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Substantive session of 1995

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Friday, 21 July 1995, at 10 a.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. KAMAL	(Pakistan)
later:	Mr. TEJERA-PARIS (Vice-President)	(Venezuela)
later:	Mr. PAPADATOS (Vice-President)	(Greece)

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (agenda item 1)  
(continued)

Accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Fourth World Conference on Women (continued) (E/1995/91)

The PRESIDENT recalled that the Council was required to decide, at its current session, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/243, on all pending proposals for the accreditation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the Fourth World Conference on Women. At its 17th meeting, the Council had had before it, in annex I to the note by the Secretariat on the subject (E/1995/91), a list of NGOs that the Secretariat recommended for accreditation, based on the information provided by the organizations and in compliance with the criteria established by the General Assembly in resolution 48/108.

At that meeting, he had informed the Council that some countries had expressed concern and reservations about the accrediting of 19 of the NGOs listed in that annex, namely, those numbered 15, 27, 86, 87, 113, 295, 334, 354, 355, 356, 378, 380, 392, 453, 506, 610, 611, 639 and 640. It had consequently been agreed that the 19 NGOs in question should be separated from those listed in annex I, together with the NGOs listed in annex II of the document, and that he would hold informal consultations on the matter. As a result, the Council had decided to accredit the remaining 742 NGOs listed in annex I.

At the outset of the open-ended informal consultations, it was agreed that uniform and transparent criteria should be established by which the 19 NGOs would be individually reviewed; it had also been agreed that the accreditation criteria unanimously determined by the General Assembly in resolution 48/108, particularly paragraphs (b) and (c) of the annex, which he read out, should be applied. Accordingly, and in a spirit of full cooperation, the 19 NGOs' applications had been examined individually.

Despite the strong views of some delegations, there was nevertheless widespread understanding of the need to resolve the issue in the interest of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Therefore, by the application of the uniform criteria, it was determined that the eight NGOs numbered 15, 87, 334, 355, 453, 506, 610 and 611 were eligible for accreditation to the Conference. It was further determined that the 11 NGOs numbered 27, 86, 113, 295, 354,

356, 378, 380, 392, 639 and 640 were not eligible for accreditation. It had been decided to recommend that the Council should take a decision to that effect, and that there should be no debate on the issue, although any delegation would have the right to make a statement after the decision had been taken.

It was also the understanding of the open-ended informal consultations that annex II of document E/1995/91, which contained the list of NGOs not recommended for accreditation by the Secretariat, would not be considered unless any concerned delegation was able to ascertain that all members of the Council were prepared to accredit a particular organization by consensus; he had been informed that such was not the case.

He took it, therefore, that the Council wished to decide that the eight non-governmental organizations numbered 15, 87, 334, 355, 453, 506, 610 and 611 would be accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and that the 11 non-governmental organizations numbered 27, 86, 113, 295, 354, 356, 378, 380, 392, 639 and 640 would not be granted such accreditation.

It was so decided.

Mr. FERNANDEZ (Observer for Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union fully supported the participation of NGOs in the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Union had taken the initiative leading to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 49/243, pursuant to which over 700 additional NGOs had already been accredited, and it strongly reaffirmed the principle that any NGO should be accepted or rejected only on the basis of objective criteria as set out in resolution 48/108.

In the case of the NGOs numbered 334, 356, 392, 453, 611, 639 and 640, the decision-making procedure had lacked transparency. For that reason, the Union dissociated itself from the decision to exclude them, which had been based not on the aforementioned objective criteria but on political considerations. Member States were not entitled to prevent any NGO which met the objective criteria from participating in a United Nations conference.

While the decision just taken had some positive aspects, in that it allowed certain relevant NGOs to participate in the Conference, there was a need to provide the Secretariat with clearer guidelines in the future for recommending acceptance or rejection of NGO participation in major

United Nations conferences and meetings. The Union expected that the host country would take all necessary measures to ensure that the NGOs accredited could actually participate in the Conference.

Mr. ZHANG Yishan (China) said that his delegation appreciated the President's efforts, thanks to which the problems concerning some of the NGOs listed in annexes I and II had been solved. China, as the host country for the Conference, welcomed the participation of all NGOs which met the criteria set forth in General Assembly resolution 48/108; therefore, the concern voiced on behalf of the European Union was entirely unnecessary. His delegation's position with regard to the non-governmental organization numbered 334 was that it failed to meet the criteria set forth by the resolution mentioned; his delegation therefore regretted the decision taken, from which it dissociated itself.

Ms. IRISH (Canada) said that her delegation had accepted, despite strong reservations, the decision just taken by consensus, but felt that the procedure followed had been unnecessary; the previously agreed process had clearly assigned to the Secretariat responsibility for assessing applications on the basis of criteria set forth in a General Assembly resolution. Although her Government had not fully agreed with some of the Secretariat's specific judgements, it felt that acceptance of its recommendations would best uphold the integrity of the process and the interests of the Conference.

It was most disappointing, therefore, that some Governments had chosen to contest accreditations which had been recommended by the Secretariat on the basis of the agreed criteria. While recognizing the delicacy of the President's position, her delegation regretted that some decisions seemed to have been significantly influenced by extraneous political considerations. Where an organization had a demonstrably genuine interest and potential contribution to make to the Conference, its political views, provided they involved no advocacy of violence, should not have been central to the determining of disqualification.

The decision should not be seen as a precedent for future United Nations-sponsored conferences. Future accreditation criteria must be clear and specific, and all Governments should respect objective assessments made in good faith by the Secretariat - a matter which the relevant working group could usefully consider during the coming year.

Mr. BLANEY (United States of America) said that his delegation had consistently supported the fair and transparent application of the standards set forth in General Assembly resolution 48/108. It believed that the Secretariat had applied those standards in making its recommendations, and it applauded the Council's approval of the vast majority of organizations listed, including more than 110 from the United States. It regretted, however, that some on the list, including two United States-based groups recommended by the Secretariat - the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet and the Tibetan Rights Committee to the Fourth World Conference on Women - had not been approved by the Council.

