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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 57th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOBHY (Egypt)  
later: Mr. JAIN (India)  
later: Mr. SOBHY (Egypt)

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The meeting was called to order at 6.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/34/357, 542; A/C.3/34/L.42, L.52)

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1. Mr. BEKELE (Ethiopia) said that in the previous five years Revolutionary Ethiopia had paid considerable attention to the question of women and United Nations activities related to them. Ethiopian women had realized that the dual oppression of feudalism and sexism under which they had suffered for centuries would have to be replaced by a democratic society in which peace, equality and prosperity prevailed. To that end they had organized themselves at three levels. The first level of organization was the peasant associations in rural areas and the "Kebele", or neighbourhood organizations, in the urban centres. The more than 27,000 peasant associations with over 7 million members enabled the peasants to exercise far-reaching judicial and administrative power, with the participation and, in some cases, the leadership of women. The same degree of power and influence was also exercised by urban women in the "Kebele" organizations in the cities. The participation of both in the planning and implementation of economic and social development projects had been ensured by the recent establishment of a central planning authority in which peasant and "Kebele" associations were represented at all levels.

2. At the second level of organization, women members of the peasant associations and the "Kebele" organizations had formed committees of women's affairs, distinct from but parallel to the mass organizations, which ensured that women enjoyed all of the privileges, ranging from leadership to full participation, to which their membership in the mass organizations entitled them. The third level of women's organizations was at the provincial and city-wide level; those organizations were working towards the creation of the fourth and final level of organization: the All-Ethiopian Women's Organization.

(Mr. Bekele, Ethiopia)

3. His country's provisional military Government encouraged and supported women in their efforts to organize and enthusiastically put into effect their various demands. A week-long seminar had been held, prior to International Women's Day on 8 March 1979, which had led to the adoption of a 14-point resolution calling for, inter alia, the abolition of all unequal laws pertaining to work, marriage, divorce and retirement, and the abolition of all customary practices that placed women at an unequal and disadvantageous position.

4. His delegation welcomed the statement by the Secretary-General of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women on the preparations for the Conference and believed that she should be supported in her efforts to ensure the success of the Conference, particularly her requests with regard to staff and other resource needs. With regard to the proposed transfer of the administrative offices of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, his delegation wished to state that the Voluntary Fund had made it possible for some exciting experimental work involving the development of indigenous skills in building materials to be carried out in his country; the project was of value not only to Ethiopia but potentially to other developing countries as well. His delegation hoped, therefore, that nothing would be done that might adversely affect the progress of the experiment.

5. The women of the developing world faced enormous problems, with back-breaking work in the context of marginal economic existence. Solutions for their problems should be sought on a priority basis and their liberation assured. The means of their liberation, which required a fairer share of the world's resources through the establishment of a new international economic order and the development of better home-keeping techniques should be fully examined and action-oriented proposals should be adopted. The women of the world, who constituted the majority of mankind, had taken up the struggle for the equality of all people. The support that men gave to their struggle for the attainment of equality, development and peace was the insurance that men should take out for their own liberation.

6. Mrs. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that her country attached the greatest importance to the elimination of all types of discrimination against women. Greater participation of women in the development process should be ensured by giving women equal access to education and the professions, equal salaries to those of men and opportunities to engage in significant economic activities. In Benin the Committee of Women's Organizations was a focal point for the struggle for equality and against the continued stereotyping of women's role, which had been reinforced by the Western colonial system; the Committee also served as a forum for the discussion of grievances. Particular attention was paid to the situation of women in rural areas.

7. The establishment of the new international economic order and the completion of the drafting of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were vital steps in accelerating the struggle for equality. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the forthcoming World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and hoped that as many countries as possible would participate actively in the Conference. All necessary funds and resources should be made available for the Conference and assistance should be provided to developing countries to facilitate their participation.

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8. Mrs. de REYES (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the group of Andean countries, said that those countries were fighting the traditional machismo and oppression to which Latin American women had been subjected for centuries and had adopted radical measures to give women the place in society and economic development which they merited. Her Government, for example, had reviewed all existing legislation and had introduced substantial reforms in the labour code and family law so as to guarantee women and men complete equality of rights and duties. To that end civil marriage and divorce had been introduced. Aware that the reform of law alone could not guarantee equality between the sexes, her Government had backed it up by social, educational and informational programmes. School textbooks had been revised to eliminate any discriminatory implications against women. The Institute of Family Welfare had been restructured and pre-school day-care centres had been given particular attention with a view to alleviating the burden on working women. Furthermore, the Government made it possible for professional women to hold management positions in all areas.

9. In Peru, the new Constitution had introduced substantive changes aimed at achieving equality of the sexes. In Venezuela, in addition to law reforms, a Ministry of State on the participation of women in development had been established, a step which ensured the participation of women at the highest levels of political decision-making.

10. The Andean countries had sponsored Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/11 on the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the Dominican Republic, which would organize training programmes for Latin American women and thereby foster development within the region. The Andean group welcomed the progress made in appointing the Board of Trustees and the financial decisions involved. Such measures helped to redress the imbalance in the regional distribution of funds for development projects, in which the Latin American region was at a disadvantage, as indicated by document A/34/612, on projects funded by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. In relation to that same document, the Andean group suggested that a larger share of the budget should be devoted to information and communication projects aimed at promoting the development of women; it was important to combat the distorted image of women as objects presented by advertising. In that connexion, her delegation would welcome some information on the results of the study carried out on the subject by the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

11. The status of women in education still left much to be desired and required immediate measures on the part of the United Nations, especially UNESCO. Document A/34/577 provided a valuable survey of the situation and revealed the educational gap between developing and developed countries. Education was the point of departure for achieving equality of the sexes and of peoples, and the existence of discrimination against women in education was further proof of the need for a new international economic order. Document A/34/471, on the contribution of women to

(Mrs. de Reyes, Colombia)

development and peace, revealed that the number of women participating in the policy-making activities of the United Nations was extremely small; Member States should, as a matter of urgency, increase the number of women holding senior posts in their delegations. Furthermore, the Secretariat of the United Nations should also implement a policy of equality in senior positions.

