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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

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later: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)

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Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.3/35/SR.41  
25 November 1980  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 69: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/35/361 and Add.1; A/34/855; A/C.3/35/3; A/C.3/35/L.26)

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1. Mrs. SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic), speaking on agenda item 79, International Year of Disabled Persons, said that her country had voiced its full support for the proposal to devote the year 1981 to the special problems of disabled persons and that the present draft world plan of action for rehabilitation of disabled persons met with the general consent of the German Democratic Republic. The effective elimination of discrimination against disabled persons became possible only under a social system where the exploitation of man by man had been eradicated

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(Mrs. Saelzler, German Democratic Republic)

and where the integration of disabled persons in social life was effected not only for charitable reasons but as a task accepted by the whole society and systematically implemented with the full participation of all State, economic and social sectors.

2. In preparation for the International Year of Disabled Persons, the German Democratic Republic had established a government commission under the chairmanship of the Minister of Health and composed of representatives of the education and vocational training sector, the trade unions, the Red Cross and other medical and scientific organizations, the Protestant Church and the associations of blind and deaf-mute persons. The commission had adopted a number of measures for the observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons. Under the comprehensive socio-political programme adopted in the country some years earlier, there existed a uniform system of medical and social care which included manifold measures for the rehabilitation of disabled persons of all age groups. Special facilities had been provided for the education and further training of disabled persons; special groups for disabled children had been established in crèches and special schools had been built for children suffering from defective eyesight or hearing and for aphasic children.

3. There were currently some 30,000 protected places in enterprises in the Republic where ergotherapists were available to look after the disabled directly at their place of work. In recent years the trade unions had been providing an increasing number of places in holiday resorts for disabled persons. Architectural barriers which constituted an obstruction were being eliminated and appropriate housing was being provided for handicapped persons, particularly those using wheel-chairs. The German Democratic Republic centred its activities on two main tasks: the first consisted in the prevention of possible damage to the health of children through a comprehensive medical care programme for pregnant women, delivery under medical supervision and complete prophylactic medical care for children; the second consisted in preventing damage to health caused by war and aggression or resulting from related consequences.

4. With regard to agenda item 73, on the question of a convention on the rights of the child, the German Democratic Republic had observed the International Year of the Child under the motto "For a happy childhood in a world of peace, for friendship among peoples and international security", giving special attention to the impact on children of the terrible aftermath of colonialist exploitation in developing countries. The period of one year had been insufficient to solve all existing problems and it was necessary to ensure that the development initiated in 1979 for the benefit of children was systematically pursued. That implied guaranteeing children's rights to sufficient nutrition, proper education and health care, development of their own talents and the right to recognition of their own personality.

5. Her delegation held the view that the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child should be completed as soon as possible. Such an instrument would constitute a solid basis to ensure the well-being, security and happiness of children. Her delegation welcomed the initiative of the Polish People's Republic

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(Mrs. Saelzler, German Democratic Republic)

in the preparation of such a convention and believed that the proposal submitted to the Commission on Human Rights constituted a valuable basis for that work. It therefore rejected anything that might complicate or impede it. The German Democratic Republic welcomed the provision laid down in resolution 36 (XXXVI) of the Commission on Human Rights that a working group should resume work on the draft convention during the week prior to the next session of the Commission. To support further activities, her country had also joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.14.

6. Mr. ZIFAN (China) said that his delegation held the view that the problems of the elderly and the aged, disabled persons and youth deserved the attention and concern of all national societies and of the international community without regard to differences in social, economic and political systems. In accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, the United Nations should take appropriate measures to ensure adequate attention being given to those problems. With that aim his delegation endorsed in principle the United Nations decisions to convene a World Assembly on the Elderly in 1982 and to designate 1981 and 1985 respectively as International Year of Disabled Persons and International Youth Year.

7. The well-being of the aged had always been a matter of great attention and concern to the Chinese Government. Thus China's Marriage Law stipulated the obligation of parents to bring up and educate their children and the duty of children to aid and provide for their parents, while abuse of the elderly was prosecuted by law. China's Labour Regulations and laws related to work for the aged, the infirm and the disabled stipulated that staff or workers should receive a monthly retirement benefit from the establishment where they worked or from the local government equivalent to 60 to 90 per cent of their pre-retirement wages, depending on seniority. Workers who had made extraordinary contributions received an additional 10 to 15 per cent on their retirement benefits. But in its policy for the aging and the aged, the Chinese Government laid special stress on their being assured of special care, and persons unable to obtain such care by their own means were admitted to government-run social-welfare institutions or nursing homes where they were given the necessary care. In rural communes and brigades, the national programme for agricultural development stipulated that members who were widowed, no longer able to work or otherwise bereft of other means of subsistence, had to be taken care of by the production brigade to assure them of a decent life and burial. Where economic conditions permitted, the members of communes or brigades who had worked for at least 15 consecutive years of collective labour received monthly pensions from the commune or brigade.

8. According to incomplete statistics, his country currently had some 1.6 million blind people, 3 million deaf-mutes, and another 3 million people with other disabilities. As a result of the Government's policy of encouraging productive self-help and community mutual aid, supplemented by the necessary government relief, most of the disabled had become self-supporting workers with stable employment. The Government had also set up factories specifically for the blind and for deaf-mutes. The rural communes and brigades also took account of the

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(Mr. Zifan, China)

special physical conditions of the disabled in the division of labour in agricultural and other production.