Mr. LANGENBACHER (Observer for Switzerland) said that his delegation, which had taken an active part in the informal consultations, regretted that the Council's decision with regard to a number of NGOs, including the Tibetan Women's Organization in Switzerland, had not, in its view, followed the criteria clearly established by resolution 48/108. Switzerland, which hosted very many United Nations conferences, had the strongest reservations with regard to the implications of the principles and procedures followed in the decision just taken for future decisions relating to participation in international conferences.

Mr. KARIMIAN (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, following discussions on the NGOs whose accreditation had been questioned, his delegation had agreed not to insist with regard to objections relating to the NGOs numbered 87, 355, 453 and 506, on the grounds that there was no time for it to present more information which might have led to their non-accreditation. The discussions had, however, shown that some organizations which had not met the minimum requirements set forth by resolution 48/108 should have been included in annex II and not recommended for accreditation. It should be noted that some of them, or their main membership, espoused violence and had been directly or indirectly connected with terrorist groups.

It was unfortunate that transparency had not been applied in all cases. There was no way to judge whether other NGOs listed in annex I might also have been rejected or, conversely, some listed in annex II accredited, had the criteria set forth in the General Assembly resolutions been applied. It was hoped, therefore, that in all future cases the essential requirement of transparency would be fully observed.

Ms. BERGIN (Australia) said that her delegation shared the concern expressed by the previous speakers and endorsed, in particular, the views of the European Union and Canada about the procedure followed in taking the decision just recorded. The Secretariat already possessed clearly established criteria, set forth by the General Assembly, and the Council should have allowed them to be effectively applied.

Mr. USUI (Japan) said that his delegation was in favour of granting accreditation to all NGOs recommended by the Secretariat, and the decision not to grant accreditation to some of those listed in annex I was somewhat different from what it had expected. While it might have been the case that some NGOs had not met the criteria set forth in resolution 48/108, his delegation understood that the Secretariat had recommended those NGOs for accreditation on the grounds that their activities were related to the advancement of women and thus relevant to the work of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Council should have given greater heed to the Secretariat's recommendations.

Mr. AARDAL (Norway) said that he endorsed the concerns voiced by the previous speakers and shared especially the views of the European Union and Canada in that regard. The relevant criteria clearly established by the General Assembly should have been adhered to.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) said that deliberations relating to the accrediting of non-governmental organizations should be non-political, transparent and based on the objective criteria set forth for the Secretariat's guidance. His delegation regretted that not all the NGOs listed in annex I had been accepted; it noted with satisfaction, however, that over 700 NGOs would nevertheless be enabled to participate in the Conference. It also appreciated the President's efforts, which had enabled the Council to adopt a decision on the matter without a vote.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had thus concluded its consideration of the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Mr. Tejera-París (Venezuela), Vice-President, took the Chair.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (agenda item 5)

- (a) SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE  
(A/50/203-E/1995/79 and Add.1, A/50/292-E/1995/115, E/1995/53)

- (f) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS (A/50/84-E/1995/12, A/50/181-E/1995/65, E/1995/24 and Add.1, 102 AND 109)
- (g) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (E/1995/30 and Add.1, 78 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1; A/CONF.169/16; E/1995/NGO/2)
- (h) NARCOTIC DRUGS (A/50/95-E/1995/17, E/1995/29, Corr.1 and Add.1, 47 and 48)
- (i) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (E/1995/52)

Mr. HANSEN (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing two reports of the Secretary-General (A/50/203-E/1995/79 and Add.1 and A/50/292-E/1995/115), said that, in the period since the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) much had happened. In 1992 there had been 6 humanitarian emergencies; in 1995 such emergencies had affected 13 countries, and there had also been some 50 conflicts throughout the world. The level of resources sought for emergency programmes had risen from US\$ 845 million in 1989 to US\$ 3 billion in 1994. The number of refugees had risen from 1.4 million in 1960 to 11.6 million in 1985 and some 27 million in 1995, in addition to another 27 million internally displaced persons.

Although conflicts in the past had been chiefly between States, most current conflicts were intra-State, and almost 90 per cent of their victims were civilians. United Nations civilian personnel had suffered 11 casualties in 1992, twice that number in 1993 and 66 in 1994. In 1994, donors had covered 77 per cent of the resources called for through the consolidated appeals process; in 1995 only 46 per cent had so far been covered.

In the case of natural and other disasters, DHA had launched 27 appeals between May 1994 and July 1995. In a 10-month period it had coordinated international assistance for 85 disasters in 50 countries. Although the United Nations system had removed 120,000 land-mines in 1994, an estimated 2.5 million new mines had been laid in that year. Those statistics provided a glimpse of the complexity of the humanitarian challenge currently faced. The fact that humanitarian organizations had managed to cope with the situations in Rwanda, Somalia and the former Republic of Yugoslavia showed that the international community's mechanisms were proving increasingly effective; efforts to enhance their capacity would continue.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/50/203-E/1995/79 outlined many of the initiatives taken by DHA and its



partners in humanitarian activities; they included a special focus on disaster prevention and mitigation. In that regard, national capacity-building remained the most effective method of preventing and reducing the adverse consequences. He was pleased that the specific coordination tools given to DHA, namely, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), the humanitarian coordinators and the consolidated appeals process had become invaluable assets for the humanitarian community at large. To perform its various activities, DHA would continue to need significant funding support, especially extrabudgetary funds.

With regard to CERF, there was a proposal to add some US\$ 30 million to it for financing immediate recovery and rehabilitation activities during the early transitional phase. The advances CERF had made to other agencies should be repaid and the Fund should be rendered more flexible to improve its reaction to situations.

The Council also had before it a report of the Secretary-General on the "White Helmets" initiative pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/139 B (A/50/203/Add.1-E/1995/79/Add.1). The proposal involved the participation of volunteers in United Nations activities in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development. DHA had been working closely with the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) to ensure that the initiative could be effectively implemented and substantially add to United Nations capacity. The critical elements in that connection were organization, training, planning and the availability of the requisite financial support.