12. The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Economic and Social Development in Latin America had been held at Caracas in November 1979 for the purpose of evaluating the regional plan of action and adopting documents which would constitute the Latin American contribution to the coming World Conference. The Regional Conference had also made recommendations to Governments in the region, to the Economic Commission for Latin America and directly to women; resolutions had also been adopted on the problems of refugee women and in support of the advancement of women in Nicaragua.

13. With regard to the work of the Preparatory Committee for the coming World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, the Andean group felt that the funding requests made by the Conference secretariat should be supported. In that connexion, she requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to provide a more detailed description of the content and method of work of the Conference. There should be a thorough evaluation of the first half of the Decade and of the results of the Mexico, Baghdad and Caracas Conferences. Short-, medium- and long-term plans for the integration of women in development and for the implementation of the policies to be adopted at the World Conference should be submitted.

14. Mr. Jain (India) took the Chair.

15. Ms. COOPERSMITH (United States of America) said that the United Nations played a catalytic role in enhancing the status of women and should therefore meet its responsibilities of leadership by improving opportunities for the advancement of women to the highest level throughout the United Nations system.

16. With regard to preparations for the forthcoming World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, she said that her country, in reviewing and planning its national activities, in conjunction with the celebration of the Decade and the forthcoming World Conference, had consistently stressed the need for the Conference to focus on the universality of the plight of women. Her Government supported the agenda proposed for the Conference as accurately reflecting concerns recognized by the international community as being universal in nature and impact. The agenda and the relevant documentation which was to be prepared allowed for input from individual regions with regard to their specific concerns. Her Government was therefore opposed to attempts to change the agenda in such a way as to stress the situation of any one specific group of women; the only exception which her Government would recognize was the situation of women suffering under apartheid.

(Ms. Coopersmith, United States)

17. Her Government was also opposed to any effort to politicize the World Conference through the introduction of controversial issues which had received, or were receiving, adequate attention in other forums in the United Nations system. The event was intended to be a mid-Decade review conference focusing on the implementation of the World Plan of Action produced by the Mexico City Conference in 1975. The limited resources and time available for the Conference should not be squandered on renewed polemics over controversial issues peculiar to one geographical region and characterized by the traditional rigidity of positions held by Governments within that particular region.

18. Her delegation was sympathetic to the need for additional resources for the Conference secretariat expressed by the Secretary-General of the Conference. In that spirit, her Government had already contributed an additional \$200,000 to assist the Conference secretariat in its preparations. Her delegation believed, however, that the scarce resources would have to be properly managed and priorities in the regular budget reordered, if necessary, so as to accommodate the needs of the Conference secretariat. Her delegation whole-heartedly supported the arrangements which the host country had proposed with regard to the facilities for the Conference, particularly the arrangements for three simultaneous meetings with full interpretation and a total of six meetings per day. It agreed that the Preparatory Committee should be authorized to hold a third and final session to complete preparations for the Conference.

19. With regard to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, her delegation noted with appreciation the effectiveness of the new procedure for the submission and review of project proposals at the national level. It was her delegation's view that there was no legislation relating to the establishment of the Voluntary Fund which linked it as an element of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and there was accordingly no valid reason for transferring the Fund away from Headquarters, which would remove it from close proximity and collaboration with the United Nations bodies which were essential to its efficient operation.

20. Her delegation agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Norway with regard to machinery aimed at ensuring the full participation of women in the mainstream of society. It was a sad fact that the two Development Decades had not produced, and one Decade for Women was unlikely to achieve, the desired goal, which could only be attained by a serious and affirmative response to the problem by all nations.

21. Mr. NABHAN (Iraq) said that since the revolution of 1967, women in Iraq had been able to participate equally with men in promoting the social progress and economic development of the country. There was equal opportunity for all in Iraqi society, and legislation ensured that the humanitarian principles guiding the revolution would serve to strengthen the position of women in society. The Government recognized that women were a driving force in the development of society and therefore worked continually for their liberation. The improvement in the status of women and the guarantees of their rights and duties on an equal footing with men responded to a national desire to bring justice to a large segment of society which had been ignored before the revolution.

(Mr. Nabhan, Iraq)

22. Illiteracy was a scourge of developing countries; after the revolution the Government had set up literacy programmes and schools in all parts of Iraq with the object of eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000. Women were, of course, particularly concerned in those activities. The army, police, medical and legal professions were open to women on a footing of complete equality with men, with equal salary scales. The Government was also establishing kindergartens and nursery schools in an effort to ensure that women had the opportunity to participate equally in all activities. The Conference of Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries on the Role of Women in Development, held at Baghdad in May 1979 (A/34/321), had reviewed the achievements of women since the revolution and had stressed the principle of equality in building a better world free of colonialism, racism and zionism. He pointed out that women in Palestinian communities were experiencing special social, political and economic difficulties because of oppression and racial discrimination by the Israeli authorities; that situation was likely to continue as long as the Palestine people were deprived of the right to return to their homeland and build their own sovereign independent State.

23. Mrs. ORIYO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women had shown the importance which the international community attached to the role of women in development. However, adequate education, a change of social attitude, and social reforms were basic prerequisites for the attainment of the objectives of the Decade.

