition of sanctions on South Africa, to the condemnation of the régimes of Chile, El Salvador and Bolivia for their violations of human rights, and to the condemnation of aggression against the People's Republic of Angola.

44. The Conference had urged the General Assembly to continue the drafting of a declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression and occupation and all forms of foreign domination. The draft declaration on the subject prepared by the German Democratic Republic provided an excellent basis for that work, and she hoped that it would be adopted.

45. In his message to the Conference, the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, had stated that one of the great achievements of the Soviet people and of socialist peoples was the attainment of true equality of women and men in every aspect of cultural, economic and social life. The state strove to improve working and living conditions for women in order to enable them both to work and adequately to care for their family and children.

46. The Constitution of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic provided for equality of opportunity for men and women in all spheres of life. She could quote some figures to support her statements: women formed 53 per cent of the labour force and 40 per cent of all scientific workers; half of the deputies in the local Soviets were women. A standing committee of the Supreme Soviet was responsible for improving working conditions for women and providing facilities for working mothers and their children. For example, there were schools, nurseries and other establishments to help working women.

47. Byelorussian women had fought side by side with the men for the triumph of the Revolution and they continued to fight for peace, as the highest aspiration of the Byelorussian people was to live in peace and friendship with all peoples. The male and female workers of Byelorussia welcomed the message addressed to the parliamentarians of Europe and the world by the meeting of parliamentarians of the Warsaw Pact countries, held at Minsk in June 1980.

48. At the World Conference, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and it supported the appeal to all States to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible. The Committee should adopt a resolution to that effect.

49. Her delegation had to mention the matter of the overthrown Pol Pot régime: the sorry spectacle of the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by someone who represented no one. It should not be forgotten that the victims of that dreadful régime included hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean women and children.

50. Mrs. AKAMATSU (Japan) said that the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations and journalists in the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women should certainly be noted, because the achievements of the Conference would have been unthinkable without their co-operation and because the successful implementation of the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade depended upon the role they would play.

51. Among the examples of the progress made in Japan since the World Conference in Mexico was the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, many difficulties still remained. Women from all over Japan, including eight members of the Japanese Parliament and about 50 journalists, had gone to Copenhagen to share their experiences with women from other countries and provide informative coverage on the Conference.

52. Among the most important achievements of the Copenhagen Conference was the fact that many countries had signed the Convention, which, as a result, could be expected to enter into force shortly, thus giving an impetus to the solution of the problems of women throughout the world. Also encouraging was the large number of women participating in the Conference. Her delegation considered that the Conference had been well organized, thanks largely to the efforts of the Government of Denmark.

53. Nevertheless, there had been an unfortunate side to the Conference, in that questions concerning women exclusively had not always been dealt with: considerable time had been spent on specific political problems, which had provoked confrontations that had seemed excessive to her delegation. At the same time, Japan recognized that political debates were difficult to avoid, given the situation of women in South Africa and Palestine, who were denied their basic rights.

54. Immediately following the World Conference, her Government, pursuant to the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade, had arranged to convene national and regional conferences for the purpose of informing the Japanese people of the results of the Conference. An effort was also being made to incorporate the Programme of Action in Japan's national policy and to create the conditions necessary for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

55. Her Government was very interested in activities related to women, in particular the improvement of health, nutrition and other social services, which were essential to the full participation of women in development activities. The monitoring and review of the implementation of the Programme of Action were very important in national and international plans. In that connexion, she stressed the important role of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

56. As a contributor to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, her Government felt that a way should be found to involve Governments more directly in the Fund's activities. In another connexion, she said that her Government intended to make an appropriate contribution to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

(Mrs. Akamatsu, Japan)

57. Her Government favoured the holding of another world conference on the question of women in 1985 in order to review and appraise the achievements of the Decade. Her delegation hoped that due account would be taken of the comments it had made and that the conference would yield results that could be supported by all regions, countries and organizations.

58. Mrs. MOUTOU-DAGRAÇA (Gabon) recalled that on the opening day of the Copenhagen Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had stated that the strengths and energy of women needed to be utilized in the collective domain if universally accepted goals were to be attained. Women should be integrated in development in a spirit of equality. Her Government realized that smooth development was possible only through the involvement of all citizens of both sexes, and the President of the Gabonese Republic had stated that the essential aspect of the advancement of women was their political advancement. The Gabonese Ministry for Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women, headed by a woman, reflected that constant concern with the integration of women.