With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the measures taken following the cyclones and floods that had affected Madagascar (A/50/292-E/1995/115), he said that despite generous contributions, there was still a lack of resources for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected areas.

On the question of assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia, he gave a brief account of the situation in that country since the departure of UNOSOM in March 1995 and said that there was a great need to assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts there since the humanitarian situation was still fragile and the

balance could tip either way. The international community must live up to its responsibilities and not allow Somalia to return to the terrible situation it had undergone for several years.

Mr. MILLERON (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) said that, in addition to the World Economic and Social Survey 1995, the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA) had also prepared an interim report on the world social situation (A/50/84-E/1995/12) which outlined the most outstanding developments that had been observed in the social sphere. Although the document had been prepared before the World Summit for Social Development had been held, the interim report covered all the major themes included in the Summit's Programme of Action.

There were three questions which deserved the Council's attention. The first was that of the dates and periodicity of the synthesis report - the Survey. While the principle of having such a report had been clearly confirmed, there remained a question mark as to its optimum periodicity. It might be useful to reconsider the timetable in order to take account of certain specific dates, for example the year 2000, which was both a symbolic date and the year in which the General Assembly was to hold a special session to consider systematically the follow-up to the decisions taken at Copenhagen. It was therefore necessary to consider what had to be done to enable the Assembly to carry out its work on the basis of satisfactory information. Consequently, the question of the optimum date of publication of the first post-Copenhagen synthesis report should be considered.

His second question related to the balance between thematic work and global synthesis reports. The Copenhagen impetus must not be lost and more sectoral work would have to be developed on an annual or pluri-annual basis. There were two examples connected with the work of DESIPA. The World Economic and Social Survey contained several chapters which examined structural questions of an economic and social nature from a global angle, e.g. changes in methods of production and employment, the development of social security systems and so forth. Moreover, in cooperation with other departments and specialized agencies of the United Nations family, DESIPA had prepared for the forthcoming Beijing conference a specific publication on women throughout the world in 1995: trends and statistics.

That kind of thematic approach was something that could be expanded to a greater or lesser extent. However, such reports had to be prepared very carefully and long before the planned dates of their discussion. In that regard, it was of the greatest importance that DESIPA should know well in advance the schedule of work to be undertaken within the Commission for Social Development.

The third question was whether or not it might be useful to submit the Survey in two stages, a first stage focused on the economic environment in the first quarter of the year and then a more structural analysis in the third quarter. That might guarantee the necessary flexibility for the Council's medium and long-term analyses where economic and social aspects were frequently closely interlinked.

Mr. BAUDOT (Director of the Division for Social Development) said that the note by the Secretariat on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (E/1995/102) was quite close in spirit to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. He had three comments to make on the note by the Secretariat. First of all, a follow-up was needed that would be extremely systematic and well-organized not only at the intergovernmental level but also at the level of the entire international system. Paragraph 22 of the note stated that it was important that intergovernmental follow-up be comprehensive in scope and encompass six dimensions: an assessment of social conditions in the world; a review of the Copenhagen commitments; an exchange of views on the experience gained in implementing the Programme of Action; support for regional cooperation; a review of support for national activities and a review of approaches to the financing of social development.

To ensure that all those dimensions were covered, there was clearly a need for burden-sharing among the various organizations of the United Nations system and the establishment of a clear timetable. Responsibility at the intergovernmental level was divided between the General Assembly, the Council and the Commission for Social Development, and it was important that their activities be coordinated. The Commission should thus meet annually, like the other functional commissions that played a follow-up role for global conferences, and it was important that experts from the main actors of civil society should be appropriately involved in its sessions.

Mr. DOSS (Director of the European Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General

on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (E/1995/53), said that healthy economic growth patterns had been evident in that country during the period covered by the report and GDP had risen by an estimated 8.5 per cent. On the other hand, as a result of the precarious situation of public finances, the Government's investment policy had continued to be seriously restrained. Stagnation in the productive sectors had also persisted and other challenges that had to be addressed included the implementation of administrative reform measures, the renovation of basic social services and the rehabilitation of southern Lebanon.

The Government's recovery policies and actions had been guided by the National Emergency and Recovery Programme, which covered the entire range of physical and social infrastructure as well as institutional strengthening. Progress in rehabilitating the infrastructure in the initial priority sectors had been substantial, and completion was envisaged before the end of 1995.

The mobilization of international financing had continued to be a major Government priority. By the end of 1994, the Council for Development and Reconstruction had secured funding from international sources of about US\$ 2 billion.

The focus of United Nations system programmes had continued to be the support of national priorities and rehabilitation and development programmes. The work of the system had been organized under the leadership of the Office of the Coordinator of United Nations Assistance for Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon (UNARDOL) and a United Nations coordination committee established in Beirut. Through a number of inter-agency working groups, the system had provided advisory support to the Government on a variety of important policy measures, including institutional renewal, social development and environment.

United Nations-supported operational development activities had progressed well and expanded further during the period under review. At the same time, the importance and urgency of adopting a country strategy note (CSN) and a programme approach as a means of improving United Nations effectiveness had been underlined in the report.

With regard to the United Nations presence in the country, UNARDOL had been terminated on 31 March 1995, as recommended by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the General Assembly, its task and functions being transferred to the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP.

While the report noted that achievements by the Government over the period of review had been significant, emerging strains on the capacity of public institutions and the sustainability of reconstruction were also noted. The report also stressed that social issues and environmental concerns needed urgent attention. The United Nations system had played an important role in helping to rebuild local institutions but, to continue to meet the expectations placed in it, it must increasingly focus its activities on a limited number of critical areas. That could not be achieved unless adequate resources were made available.

Mr. MORJANE (Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that, on 31 December 1994, UNHCR statistics indicated that there were 11,816,000 persons in its charge in Africa out of 27,418,900 throughout the world. Consequently, UNHCR had to devote nearly half its resources to Africa.