24. Her country's constitution guaranteed women equal rights with men. The Union of Tanzanian Women had been instituted immediately after independence; it conducted various activities for the benefit not only of women but of the whole nation in urban and rural areas. It ran day-care centres for children and operated catering facilities at places of work, and encouraged small-scale industries, such as weaving and other crafts, which could promote self-reliance. Women enjoyed special treatment in education: they could enter the university directly after completing the top level of post-primary education, whereas men were required to work for two years before entering university. The object of that arrangement was to enable women to achieve equality in education within a reasonable time.

25. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs could operate from different places without in any way obstructing the effective operation of either. In any event, the Fund should remain at Headquarters because of its links with UNDP and UNICEF. Moreover, the Fund was of a temporary nature and its transfer would entail unnecessary expenditure. She urged Governments, United Nations organizations and specialized agencies to intensify their support for the Fund.

26. She expressed appreciation to the Government of Denmark for agreeing to act as host to the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Conference should concentrate on the status of women living under apartheid. The recommendation by the Preparatory Committee that resources be made available

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(Mrs. Oriyo, United Republic of Tanzania)

to the least developed countries and countries similarly placed to enable them to participate in the Conference should be endorsed by the General Assembly.

27. Even after the end of the Decade, Member States should continue their efforts to ensure that women and men occupied exactly the same position in society. She shared the eagerness expressed by many delegations to see the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women completed.

28. Mr. Sobhy (Egypt) resumed the Chair.

29. Mrs. RUSSELL (Barbados) said that the publication in Barbados in 1978 of a report of the Commission on the Status of Women had been followed by legislation pertaining to women based on the recommendations of the report. In 1979 Barbadian women from all sectors of society had participated in seminars organized by the Organization of American States aimed at producing specific measures to achieve the total integration of women in society. The Government was interested in the condition of women all over the world, especially in the third world.

30. She noted that the agenda for the forthcoming World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women included the condition of women under apartheid. Indeed, apartheid, colonialism, racial discrimination and racism, together with economic inequities, were serious impediments to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women. In the case of apartheid, the evils which women suffered were passed on to their children. A recent study had shown that the policy of taking men away on conscripted labour left the women unprovided for and unaided in the difficult task of raising children. The fathers were not reluctant to contribute to the support of their offspring, but were unable to do so because of the slavery-like system of apartheid.

31. She welcomed the measures proposed to ensure the participation in the Conference of representatives of the least developed countries and countries with special considerations. The Caribbean included several small territories; some were still in a quasi-colonial State, but they had shown a keen interest in the United Nations Decade for Women, as their participation in the recent ECLA conference at Caracas demonstrated.

32. She was pleased to see that aid from the Voluntary Fund was reaching territories in the Caribbean and hoped that the region would receive further benefits from the Fund.

33. It was a source of satisfaction to her delegation that the programme of work and budget for the biennium 1980-1981 of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had been approved and that its Board of Trustees had decided on a number of guidelines for its work. She hoped that the Institute, which was to be set up in the Dominican Republic, would disseminate information on women in society and would stimulate a two-way flow of such information, especially in developing countries.

34. Mrs. KRISHTALEVICH (Byelorussian SSR) said that the United Nations Decade for Women had already led to progress in establishing conditions under which women



(Mrs. Krishtalevich, Byelorussian SSR)

of many States could become involved in the process of development. Unfortunately, however, the situation of working women in the capitalist States was made more difficult by unemployment and inflation, while racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, aggression, colonialism and neo-colonialism, foreign occupation and the arms race were still serious obstacles to the achievement of full equality by women everywhere.

35. The Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held in 1980 should pay equal attention to the three key factors of the struggle for the achievement by women of equal rights all over the world: those factors - equality, development and peace - were gaining increasing support throughout the world. The Conference was to consider an important draft declaration on participation by women in the struggle to promote world peace and security and against colonialism, racism, foreign aggression and occupation and all forms of foreign domination, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/142.

36. A basic element in the establishment of a socialist society in the Byelorussian SSR had been the principle of the equality of all citizens regardless of origin, social and financial situation, race, nationality, sex, education, or attitude to religion. The new Constitution, adopted in 1978, contained many provisions strengthening and guaranteeing women's equality. Proper conditions were provided under which women could combine a career with matrimony, increasing their professional qualifications and becoming active participants in constructing a communist society. Women were expected to engage in productive activity and were encouraged at the same time to realize their full capabilities and develop their sense of self-reliance and responsibility in social affairs. The role of women in mechanized and automated industry had grown considerably. Women were also encouraged to participate in political life, and they accounted for a substantial proportion of the members of local and State councils.

37. In 1976 the Supreme Soviet of the Republic had established a standing committee on the working and living conditions of women and on maternal and child welfare. That illustrated the concern of society with the position of women and the desire to utilize women's productive strength to the full and to keep under systematic State supervision the implementation of measures to improve the living and working conditions of women.

38. Byelorussian women also participated actively in the work of various public bodies, including organizations for the development of friendly relations with societies abroad. They constantly sought to extend their solidarity with workers of all countries, with peoples struggling to achieve their freedom and independence and with those fighting for democratic and social progress and for the achievement of genuine disarmament, détente and the outlawing of war for ever.

39. She was gratified by the work of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and by the fact that the Conference was to consider the adverse effects of apartheid on the situation of women in southern Africa. As regards the programme of activities for the second half of the Decade, the programme should take full account of the three goals of

(Mrs. Krishtalevich, Byelorussian SSR)

equality, development and peace: the ending of exploitation and the strengthening of peace were equally essential for improving the status of women and achieving equality for them. The programme should therefore accentuate the relationship between the goals of women and general problems of international relations.