59. In the field of education, the Gabonese Constitution guaranteed free education and training at all levels to all children, without distinction as to sex, which was consistent with the provisions of article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It was her opinion that the co-educational system would bring about the necessary changes in mentality that would contribute to the creation and development of a new breed of men and women and a new prejudice-free society.

60. With respect to employment, Gabonese legislation recognized the right of women to receive the same pay as men for work of equal value, as provided in article 11 of the Convention. With regard to public health, her Government had designed a broad primary health care programme which gave priority to women and children, in accordance with the provisions of article 12 of the Convention.

61. As to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade, Gabon, as one of the sponsors of the Fund-related resolutions contained in document A/CONF.94/C.2/L.53, could only appeal to the international community to contribute more generously so as to ensure that the many projects before the Fund were executed. With respect to resolution A/CONF.94/C.2/L.57 on the strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, her delegation welcomed the fact that the international community was helping the Institute to function properly.

62. Her delegation had been greatly disappointed to see the Copenhagen Conference used for purely political purposes. In any event, however, it was firmly convinced that the Conference had been a significant international meeting on the question of women. Although the Programme of Action had not met with the general agreement that could have led all States to subscribe to it, adopt it unanimously and apply it in national and international plans, the specific measures adopted since the Mexico Conference retained their full value and should encourage Governments to redouble their efforts to attain a satisfactory result by the end of the Decade.

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63. Mrs. GUELMAN (Uruguay) said that the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen and, in particular, the principles and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, and accordingly of the World Conference, were of major importance. The principles of equality, development and peace should undoubtedly be the basis for the understanding and proper implementation of the Programme. Uruguay fully supported the objective of not only de jure equality, but also de facto equality for women. To that end, it wished to offer its experience as a pioneer in the field of equal rights and equal opportunity for all its inhabitants. Uruguayan legislation was based on the thesis of the Uruguayan philosopher, Vaz Ferreira, known as the "theory of compensatory feminism". In other words, the treatment accorded to women in Uruguay not only placed them on an equal footing with men, but also gave them special protection in order to compensate for the major responsibilities assigned to them by society. Accordingly, Uruguayan positive law and the actual situation in the country went beyond the very goals laid down in the Programme of Action.

64. Uruguayan legislation provided for special periods of maternity leave, granting a woman not only a three-month leave of absence but also the option of working only half a day as long as she was feeding the baby. With regard to civil rights, Uruguayan law had made both spouses jointly responsible for the care and education of their children; in addition it gave wives the right to dissolve the matrimonial bonds of their own volition, the will of the wife alone being sufficient cause for divorce. In the light of those circumstances, Uruguay offered its collaboration, assistance and experience to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, whose headquarters it had been decided to set up in Santo Domingo.

65. Uruguay fully endorsed the concept of development contained in the Programme of Action, on the understanding that development involved not only economic aspects but social, cultural and political aspects as well. As a developing country, Uruguay needed real growth for its economy in order to consolidate the progress achieved in the social and cultural fields, and considered that the international community should make every effort to remove the obstacles to the economic growth of developing countries. With regard to the objective of peace, there was no doubt that there could be no development without peace and stability, and women could and should play a fundamental part in the attainment of that objective as the natural instrument of peace and harmony. Within the family, women must fulfil their fundamental role of shaping tomorrow's generations, the future rulers who would in the final instance be called upon to strive for peace and security in the world.

66. Her delegation regretted the failure to achieve a consensus, which had made it necessary to adopt the Programme of Action by voting, and deplored the elements of a political nature which had interfered with the work of the World Conference, whose sole objective should have been to contribute to the achievement of equality, development and peace among human beings. Her delegation reaffirmed its reservations regarding paragraph 5 and its rejection of various resolutions of highly political content, the subjects of which were being studied in the appropriate United Nations bodies.