More than 1,700,000 Mozambicans had returned home from Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia. The repatriation operation had just come to an end and UNHCR hoped that, by June 1996, it would have been able to complete its rehabilitation and reintegration activities in that country.

Referring to the exodus of more than 2 million Rwandan refugees following the tragic events in their country, he said that UNHCR, the international community as a whole and the countries affected - Tanzania, Burundi, Zaire and Uganda - had had to work closely together to cope with the unprecedented arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees within a matter of a few days. It had been necessary to test new methods of cooperation, including cooperation with the military, and with the authorities of the countries of asylum in connection with the maintenance of order in the camps. The impact of that situation on the countries of asylum had been dire and had overburdened their economies and their entire social systems. Peoples and Governments alike had shown great generosity and had not hesitated to share their goods and services with their brothers in need.

Nevertheless, because there seemed to be no end to the problem, some Governments were adopting restrictive measures with regard to asylum-seekers. He thus appealed to all those involved in humanitarian matters to do their utmost to ensure that the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees continued to be respected in both the spirit and letter, particularly with regard to refugees in Africa.

Something would have to be done about the problem because the stability of the continent were menaced thereby. Clearly, food security and political stability in Africa were of great importance to the world as a whole. UNHCR was prepared to play its part but, to do so, it needed a strategy and the High Commissioner had therefore proposed one to the OAU Council of Ministers at their meeting in Addis Ababa. The strategy included determining the causes of displacement, promoting voluntary repatriation, emphasizing the need to respect the principles of asylum and refugee protection, international solidarity to help asylum countries and countries of origin, and the integration of all those elements into a global and coherent approach with a genuine political will.

UNHCR trusted that through that kind of cooperation, particularly with the OAU, it would be possible to make the strategy a reality. It was to be hoped that, when next he attended a session of the Council, he would be able to give members more encouraging information, particularly with regard to the repatriation of more than 300,000 Angolan refugees.

Mr. VETERE (Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch) said that, in accordance with Council resolution 1989/64, the report of the Secretary-General on capital punishment (E/1995/78) also included information on the implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing the protection of those facing the death penalty, which had previously been the subject of a separate report. It would be recalled that the results summarized in the last report considered by the Council and by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders five years previously had been published as "The death penalty: a world-wide perspective", in The International Review of Criminal Policy.

As for the latest survey (the fifth) which covered the quinquennium 1989-1993, he noted that 64 replies had been received, 62 of which were reflected in the report. The two additional replies, from Panama and the Cook Islands, had been received the previous week. Of the 64 responding countries, 43 were abolitionist, i.e. 33 were totally abolitionist and 10 with respect to ordinary crimes only. Of the remaining 21 countries, 7 were abolitionist de facto, 1 had halted executions in 1988 and foresaw the total abolition of the death sentence in its new penal code, 3 appeared to be moving towards de facto abolition and 10 countries still retained the death penalty.

A trend toward the abolition or gradual limitation of the use of the death penalty could be noted, particularly in East European countries striving towards democracy. Public opinion, the elimination of a totalitarian regime and the inviolability of human life were cited among the reasons for that policy shift.

Many States which had not abolished capital punishment de jure had done so de facto so that, even where capital punishment was on the statute books, it was rarely if ever used. Some other retentionist countries also limited the use of the death penalty and removed from its ambit offences that might have previously been subject to such an extreme measure. Only one retentionist country had extended the range of penalties, up to the death penalty, for acts falling under the heading of "terrorist acts or anarchy".

With regard to the United Nations safeguards, which many countries were endeavouring to apply, a number of problems had been mentioned and they were duly indicated in the report.

Mr. MALHOTRA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that, as mentioned in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the progress made and problems encountered in the struggle against illiteracy (A/50/181-E/1995/65) there was both significant progress to report and major problems still to be resolved. On the positive side, the projected increase in the number of literates in the world was certainly impressive: an increase of nearly 70 per cent or, in absolute terms, of approximately 1,400 million between the year 1980 and the end of the century. Moreover, that increase would take place mainly in the world's developing countries.

A more revealing measure of progress was the increasing percentage of literates in the adult population. Between 1980 and 2000, the percentage of literates in the adult population was projected to increase by approximately 10 per cent to a projected 79.4 per cent in the year 2000.

Enrolment in the developing countries at primary-school level had increased from 217 million in 1960 to 499 million in 1990. That was not only an impressive increase in absolute terms. It also meant that, whereas fewer than half of the children in the 6 to 11 year age-group were enrolled in 1960, over three-quarters had been enrolled in 1990.

There was every reason to be encouraged but there was no room for complacency. An estimated 885 million people were still illiterate and more

than 100 million children in the 6 to 11 year age-group did not attend school. Unless action was taken expeditiously, those children would become the adult illiterates of the twenty-first century.

It was also vital to note that the education of women and girls continued to lag behind that of boys and men. Unless girls and women were educated, all the problems of development would be much more difficult to resolve.

There was also growing concern over the quality of education in many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), and UNESCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had commissioned a study that should provide, for the first time, a relatively reliable estimate of the extent and nature of such problems as excessive student-teacher ratios and large numbers of pupils sharing a single textbook. Closely related was the need to create literacy-sustaining environments, especially in the LDCs, where there was often little reading material available for students with limited schooling to continue learning on their own.

While overall progress over the years in the promotion of literacy and education had been favourable, there were regions that had lagged behind. Although education in Africa, for example, had expanded very rapidly throughout the 1960s and 1970s, it had been slowed by the economic difficulties of the 1980s and 1990s. Chapter IV of the report emphasized the action undertaken by the international community to promote education for all since the International Literacy Year in 1990. The World Conference on Education For All, the follow-up to which was engaging the energies of all relevant organizations of the United Nations system working in concert, would, he believed, come to be recognized as a critical turning point in the struggle to expand educational opportunities. Education had been a component of all the major United Nations conferences, whatever their focal concerns. Recognition of the essential role of education in all progress was both the best measure of and the main force behind the progress recorded in the report.