40. In conclusion, she said that the World Conference should not give rise to unjustified increases in the United Nations budget.

41. Mr. HYSENAJ (Albania) said that the economic and social condition of women in many countries was deteriorating as the international situation became worse. That situation was the direct consequence of oppression and exploitation and the evils caused by imperialism, social imperialism, and reactionary forces, both internal and external, and by foreign capital and multinational corporations. The status of women in Azania, Zimbabwe and Namibia, the sufferings of Palestinian women and children under Israeli occupation and the tragedy of women and children in South-East Asia were all the consequences of the worsening situation in the world at large. Those developments strengthened his belief that complete emancipation for women was not possible without true economic and political independence, and had to be achieved by resisting the expansionist and hegemonist policies of the United States, the Soviet Union and China - all imperialist super-Powers busily hatching a new world war.

42. In Albania women played an active role in the establishment and defence of socialism, and their rights were safeguarded by law. They enjoyed equality with men in work, wages, holidays, social security and education and in all aspects of social, political and family life. Eight years of schooling was compulsory for both girls and boys and was State-subsidized. There were vocational and other schools in production centres and rural areas, and the proportion of women in educational institutions of all kinds was high.

43. Albania was a country where unemployment and inflation were unknown, so that the standard of living was constantly rising. Women enjoyed the resulting advantages on an equal footing with men. Measures such as the establishment of child-care centres and kindergartens had been taken to ensure that women even in the remotest rural areas enjoyed constantly improving conditions. Moreover, women participated fully in the building of socialism. Nearly half the labour force consisted of women and girls and in such sectors as light industry, teaching, public health and commerce, the ratio was considerably higher.

44. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that the Committee should try to adopt a resolution on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women by consensus. The site of the Fund's headquarters should facilitate its contribution to the long-term objectives of the United Nations programmes for women and the Fund's operations should be co-ordinated with the work of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. In general, all programmes for women at the United Nations should be considered as a whole and not as a number of separate units. She hoped that differing views on those matters could be reconciled in a consensus text.

(Mrs. Shahani, Philippines)

45. She expressed appreciation to the Government of the Dominican Republic for offering to serve as host to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. The Institute could be an essential element in the progress of women, and she hoped that the necessary financial contributions would be forthcoming from Member States and that the Secretary-General would provide adequate staffing, particularly during the transition period when the host country agreement for the Institute was being negotiated.
46. The Secretary General's report on the status and role of women in education and in the economic and social fields highlighted the relationship between educational opportunities for women and the level of economic and social development of their countries. Her delegation would support any draft resolution designed to strengthen that relationship.
47. Her delegation and those of Papua New Guinea and Singapore were submitting a draft resolution on the situation of women refugees in the world. She hoped that other delegations would join as sponsors.
48. Mr. ERRAZURIZ (Chile) said that the United Nations Decade for Women was one of a series of important steps taken by the United Nations to bring discrimination based on sex to an end. His country's authorities were continuing to implement measures to promote greater participation by the women in all spheres of national life, and had already reported to the United Nations on the steps being taken to achieve equality for women in fields such as employment, pay, education and the eradication of extreme poverty. The National Secretariat for Women was carrying out major training and adult literacy programmes, and was marketing articles produced in the country's Mothers' Centres. Such programmes enabled women to develop their potential for work in the home, while increasing the family income.
49. His Government took great interest in the forthcoming World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. Proper preparation for the conference was essential, and the regional meetings would help by focusing attention on the concerns of specific regions, thus enabling the Conference to reach practical and realistic conclusions; the Conference should not culminate in mere restatements of principles.
50. His delegation welcomed the prospect that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women might be established in the Dominican Republic, and hoped that the Committee would adopt draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.47 on that subject, of which his delegation was a sponsor. The programme of the Institute should deal with the key problems affecting developing countries and the role to be played by women in overcoming them. The Institute should maintain close contacts with the regional commissions and relevant national and international institutions, so that its work could lead to practical action by Governments.
51. The wide range of programmes being financed by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was encouraging. The increase in the number of projects proposed for the Fund and the efficiency of its administration testified to the interest shown in such projects in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean and Western Asia. The new country-level approach was to be welcomed.

52. Mrs. KANTAI (Kenya) said that about 88 per cent of all adult women in Kenya lived and worked in rural areas. Women's activities in Kenya had greatly increased in recent years; they were all based on the concept of "Harambee", or self-help, meaning essentially that women organized, managed and monitored their own projects and programmes. Immediately after independence, rural women had responded enthusiastically to the call for rural development made by the late President Jomo Kenyatta, and had made a major contribution to the rural economy. Kenya was an agricultural country, and women were the primary food producers. As well as their labour in domestic food production, they also made a substantial contribution to cash crops, which in turn provided foreign exchange. Their agricultural and household work provided little monetary return, and in many cases, women in rural areas undertook men's work as well, as the husbands were absent from home in nearly a quarter of all rural households.

53. The current five-year development plan emphasized the elimination of poverty, and equipping of rural and urban women with adequate skills was a high priority of the Government and the Women's Bureau. The Bureau established in 1975 as a Division of the Ministry of Housing and Social Services, was responsible for assessing the needs of Kenyan women and planning for their increased participation in national development. In addition, the National Council of Women, comprised of 30 national non-governmental organizations, fostered the activities of self-help groups, which ranged from home improvement schemes and water projects to income-generating activities such as farming and handicrafts.

54. The Women's Bureau also supported efforts to achieve equality of opportunity for women workers, and employment policies in Kenya were specifically designed to eliminate discrimination against women. Employment roles and wages both tended to be determined by the level of education and experience achieved. In the post-independence era, wage-earning women had been concentrated in lower-paid jobs, and experienced significantly higher rates of urban unemployment than men. However, the most recent statistics indicated a slight increase in the employment of women at all levels, in both the public and private sectors.