67. Mr. ROME (Israel) said that in its Declaration of Independence of 1948, Israel had proclaimed the social and political equality of all its citizens without any distinction whatever based on sex, race or belief. Subsequently, in 1951, the Israeli Parliament had approved the Equal Rights for Women Act, invalidating all earlier laws which might have been discriminatory. Women were able to work in every sector and ever-increasing numbers of them were to be found in positions of responsibility in professional and academic circles. Even the office of Prime Minister had been held by a woman.

68. If the number of women participating in public life in Israel was not greater, it was not due to any legal restriction but to their family duties, which made it difficult for them to take employment outside the home. Taking that fact into account, Israel had set up a network of day-care centres where children from the age of 6 months and up could remain for between eight and twelve hours a day to enable their mothers to work outside the home. In the sphere of education, Israel had established special literacy projects for women who had not had the opportunity to attend school before emigrating. There had likewise been spectacular progress in the sphere of health. Infant mortality had drastically diminished, because 97 per cent of women had their babies in hospitals. Life expectancy had risen from 53 to 72 years in the past 30 years, and special hygiene courses had been introduced on television. In the sphere of education, 46.5 per cent of the students had been female in the 1978-1979 school year. As part of its efforts to achieve total equality, Israel had naturally signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

69. Israel regretted that part of the Copenhagen Conference, as had been the case five years earlier in Mexico, had been given up to political discussions alien to the subject, during which it had even been declared that zionism was a form of racism and as a result of which it had not been possible to adopt the Programme of Action by consensus. There had been talk of women and children being detained in Israel, where as in fact there was not one child under detention; only 16 women were under detention, and they had been charged with serious offences. In the three years since the Six-Day War and the transfer of Arab territories to Israel, the living conditions of the inhabitants of those territories had improved substantially and it was women who had benefited most, as they had been freed from tasks which they had formerly performed as beasts of burden. In the sphere of education, 42 per cent of the young people attended school and, in the public health area, the number of births in hospitals had risen from 7.5 per cent to 35 per cent. There had also been an increase in the number of clinics for mothers and children and general clinics. As to politics, Israel had for the first time given the women of Judea and Samaria the right to vote in certain municipal elections. Mention should also be made of the establishment of a training centre on Mount Carmel with seminars on community development, public health and nutrition, among other subjects, organized with the aim of enabling the participants to teach other women what they had learnt, thus producing a multiplier effect.

70. Israel had not been able to accept the Programme of Action because of the aforementioned tendentious provisions, but it did approve of the non-controversial

(Mr. Rome, Israel)

portions of the Programme and had for some time been acting in conformity with the Programme's guidelines on employment, health, legislation, education and so on. In conclusion, his delegation urged all other delegations not to yield to the temptation of allowing their attention to be diverted to subjects under discussion in other bodies.

71. Mr. ARMALI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was lamentable to have to listen to the representative of the Zionist entity delivering an apologia for the occupation of the Arab territories. The figures he had given were false and were given the lie every year by the reports of the competent international organizations: reference had been made to the excellent health conditions prevailing in the occupied territories, whereas WHO, at its annual meeting in Geneva in 1979, had adopted a resolution condemning the Israeli authorities for the public health policies applied in the occupied Arab territories. Listening to the aforementioned representative one would think that the benefits of the occupation were such that the only solution for countries suffering from social and economic problems would be to demand immediate occupation by the Zionists.

72. But even if the figures provided by the representative of the Zionist entity were correct, the only aspirations of the men and women of Palestine were liberty and their right to self-determination and independence, the end of the occupation and the end of zionism.

73. He wondered how the Zionist delegate could possibly speak in those terms when only a few hours previously 10 Israeli aircraft had attacked a refugee camp in southern Lebanon, leaving 30 civilians dead and large numbers of wounded. He had also been cynical enough to refer to the 1976 municipal elections, which had been won by a number of Arab mayors, some of whom had been mutilated by Zionist terrorism and others confined to the cities which they administered.

74. The international community did not wish to go on listening to the absurdities put forward by the Zionist delegates. The definitive remedy to that intolerable state of affairs was to expel the Zionist entity from the Organization.

75. Mr. HAMOUD (Iraq), said that, in view of the lateness of the hour, he would postpone his exercise of the right of reply until the following day.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.