Ms. BAUTISTA (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that they were painfully aware of the increasing pressures placed on humanitarian agencies by the growing number and intensity of disasters necessitating urgent relief. They fully supported humanitarian action in Africa and underlined the importance of the guidelines given in General Assembly resolution 46/182, particularly with regard to impartiality and neutrality, and the need to put humanitarian assistance in a development



context. Humanitarian assistance should be provided in response to an appeal by the affected country, and delivered with its full consent and cooperation.

The Group of 77 and China shared the concern expressed in the report about security for humanitarian personnel and were ready to cooperate in the search for means of increasing it. They called for emergency action to strengthen the financial base of the CERF through additional contributions and regular repayment by debtor organizations. They welcomed the positive view taken in the report of the potential of the "White Helmets" initiative.

The world-wide narcotic drugs problem required an international response, as was recognized by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its draft resolution V on international cooperation. The Group of 77 and China supported the taking of a decision by the Council recommending that, at its fiftieth session, the General Assembly should consider the proposal for a second conference to assess action on and review the 1988 Convention, which would include such issues as demand, money laundering, illegal trade in chemical precursors, and the development of alternative crops.

With regard to social development, the Group of 77 and China believed that the Commission on Social Development was ideally suited to lead the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, and should, accordingly be strengthened and placed on an equal footing with the other functional commissions.

Mr. VALENZUELA (Observer for Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the report on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (E/1995/115), which contained some important conclusions and recommendations. The Union shared the Secretary-General's concern over the growing disrespect for international humanitarian law, basic human rights and refugee law, and the increasing risks to humanitarian personnel. Action should be taken by the relevant United Nations bodies to ensure greater security for humanitarian personnel.

The Union took note of the concern expressed in the report regarding the need for adequate support for all United Nations agencies. In 1994, the Union, both through community funds and through the contributions of its member States, had been by far the largest contributor to consolidated inter-agency humanitarian appeals, providing some 50 per cent of all the contributions received. It urged all States to participate in international burden-sharing.

The member States of the Union had also been major contributors to CERF from its inception and hoped that its donor-base would continue to be broadened. The value of CERF in facilitating a timely response to emergencies was recognized by United Nations operational agencies, and the Union believed that any changes - such as those recommended in the report - should be considered with caution. One of the reasons for the success of CERF was its revolving character, which should be preserved, although some constraints identified by DHA might remain under review.

If the Fund was to continue to function effectively, it would have to be repaid promptly by United Nations agencies. There were no sufficient reasons for making exceptions to that principle, and where advances were long-outstanding, prompt steps should be taken by the governing bodies of the agencies concerned. The recommendation in the report of the creation of a new additional window within CERF for immediate rehabilitation activity raised serious questions and would require further study.

The parts of the report devoted to the analysis of the capacity of the United Nations system offered a comprehensive overview of humanitarian assistance and could serve as a basis for a review of the capacity of the entire United Nations relief system, helping to identify gaps and imbalances that had, as the report pointed out, appeared as the system evolved rapidly in recent years. Issues such as strengthening local capacity, defining the operational responsibilities of each organization, and the development of memoranda of understanding between agencies regarding staff development and inter-agency training modules, needed to be addressed in appropriate forums, especially agency governing bodies.

The relevant programmes and agencies should be requested to report, in close coordination with DHA, on any features of their operational, management or financial structures that impeded the provision of humanitarian assistance, and DHA should subsequently submit a progress report to the Council on common or priority issues. To facilitate action on such issues within the governing bodies of the programmes and agencies, DHA should convene open-ended informal meetings, at the regional level also, at which Member States could receive information helpful in achieving greater coherence and coordination of humanitarian assistance activities within the United Nations system.

The Union also welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the participation of "White Helmets" in United Nations relief activities

(A/50/203/Add.1-E/1995/79/Add.1), as requested by General Assembly resolution 49/139 B, and commended the close collaboration established between DHA and UNV. Further study would, however, be required of means for financing the training and employment of the volunteers. The Union supported the range of activities for their eventual deployment mentioned in the report, including the advantages of deploying those from neighbouring countries, or countries within the same region.

The Union wished to emphasize the importance of greater awareness and coordination of assistance in land-mine clearance, in the light of the recent international meeting on that subject.

With regard to natural-disaster reduction, the Union wished to reaffirm its full support for DHA efforts in the areas of early warning, training and national capacity-building. Given the close link between natural disasters and sustainable development, disaster prevention must be integrated into all national-development strategies. More generally, the Union stressed the importance of a more coordinated approach by both States and United Nations agencies and programmes to ensure coherent and effective response to humanitarian crises and believed that it would be useful to establish an agenda for open debate over the coming two years on closing existing gaps and correcting imbalances.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Colombia) said that his country had long been in the forefront of efforts to achieve effective coordination in the struggle against illicit drug trafficking at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. Unfortunately, genuine commitment on the part of all States had yet to be achieved. The drug problem had assumed global dimensions but the solutions had not. His Government had taken note of the Commission of the European Union's 1995-1999 programme of action and the observations of the European Parliament, which recognized the limitations of what was being achieved in Europe and the necessity to strengthen cooperation between the countries of the region, particularly in respect of money laundering.

His delegation also drew the Council's attention to the results of the Americas Summit at Miami, where the presidents had reaffirmed their commitment to the struggle against drugs and expressed support for the holding of an anti-drugs world summit. Also noteworthy was the letter of 6 July 1995 from the President of the United States of America to the President of Colombia

agreeing to continue efforts to educate citizens in the dangers involved in drug consumption and to seek to reduce the demand for drugs in his country.

His delegation was, however, concerned that the problem continued to be tackled from one angle alone, to the neglect of the responsibility incumbent upon all countries, whether consumers, countries of transit, producers of chemical precursors, or providers of financial services for money laundering.

His Government was discharging daily its share of the responsibility not through external imposition but from conviction. In the first half of the current year, it had captured over 1,000 traffickers, including the leaders of the Calí cartel, and confiscated great quantities of drugs; 243 clandestine laboratories and 58 landing strips had been destroyed, and vast quantities of drug-processing chemicals seized.