55. Her Government had a policy of providing free medical services for all citizens. Dispensaries and rural health clinics, and district and provincial hospitals had been established. To combat malnutrition among children, which led to kwashiorkor, 10 family centres had been established through the Ministry of Housing and Social Services. The Government was also pursuing a vigorous population policy.

56. In all modern societies the institution of the family was undergoing a tremendous change, especially with the growing acceptance of the new status and role of women. Any Kenyan legislation which sanctioned open or concealed discrimination against women had therefore been repealed. The income tax law was being amended so that the wife could be taxed independently, and the proposed Marriage Bill aimed to give the same rights to women as to their husbands, such as the choice of a spouse, to establish a minimum age for marriage and to enforce the registration of marriage. The Bill was intended to discourage child marriages and the forced remarriage of widows, and to clarify ambiguous procedures relating to the ownership, disposal and inheritance of family property.

(Mrs. Kantai, Kenya)

57. In order to assess the economic contribution of women to society and to plan for their increased participation, a main priority was adequate research; the Women's Bureau was therefore organizing a reliable bank of extant data on the situation and needs of women. It had completed an annotated bibliography of Kenyan women, a project financed by the Economic Commission for Africa. The bibliography would assist the Government and women's organizations to identify further areas for research and would provide the necessary information for policy and programme formulation. The Bureau had already completed a report on the legal status of Kenyan women, and a survey was being undertaken of Moslem women and their participation in the development process. Her delegation appreciated the supplementary financial and technical support provided by the United Nations Voluntary Fund for programmes aimed at enhancing the position of women in society, and was particularly grateful for its financial assistance to Kenya for research studies on the role of women and for the development of small-scale home industries.

58. The purpose of the 1980 World Conference was to take stock of the progress being made to achieve the objectives of the World Plan of Action. During the Conference efforts should be made to identify gaps in the process of integrating women into development. The necessary financial and staff resources should be provided for the secretariat of the Conference, special attention being paid to items A to H in the summary of costs in document A/34/657.

59. Mrs. THAPA (Nepal) said that the International Women's Year in 1975 and the Mexico Declaration had focused world attention on the problems of women. The proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women and the measures being taken to implement the World Plan of Action at the national, regional and international levels had brought about significant progress towards the advancement of women.

60. In Nepal the Women's Services Co-ordinating Committee and a number of other women's organizations and mothers' clubs were engaged in activities for the advancement of women. Those activities covered the eradication of illiteracy, legal aid services for poor women, family planning projects and skill development projects, with the aim of raising the family income. Special attention had been paid to the elimination of prejudice and discrimination against women. The Government was promoting the education of women through the distribution of free text-books, cash awards and scholarships for female students, and adult literacy programmes in the remote areas. However, the promotion of women's equality remained a major problem, and co-ordinated action was urgently required to solve it.

61. Her delegation was encouraged by the progress made in establishing the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and appreciated the work of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. The women of Nepal had benefited from Voluntary Fund projects.

(Mrs. Thapa, Nepal)

62. The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at the mid-point of the Decade, would be an opportunity not only for reviewing the implementation of the World Plan of Action at various levels but also for considering all aspects of the advancement of women. Her delegation commended the excellent work which had been done in preparing for the World Conference and was grateful for the co-operation of the Government of Denmark in providing facilities for the Conference.

63. Ms. ILIC (Yugoslavia) said that her delegation was glad to note that the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had been appointed, and had adopted its programme of work and budget for the biennium 1980-1981. She trusted that an agreement would soon be concluded between the Government of the host country and the United Nations on the arrangements for the establishment of the Institute. As the Decade for Women progressed, the demand for the services of the Institute would increase. Its work should be an integral part of the development concept for improving the status of women, as adopted at the Conference in Mexico in 1975. Once in operation, the Institute should establish co-operation with other institutes dealing with questions of development and women.

64. The underlying cause of the unequal position of women was the inequitable use and distribution of resources which characterized the existing world order, together with oppressive social structures and attitudes that thrived on inequalities of all kinds. The elimination of human misery, injustice and oppression was still a distant goal to the vast majority of people, particularly in the developing countries, by reason of the low priority given to women in national strategies for development, inadequate understanding of the relationship between the status of women and the development process, and the paucity of resources in most developing countries. Women were therefore doubly affected by the unequal economic and political relationships which hindered development. In order to achieve social justice and accelerate the development process, the role of women in development must be increased. Action on behalf of women would have no lasting effect unless it became an integral part of the development strategy of each country and of the effort to establish a new international economic order. At the Conference of Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries on the Role of Women in Development, held at Baghdad in May 1979, non-aligned and other developing countries had therefore reaffirmed their full support for the decisions of the World Conference of the International Women's Year. They had again declared that comprehensive development required maximum participation by women in all national activity. They had stressed that full participation by women was an important indicator of a nation's progress, and that individual human rights, including the equality of women, could be achieved only within over-all development. In that connexion, they had emphasized that strategies for the advancement of women had to be a constituent part both of national development plans and of measures to establish the new international economic order.

65. The Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana in September 1979, had endorsed the report of the Baghdad Conference as a basis for future co-operation among non-aligned and other developing countries in

(Ms. Ilic, Yugoslavia)

furthering the role of women in development. The Havana Conference had also decided that the proposals made by the Baghdad Conference should serve as an essential input for the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, and had called upon the non-aligned and other developing countries to participate actively in the work of the 1980 Conference.

66. Her country would do its best to contribute to a successful outcome of the 1980 Conference and of the Decade for Women. In Yugoslavia women had participated alongside men in the War of Liberation and in the reconstruction of the country, and were working to develop the country, to ensure a better life for all regardless of sex, to establish a more just economic and political order, and to promote lasting peace in the world.

67. Mr. NYAMEKYE (Ghana) said that his delegation supported the proposals made at its second session by the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. There was much merit in the proposal that the General Assembly should give consideration to facilitating the participation of least developed countries and countries with special considerations, and he hoped that the Assembly would accept that proposal. His delegation also supported the holding of a third session of the Preparatory Committee.

68. The information contained in document A/34/612 on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was very encouraging. The projects funded were useful to women of developing countries, and credit was due to the Consultative Committee and the regional commissions, as well as to the donor countries. He urged donors to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal to consider pledging support to the Fund on a multi-year basis, so that long-term project planning could be undertaken. His delegation saw no need for controversy regarding the site of the Voluntary Fund's offices and favoured whichever site would increase the effectiveness of the Fund at the lowest cost.

69. Mr. OKOTH (Uganda) said that Uganda had long since realized the importance of the role of women in the development process. The second World Conference on the subject of women would provide an opportunity to assess both failures and achievements with regard to the first World Plan of Action. The international solidarity demonstrated by events such as the Conference was proof of the firm belief of the international community in the need for equal participation by women. Equal, rather than separate, development for the two sexes should be the goal, and he hoped that the forthcoming Conference would be successful in achieving that purpose.

70. His delegation had had no alternative but to support a third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, as there was a need to finalize the programme and arrangements for the Conference. However, from a procedural and economic point of view, his delegation believed that it would have been better to have arranged a longer second session of the Preparatory Committee in order to avoid incurring extra expense. Repeated preparatory sessions for the same conference were not only cumbersome, but also a burden on his country's small resources. His delegation was also seriously concerned about the question of funds to enable

(Mr. Okoth, Uganda)

developing countries, in particular, to participate in seminars and other events organized by the United Nations. While his country realized the importance of the exchange of ideas at the national, regional and international levels, lack of funds made it increasingly difficult for it to participate fully in such exercises.

71. For similar reasons, his delegation had given unreserved support to the establishment of a Voluntary Fund to foster the equal participation of women in all fields outlined in the World Plan of Action. However, the Fund could not be a permanent solution to the problem, which was related to the economic structure of third-world countries and was therefore linked to the hope for better prospects through the establishment of the new international economic order. Without such improved prospects, it might be impossible to implement international programmes even at a minimum level. His delegation was not seriously concerned about the site of the Voluntary Fund's office; the important issue was its ability to function effectively. His delegation, however, was by no means certain that the Fund had enough resources to be involved in a transfer of its operations elsewhere and was not fully happy with the proposed new site. Few African States were represented in Vienna, and his country's limited resources might be further strained by such a decision. However, it was logical that the Voluntary Fund should be in the same place as the Centre for Social and Humanitarian Affairs, as the functions of the two bodies could not be separated. His Government, in general, was a staunch supporter of all moves to decentralize United Nations organs, but in all such decisions, the efficiency of the institution concerned should not be adversely affected and funds should not be devoted to purposes which might have that consequence.

72. Mrs. BOCOMI (Ivory Coast) said that women constituted 50 per cent of the population of her country; however, 56 per cent of the women were illiterate, as compared to 40.4 per cent of the men. Thirty per cent of women were engaged in active employment, 10 per cent were students, and 27 per cent were housewives. In the modern sector, women accounted for 5 per cent of the labour force. Most women, however, were in traditional occupations, such as family farms, traditional crafts and small businesses.

73. Since the accession of the Ivory Coast to independence, women had been actively involved in political life; their membership of the Political Bureau and the highest echelon of the Party had increased, and they were to be found in Party bureaux throughout the country. Ten per cent of parliamentary representatives and 12 per cent of the members of the National Economic and Social Council were women, and the Bureaux of both the National Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had woman Vice-Presidents. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to secure for women the full enjoyment of the rights of citizens, as recognized by the Constitution and the legislation in force.

74. Her delegation was satisfied with the progress made by the Centre for Humanitarian and Social Affairs in advancing the status of women. However, she wished to point out that the reference in paragraph 64 of the Secretary-General's report (A/34/577) to Governments' inability to provide sufficient health services



(Mrs. Bocoum, Ivory Coast)

was inaccurate so far as her country was concerned; no statement to that effect had been made in the report submitted by her Government in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 33/184. What that report had emphasized was the inadequacy of the health services and the Government's efforts to improve them.

75. With regard to the preparations for the World Conference, her delegation fully supported the proposal that financial assistance should be provided from the budget of the Conference to enable the least developed countries and countries with special considerations to participate in the Conference. Her delegation attached special importance to the documentation for the Conference, and hoped that it would be available sufficiently in advance for it to be studied in detail. Extra financial resources were required for the Conference, as indicated in the report, and her delegation was confident that those resources would be readily provided.

76. Miss NICOLAIDOU (Greece) said that education, employment and participation in political life were the three means which had enabled women to break out of the traditional role which had limited their activities to the home. In Western countries, industrialization and urbanization had also led to the break-up of the traditional family unit and created social structures which made it possible to advocate equality of the sexes. Changes had occurred in the status of women in recent decades, especially during the 1970s, which had been marked by a new consciousness of the status and role of women. The new consciousness had had a profound impact on family life-styles and had led to a variety of measures aimed at promoting the equality of women in such areas as employment and education. Throughout that period of change difficulties had risen, since policy did not always coincide with the social realities, and inequality of the sexes continued to prevail in many spheres of social life.