His delegation also welcomed the progress made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with regard to money laundering, but full cooperation was still lacking from the countries producing chemical precursors, and tighter control was necessary in ports of shipment. The activities of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) should be extended to include consumer countries, so that the annual report could reflect in a more balanced way the responsibility incumbent upon every country.

His delegation supported the adoption by the Council of draft decision E/1995/L.34, sponsored by the Group of 77, China and Mexico, recommending that international cooperation against drugs should be the theme for the high-level segment of the substantive session of 1996, and that the General Assembly should convene an international conference on the matter. By adopting the draft decision, the Council would express its recognition for the need for global concrete measures.

Mr. HOPE (United States of America) said that the ever-growing scale of humanitarian disaster-relief assistance called for more effective delivery, and, even more importantly, more effective action to prevent conflicts and disasters. Local efforts were of paramount importance, and more sustainable remedies must be found by, for example, population planning, education, policy reform, and the promotion of agricultural development, which would be more effective than the continued inpouring of international relief.

Many instances nevertheless remained in which relief would be necessary, and, in such cases, tight coordination of programmes and operations was essential. As good examples of such coordination, he cited the global

information and early-warning system, of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the efforts of the Administrator of UNDP to define his organization's role in consultation with relief agencies. The World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR had also developed a well coordinated working relationship. The Relief Net project under DHA leadership was a concrete example of assembling information at the field level.

His delegation fully supported the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General (E/1995/79 and Add.1) for strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance relating to respect for humanitarian law, the provision of unified coherent guidance across governing bodies of specialized agencies and programmes, and the encouragement of local capacity-building. CERF had proved an extremely useful tool, allowing prompt initial response to emergencies, but his delegation did not believe that it would be appropriate to expand its scope at the current stage. Borrowers should be strongly encouraged to repay the Fund promptly.

The "White Helmets" initiative could harness the energies and skills of volunteers and the private sector on behalf of humanitarian development. His Government was particularly impressed by Argentina's inauguration of the project which, he believed, might well inspire similar endeavours throughout the world, as would a joint Argentine-United States exercise in medical readiness recently initiated in Tucumán Province. His Government offered the assistance of the United States Peace Corps, within its resources and mandate, to other countries in establishing national volunteer corps.

He welcomed the attention that continued to be given to narcotics control and noted that the United Nations was putting into direct action a number of ideas developed in the follow-up to the 1993 General Assembly high-level plenary session. His delegation failed to comprehend, however, what additional measures could be recommended by an international conference, which would merely increase the budgetary pressures upon the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). UNDCP had agreed that the time was not yet ripe for an international conference, and the Council should respect that judgement and not seek to impose on the United Nations system a further unnecessary and costly conference.

Miss JARF (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said, with regard to resolution 4 on links between terrorist crimes and transnational organized crime, adopted by the recently held Ninth United Nations Congress on the

Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/CONF.169/16), that her Government had repeatedly expressed its condemnation of terrorism for criminal ends. As long ago as May 1986, the President of the Republic had affirmed that condemnation but had also stressed the importance of distinguishing between terrorism and acts of national resistance, which was the right of every people whose land had been occupied and whose liberties had been flouted.

The President had also suggested that an international conference be convened to define terrorism and to distinguish between it and the legitimate struggle for national liberation, and those ideas should be reflected in any study undertaken in implementation of the resolution. With regard to the draft decision recommended by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group to study the proposal to establish a regional centre for training and research in crime prevention and criminal justice for the Mediterranean States (E/1995/30 draft resolution I, I B), her delegation wished its view to be recorded that the working group concerned lacked the objective qualifications for performing its task.

Turning to the report on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (E/1995/53), which referred to the good performance of the Lebanese economy and the growing trust in the ability of its Government which was reflected in the increasing number of donors, she welcomed the response of the United Nations system, including the involvement of NGOs, and agreed with the importance attached to the role of the Resident Coordinator.

Serious difficulties continued, however, to confront Lebanon in its attempts to build up its capacity and embark on a process of sustainable development, and her delegation believed there was a continuing need for assistance to that country. It hoped, therefore, that the Council would unanimously adopt the draft resolution calling on Member States and all organizations in the United Nations system to redouble their efforts to promote the reconstruction and development of Lebanon.

Mr. FRIGERIO (Observer for Argentina) said that the "White Helmets" initiative had been first put to the international community by the President of Argentina in October 1993, proposing the creation of multidisciplinary

teams of qualified professionals to be deployed rapidly in emergency situations and in the period of transition between the end of the emergency and rehabilitation for further development.

The proposed scheme opened the door to the utilization of non-traditional sources of financing from the non-governmental sector, the business community, and various community and multilateral organizations. It had been enshrined in General Assembly resolution 49/139 B and had been given effect at the national level by the establishment in Argentina of a national commission against hunger and poverty with responsibility to recruit and utilize the "White Helmets" at both the national and international levels.

At the operational level, Argentina had initiated a number of pilot projects in its own territory, the first being in Santa Victoria Este. A second project had been launched in Tucumán Province and additional financial resources were being raised from private sources to conduct similar experiments at other locations in Argentina. The appeal of the "White Helmets" initiative resided in the fact that it transcended national boundaries and was intended to be integrated into United Nations activities, particularly through UNV and DHA.

Since presenting the initiative, Argentina had conducted a number of field missions to identify urgent needs justifying the organization of pilot projects involving the "White Helmets". The first contingent of "White Helmets", comprising volunteers from Argentina and possibly also from Bolivia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic, would begin operations in Haiti, supplementing United Nations food distribution efforts. Haiti was only the first in a series of such missions for which the technical, diplomatic and financial arrangements had already been finalized.

The other missions would be sent to Bolivia, where the objectives were in the health sector; Angola, for the reintegration into civilian life of ex-combatants; Armenia, to restore services damaged by acts of war; and Palestine, to provide occupational training and jobs for young people who had no profession or employment.