77. In the vital area of women's participation in the economy, discrimination was still practised. Although the principle of equal opportunity and treatment had been universally recognized in law, many women continued to receive less than the minimum wage. Women's participation in politics was only marginal and they tended to be excluded from the decision-making process. Although the number of girls and young women enrolled at all levels of education had increased, they were generally steered towards the liberal arts, and seldom acquired professional qualifications, except for those required for the teaching professions. The sciences remained a male preserve.

78. In Greece the participation of women in the economic, political and educational spheres had increased significantly during the preceding 15 years. The number of women employed in the secondary sector of the economy had risen by 10 per cent and the number in the tertiary sector by 20 per cent. Political life was gradually opening up to the participation of women. While the right to vote had been granted to women in 1952, not until 1978 had women been elected to the Greek Parliament, winning 10 seats out of 300. More importantly, however, 331 women had been candidates for office in the legislative elections of November 1977 - five times as

(Miss Nicolaidou, Greece)

many as in 1964. Even the disparities in education between men and women in Greece were disappearing, and one young woman in three over the age of 18 attended university. In promoting the advancement of women, her Government had given special attention to amending family law with a view to ensuring equality of the sexes and eliminating discrimination against women in employment.

79. Despite all endeavours to improve the status of women throughout the world, much remained to be done in every sphere. It was essential, therefore, to strengthen the existing machinery and to use the Copenhagen Conference to devise a detailed strategy for the attainment of objectives which were already more than a century old.

80. Ms. KELESCIAN (Italy) said that her delegation looked forward to the 1980 World Conference and considered the unprecedented convening of two world conferences on the same subject within the same decade to be a clear expression of universal sensitivity to the status of women. She was confident that the action-oriented character of the 1980 Conference would produce substantial results, especially by forging links between international and national institutions. It was to be hoped that the Conference would increase awareness of the international community's involvement among national bodies and groups concerned with the status of women. Her delegation also supported the proposal for the convening of a third session of the Preparatory Committee.

81. Women were discriminated against all over the world, but forms of discrimination varied with the socio-cultural environment, so that it was difficult to focus on the problem as a single one. In a number of countries, especially the more developed ones, the previous 15 years had been marked by definite advances, thanks to the action of women's organizations and groups. In Italy, a country of deeply-rooted social traditions which was experiencing the impact of economic and industrial development, women had suffered for centuries from entrenched legal, economic and social discrimination, but had recently made great strides in social and political life. A new family law had been enacted in 1975 establishing the legal equality of spouses in marriage, a divorce law had been enacted, and the right of women to control their own reproductive process had been recognized in principle. Such legal changes were gradually affecting attitudes and behaviour at the political level, and in recent years women had been elected to some of the highest positions in Government.

82. Although equal access to education, health and employment, and equal rights in most fields had been recognized in law in most countries, there was a gap between such formal equality and the realities. The economic value of women's work, inasmuch as it was performed in the home, was far from being recognized. Women were far from free to choose whether or not to seek employment outside the home, and for the minority who actually had such a choice, genuine participation in fundamental decision-making processes was far from being achieved. Ways should be sought to reconcile the participation of women in the work-place with their legitimate desire

(Ms. Kelescian, Italy)

for a family. In no country should women be willing to pay the high price for such participation which men had already paid, namely, forgoing the opportunity to develop their human, emotional and psychological identities to the full and to share fully in family life. Rigidity and unresponsiveness at the work-place was, in fact, one of the main factors keeping women out of the mainstream of production and decision-making in the industrialized countries, and serious consideration should be given by international and national bodies to the restructuring of the work-place so as to accommodate the needs of the family.

83. If the most basic human right was the right to control one's own life, it had to be recognized that the "women's issue" went far beyond the matter of getting good jobs or reversing the roles of men and women. Rather, it involved transcending the existing polarities by creating new patterns of family life and production based on the equality and full human identity of both sexes.

84. Miss MAIRIE (United Republic of Cameroon) said that the International Women's Year had given new impetus to efforts to emancipate women, especially in the developing countries. Her delegation was pleased that the Fund which had been established in pursuance of the Plan of Action, despite its modest resource, was making a positive contribution by helping to finance a considerable number of projects in developing countries. Her delegation hoped that the 1980 World Conference would strengthen the favourable trend which had been established and lay the foundations for more wide-ranging and sustained action in the future. Accordingly, her delegation supported the Secretary-General's request for an additional appropriation for the Conference.

85. Her country had taken a keen interest in international initiatives for the advancement of women since they were complementary to its own national policy with regard to women. While women in her country had played only a very minor role in public life during the colonial period, their involvement since independence in efforts to promote social progress had become part and parcel of the united striving of the entire people for development. Her Government's policy of social justice gave all citizens equal opportunities in the fields of education and employment. Women enjoyed all the rights of citizens recognized in the Constitution and guaranteed by law. They were represented in the Government and in high-level posts in the civil service. Her country's policy was based on the principle of equal pay for equal work for all workers without distinction as to sex.

86. While equality was guaranteed by law, traditional attitudes and habits, especially in rural areas, were an obstacle to the emancipation of women and their integration in the development process. The Government and the Party had mounted a major effort in rural areas to combat such attitudes. As part of that effort, seminars for housewives were organized and training was provided for women leaders in rural areas. In order to be fully effective, such efforts required the support of the international community, and her delegation was appreciative of the assistance provided by ECA for the training of rural leaders and for the research it was sponsoring on the status of women in rural areas. Her Government hoped that it could count on assistance from the Fund for its projects concerning women in rural areas.