One of the most critical factors for the initiative's success was the provision of adequate financial resources for proper operations. The General Assembly had established a distinct window within the UNV Special Voluntary Fund to finance the international deployment of contingents of

"White Helmets". Argentina had already made its first contribution to that window and hoped that other countries would do likewise, so that the system would have enough resources to function properly.

Six months after the initiative's approval by the General Assembly, it was encouraging to note that the political, institutional, operational and financial viability of the exercise had been confirmed. His delegation thus looked forward with optimism to the forthcoming operations of the "White Helmets".

Mr. LOIZAGA CABALLERO (Paraguay) said that his delegation supported the initiative launched by the President of Argentina to provide for the participation of volunteers ("White Helmets") in United Nations activities in the areas of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development, an initiative that had been well received by the entire international community. His delegation had been a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 49/139 B on the "White Helmets" and his Government had been one of the 23 responding in favour of the initiative to the Secretary-General's requests for views on the subject.

Paraguay's position on the issue was fully in line with the principles of international solidarity and cooperation set out in its Constitution. His Government believed that the participation of the "White Helmets" in humanitarian relief activities could help to maximize the effectiveness of such activities. Recent advances in communications technology made it possible to pinpoint rapidly the sites of disasters and the "White Helmets" would make it possible for the international community to reach them rapidly so as to prevent or mitigate the impact of the phenomena. Moreover, the recruitment and training of the "White Helmets" would have the additional benefits of raising general public awareness in the country concerned of disaster prevention and of channelling the energies of young people towards noble aims and towards helping to solve the problems of the world.

The adoption of a resolution on the subject by the Council would help to strengthen the project so that it could soon evolve into a tool for frequent and expeditious use to remedy some of the ills to which all the earth's inhabitants were exposed.

Mr. Papadatos (Greece), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. MANGACHI (United Republic of Tanzania) said he welcomed the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/1995/52) which



described activities carried out in favour of refugees and displaced persons from January 1994 to March 1995. Though progress had been made in dealing with large numbers of refugees in some parts of the world during that period, the Great Lakes region of Africa was still facing the most severe refugee crisis in its history.

The situation in Burundi had deteriorated to the point that it was affecting his country in many ways. Armed forces in Burundi had arrogated to themselves the right of "hot pursuit" across the frontier, thereby jeopardizing his country's territorial integrity. Military provocation of that type would not be tolerated, and his Government was taking appropriate steps to safeguard its borders. However, the crisis in Burundi must be resolved as soon as possible and the international community must help that country's Government to ensure that law, order, stability and respect for human rights were restored.

Tanzania was currently hosting more than one million refugees, over half of them from Rwanda and Burundi, in keeping with its tradition and exemplary record of protecting refugees in accordance with international law. It was one of the very few countries that gave naturalization rights to refugees. Nevertheless, as refugees from Rwanda and Burundi continued to pour into Tanzania and refugee camps became permanent fixtures, its capacity to sustain the refugees was becoming overstrained and insecurity in the camps, resulting in many deaths, had become a real problem. His Government appreciated the support being provided by UNHCR in connection with the security problem.

However, the only durable solution was repatriation. The international community must encourage national reconciliation and the return of refugees to their countries of origin, where conditions must be rendered conducive to resettlement. It could, for example, initiate movements of vulnerable groups of refugees, such as women and children, as a first stage towards a full repatriation operation. That would send a clear psychological message that the other refugees could return to their homelands with confidence.

Tanzania was also under pressure to receive refugees from third parties, contrary to international conventions. The refugees in question were Rwandans who had originally fled to Burundi. Unfortunately, the weakness of the Government of Burundi and the intransigent attitude of the Rwandese authorities complicated the exercise of repatriating them.

Some of the problems his country was facing could have been alleviated had the international donor community adhered fully to the principle of burden-sharing in providing assistance to refugees and to countries of asylum, particularly the LDCs. The donor community and the multilateral funding institutions should provide grants and technical assistance aimed at increasing the capacity of the LDCs to mitigate the socio-economic and ecological impact of refugees as well as for rehabilitation activities.

Mr. MORKVED (Norway), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance (A/50/203-E/1995/79 and Add.1), said that the primary mechanism for responding to complex emergencies was the IASC. It was important, therefore, that all United Nations agencies should participate fully in its work. According to the report, the mechanism of humanitarian coordinators was being used as a complement to the resident coordinator system and IASC had reached agreement on how the humanitarian coordinators were to be selected. That was an important step towards ensuring that coordination structures in the field were as clear as possible; the modalities for the appointment of coordinators must be flexible, since the experience and skills required varied from situation to situation.

Progress had also been made in the preparation and presentation of the consolidated appeals, which were very useful tools. IASC must, however, work towards the setting of more specific priorities within the appeals. As far as possible, the appeals should address, not only immediate humanitarian needs, but also the continuum from prevention to rehabilitation and development. His Government urged all countries to respond favourably to the consolidated appeals and thereby contribute to international burden-sharing. DHA should continue its efforts to involve NGOs in the work of preparing the appeals.

The Secretary-General's report described the expansion of the response capacity of the United Nations system but there were still gaps that need to be filled. Some agencies would continue to have a more developed response capacity than others. It was therefore all the more important to strengthen inter-agency cooperation so that they could all benefit from their comparative advantages.

The agenda developed by the European Union to review the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance called for a consistent

approach by member countries to participation in the executive boards of the various agencies. That would require better coordination among ministries at the national level.

DHA had made progress towards broadening the donor base and increasing the number of timely reimbursements from users of CERF, but there were still loans outstanding. His delegation hoped that the agencies concerned would repay those advances at their earliest convenience. While it recognized the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system for rehabilitation work, it shared the concerns expressed by other delegations regarding the proposal to establish a new rehabilitation window within CERF.