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(Miss Mairie, United Republic of Cameroon)

87. The 1980 World Conference should strive to maintain the momentum created at the 1975 Conference, and should identify, in the light of the experience of the previous five years, the best ways of strengthening the role of women in development. The Conference should also promote co-operation among developing countries in that field through the exchange of experience on the major problems affecting women.

88. Mr. KHALIFA (Sudan) said that integrated development required the full participation of women in all spheres of endeavour. The active participation of women in social life was an important indicator of a country's level of progress and development, and the improvement of the status of women and the promotion of their role in development was an essential component of any development strategy.

89. The process of social and economic change had benefited the women of his country, giving them the opportunity to participate in all spheres of social life and in the decision-making process at all levels. Women held a number of important political offices in his country, and, in order to ensure the participation of women in political life, 25 per cent of the seats in the people's assemblies were reserved for women. Women in the Sudan also enjoyed equal social and economic rights, and the number of girls and women enrolled at all levels of education had increased dramatically in recent years. There was ample opportunity for women to obtain an education and take an active part in social life. Equal treatment in employment was guaranteed, and special social benefits were provided for women, including paid maternity leave and time off during the working day for infant care.

90. The Union of Sudanese Women was in the vanguard of efforts to eliminate ignorance, superstition and archaic practices, and to build a new society. As mothers, sisters and wives, women shared the responsibility of preparing the rising generation for the life of the nation and inculcating in them a sense of belonging to the national community.

91. The women of his country, conscious of their role in promoting the process of change in Africa, supported the struggle of the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa against the racist régimes which kept them in the most abject oppression. They were concerned over the situation in the Middle East and had affirmed their solidarity with the Palestinian people. They fully supported the Government's position that the Palestinian problem lay at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East, that peace could be restored only with the participation of all interested parties, including the PLO, which was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and that that people should be enabled to exercise all its national rights, including the right to self-determination and a national homeland, with the withdrawal by Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem. Accordingly, his delegation supported the inclusion in the agenda of the 1980 Conference of an item relating to the situation of Palestinian women.

92. Mrs. MAIKARFI (Niger) said that, while there were still reactionaries who hold that the women's issue had been dreamt up by a few visionaries, they were heavily outnumbered by those who believed that the problem was a genuine one.

(Mrs. Maikarfi, Niger)

Her country, like the United Nations, wished to follow the trend of history, and the authorities of her country were devoting urgent attention to the integration of women in the development process.

93. Despite the measures adopted by her Government, including practical steps to improve employment opportunities for women, the problems of women in the Niger were still acute. Low incomes and cultural prejudices against the education of girls, especially in rural areas, hampered efforts to improve the living conditions of women. One of the primary goals of the Association of Women of the Niger was to increase the awareness of the population as a whole with a view to eradicating prejudice against women. A number of major national meetings had been organized for that purpose. The Association was working on a number of important projects relating, inter alia, to the drafting of a family code, the problem of teenage mothers, the laws on inheritance, and ways of lightening the women's work in rural areas. The Association hoped in time to alter ancient customs so as to ensure that the women of the Niger enjoyed all their rights. The Government was prepared to take all necessary steps to eliminate the injustices suffered by women.

94. Her delegation hoped that the review at the World Conference of the first five years of the Decade would reveal that positive results had been achieved, which would lead to the complete equality of women in the common effort for harmonious development within a framework of genuine peace.

95. Her delegation had become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/C.3/34/L.47, L.48 and L.49.

96. Mrs. NAVCHA (Mongolia) said that her Government was making every effort to create conditions conducive to the active participation of women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the country. The principle of the equality of men and women was enshrined in the Constitution, and equal rights were ensured through the provision of equal opportunity for men and women in all areas and through the adoption of special measures for the welfare of women.

97. The full enjoyment of human rights by Mongolian women in their daily lives had been made possible by the radical social and economic changes brought about in the building of socialist society. The State had adopted measures to enable women to combine their family obligations and the upbringing of children with gainful employment. Measures for the protection of women formed an integral part of the State's plans for the continued improvement of the life and labour conditions of the entire working population. The genuine equality of rights enjoyed by Mongolian women could be seen in the intensification of their activities in the international arena. The women of her country were actively participating in the struggle for peace and international security and for the freedom and independence of peoples. They had lent their full support to all international activities for the elimination of discrimination against women.

98. The importance of adequate preparations for the 1980 World Conference could not be over-emphasized. One of the main tasks of the Conference should be to

(Mrs. Navcha, Mongolia)

make progress towards the objectives of equality, development and peace, and all questions on the agenda of the Conference should be considered by reference to those three interrelated objectives. Her delegation supported the proposal to include in the agenda an item on the impact of apartheid on women in South Africa and an item concerning Palestinian women. Consideration of those questions at the World Conference would undoubtedly contribute to the efforts of the international community for the speedy eradication of the inhuman policies of racism, racial discrimination and apartheid and of foreign occupation and domination.

99. The achievement of legal and practical equality for women could not be divorced from the struggle for lasting peace and security, disarmament, national independence and social progress. The World Conference should therefore give the necessary attention to the participation of women in that struggle. For that reason, her delegation had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.48.

100. It was essential for the Commission on the Status of Women to complete its work on 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 in time for adoption at the World Conference. Her delegation also attached great importance to the preparation and adoption of the draft convention on the elimination of discrimination against women.

101. The CHAIRMAN announced that Mozambique and Somalia had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.44.

AGENDA ITEM 31: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH (continued)  
(A/C.3/34/L.41)

102. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegations of Nigeria, Fiji and Uganda had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.41.

AGENDA ITEM 72: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
(continued)

103. The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegation of Nigeria had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/34/L.39.

The meeting rose at 9.40 p.m.