Mr. SHAMSHUR (Ukraine) said that the coordinating functions performed by DHA, including for the programme of emergency assistance to newly independent States were of great significance, though more stress should be laid on the elaboration of preventive measures and on contingency planning. His delegation welcomed the more activist approach being adopted by IASC and thought that the appointment of humanitarian coordinators at the local level and the creation of inter-agency emergency teams should become standard practice. He supported the proposal to increase the volume of CERF while preserving its voluntary character.

Minimization of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster was of particular concern to his Government. While it had a generally favourable opinion of the work of the United Nations Coordinator dealing with the problem, it wondered whether the transfer of responsibility for Chernobyl-related issues to a joint ecological section of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and DHA was really helping to mobilize resources to mitigate the consequences of the world's biggest man-made disaster, since no practical results were visible to date. More experts with first-hand practical experience, including experts from the Ukraine, should be assigned to the work.

Many developments showed that the plight of refugees constituted one of the most pressing of humanitarian concerns. The High Commissioner's report (E/1995/52) testified to the continuing effort by UNHCR to develop a comprehensive approach to the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and migrants in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). His delegation had always endorsed that effort and wished to confirm its support for the convening in 1996 of a regional conference to

address the issues. The preparatory process for the conference should have a businesslike and depoliticized character, be oriented towards devising practical measures to solve the problems facing refugees and migrants in the region and be based on the constructive cooperation of all the parties concerned. The initial part of the preparatory process gave substantial grounds to believe that those objectives could be attained.

Turning to the report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-fourth session (E/1995/24 and Add.1), he said that his delegation supported the proposal to designate 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. Arrangements as part of the preparations for that significant event should contribute to increased awareness of the problems connected with ageing and highlight the need for a common approach.

A noteworthy development had been the adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Although the main responsibility for removing the obstacles to full participation of such persons in social life rested with the States, the United Nations definitely had a responsibility to ensure implementation of the Rules through, inter alia, the establishment of an efficient control mechanism.

His delegation welcomed the completion of the work on the draft world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond and was convinced that its timely consideration and adoption would lay the foundation for a youth-oriented development strategy.

Renewal, reform and reinvigoration of the activities carried out by the various elements of the United Nations system would promote the goals set forth at the World Summit for Social Development. The question of the follow-up to the Summit should be placed on the agenda of the Commission for Social Development for its thirty-fifth session since the Commission would be playing a key role in the implementation of the Summit's decisions.

Mr. EL KHAZEN (Observer for Lebanon) said that the Secretary-General had submitted a detailed and objective report (E/1995/53) on rehabilitation efforts and needs in Lebanon which was seeking to overcome its problems in full cooperation with the United Nations. His Government had established its authority over most of the country, with the exception of the

occupied sectors of the western Bekaa and the south. Lebanon has regained political stability which had enabled it to begin to recover from the effects of war.

His Government had accorded priority to rebuilding essential infrastructures such as electricity, telephone and water-supply networks. Major construction contracts had been signed for that purpose as well as for work on Beirut International Airport and other projects in Beirut. It sought to stabilize the rate of exchange of the Lebanese pound and reverse the flight of capital abroad, was working develop the health infrastructure and trying to rehouse approximately 500,000 displaced persons in their original villages. However, its efforts were being hampered by Israel's continued occupation of parts of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa.

The return of the United Nations and its specialized agencies had helped considerably to restore confidence in the country, and he thanked the agencies, particularly UNDP, for their support and the Secretary-General for the efforts he was making to provide Lebanon with the assistance it needed at the current juncture in its history. The Lebanese authorities were cooperating fully with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to combat the cultivation and processing of and trafficking in narcotic substances. Farmers had been encouraged to grow alternative crops and those who trafficked in narcotic substances had been apprehended and subjected to the maximum legal sanctions.

Lebanon required extensive resources for its reconstruction efforts, and its modest capabilities would not permit it to undertake such efforts on its own. His delegation thus called on the international community and the specialized agencies to mobilize all possible resources so that Lebanon could continue its drive for reconstruction and development.

Draft resolution on strengthening of international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (E/1995/L.34)

Mrs. MULLER (Philippines), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77, China and Mexico, said it dealt with a universal problem that needed to be addressed through cooperation at the global level. To that end, it referred to the Council's decision to adopt such cooperation as the theme for the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1996 and recommended that the General Assembly should consider the proposal to convene an international conference for 1998 for the purpose of evaluating the status

of cooperation in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and determining the steps that should be taken to strengthen the international response to that global menace. The conference could cover such subjects as money laundering, preventive and rehabilitative action, illegal trade in chemical precursors, production and sale of narcotic drugs and development of alternative crops.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (agenda item 6) (continued)

(d) SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1995/L.32)

(n) INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (continued) (E/1995/L.33)

Draft resolution on science and technology for development (E/1995/L.32)

Mrs. MULLER (Philippines), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said it sought to strengthen the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as a unique global forum for advancing international cooperation in that area and urged that the Commission be given the necessary means to carry out that important task.

The draft resolution also sought the full involvement of United Nations funds and programmes in promoting science and technology for development. Among its recommendations were the creation of a catalogue of proved technologies, promotion of access to and transfer of technology, including new and emerging technologies, and enhancement of cooperation for improved research and development capabilities.

Draft decision on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (E/1995/L.33)

Mrs. MULLER (Philippines), introducing the draft decision on behalf of the Group of 77, China and Japan, said that disasters resulting from natural phenomena affected all countries with varying degrees of destruction, but always with catastrophic effect for those that were least equipped to deal with them. The Yokohama Conference had created a momentum for international cooperation on natural-disaster reduction and the draft decision aimed to carry that momentum through to the end of the Decade and to incorporate natural-disaster reduction into sustainable-development planning.

It called for the continued action of all concerned to achieve the effective implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action and for an examination of the options for adequate funding of the Decade's activities with a view to achieving the most efficient use of limited resources.

The draft decision also included a draft resolution for recommendation to the General Assembly which called inter alia for the convening of a closing event of the Decade with a view to consolidating its achievements and ensuring the continuity of international cooperation for natural-disaster reduction.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.