9. His country had its own, standardized equivalent of braille for the blind, which facilitated book publication for them. Some blind and deaf-mute people had been promoted to managerial posts or were highly-skilled production workers, engineers or experts. Others had been elected to the National Congress or the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference.

10. His Government had always regarded youth as the country's future. In the past 31 years young people had made significant contributions to the great task of building socialism, and currently the young people of the entire country were vying with one another to advance socialist modernization, learning modern science and technology and acquiring knowledge in all fields so as to be able to make an ever-increasing contribution to the building of a modern socialist country.

11. Finally, his Government was consistently encouraging international contacts between its young people and those of other countries to promote mutual understanding and friendship, and to enhance international solidarity and co-operation. In that context, his delegation paid tribute to the Romanian delegation for its initiative in proposing to the United Nations the proclamation of International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. It likewise applauded the efforts of many delegations to promote understanding, friendship, and co-operation among young people of all countries. His delegation was of the view that the United Nations should devote more attention to the role of young people in the modern world, and to their demands for the world of tomorrow, in order to give full play to the energies, enthusiasm and creative abilities of young people world wide.

12. Mr. ACOSTA (Venezuela) said that the proclamation of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons was a positive development. He was convinced that the results achieved during the Year would effectively contribute to the solution of many of the problems confronting the disabled. In tracking down the roots of those problems, it would be found that the developing countries were the most seriously affected because of rapid population growth and because the principal cause of disablement lay in malnutrition and chronic disease.

13. His Government was very much aware of the seriousness of the problem and had therefore drawn up a plan of action for 1981, based on a diagnosis of the problems prepared by both official and private agencies working in that field. Priority areas had been defined. A preventive campaign to reduce the spread of disability among the population and to reverse the effects of incapacity was in progress. An essential part of that campaign was to provide information and to alert people to the importance of eliminating factors which interfered with human development. At the same time, an early prevention programme was in operation at the child development centres, where interdisciplinary teams were responsible for detecting and evaluating defects in the development of children under the age of three, and providing the necessary care. Preventive treatment at those centres also covered

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(Mr. Acosta, Venezuela)

high-risk mothers. Steps were also being taken for a broad-based social integration programme for the disabled, tailored to fit the specific circumstances of his country. This would be implemented through a teaching programme flexible enough to permit the people concerned to join regular classes in due course. Vocational training would also be provided as part of the programme, so that the disabled could find their place in the country's productive sector. In terms of legislation, bills would be introduced and the necessary amendments made so that the disabled would be legally protected and would be able to enjoy their rightful legal status. At the same time, particular attention would be paid to disability resulting from working or social conditions.

14. He announced that his country had already set up a co-ordinating committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Government was most concerned to ensure that all activities connected with the Year should be given the highest priority. It therefore appealed to all those countries which had not yet set up such committees to do so, and thereby make a valuable contribution to solving the problem.

15. Mr. AL-GHAZALY (Iraq) said that his Government was deeply concerned about the welfare and needs of children. In accordance with its Constitution, a national committee had been established and it had held meetings with representatives of associations involved with child welfare with a view to studying ways of intensifying action in that field. An integrated programme had been drafted to implement the objectives of the International Year. The programme had been approved by the Government and was working satisfactorily. The main elements of the integrated programme included the establishment of a child welfare agency under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the aim of which was to propose amendments to existing legislation and new child welfare laws; the establishment of kindergartens, playgrounds, and centres to develop the artistic and scientific talents of children; the holding of a conference and seminars to study children's problems and to increase awareness of their needs on the part of mothers and other family members; the evaluation of children's services and the study of legislation relating to children; the holding of sports and arts festivals for children. In addition, in 1979, the Government had promulgated a compulsory education law.

16. With respect to the problems of the disabled, his Government had taken steps to implement the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981 by establishing new medical and vocational rehabilitation centres and upgrading existing facilities, supplying the necessary equipment and material to help correct disabilities, exempting material for the rehabilitation of the disabled from customs duty, issuing special passes so that the disabled could travel more easily, making greater efforts to train the necessary staff in the fields of medicine, hygiene and social welfare, guaranteeing the disabled access to certain jobs; and, lastly, adopting effective accident prevention and disease prevention measures, together with the improvement of industrial health and safety.

17. Finally, he pointed out that the Commission on Human Rights had considered the relevant report from his country and had commended it on its exemplary presentation.

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18. Mr. MATELJAK (Yugoslavia) said that the full integration of the disabled as equal members of society was not a matter of humanitarianism; it was the basic human right of the disabled and a moral obligation for society. The attainment of that right was inseparably linked with the general level of economic and social development of each country. As the greatest number of disabled people lived in developing countries, adequate conditions should be created internationally to accelerate their social and economic development and to promote technical assistance, especially in areas of direct benefit to the disabled.

19. Current activities in connexion with preparations for the International Year of Disabled Persons were encouraging. The specialized agencies and other bodies within the United Nations system had taken or were taking steps to participate in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Year. In that respect, UNICEF had decided to make the prevention of physical impairment an integral part of its co-operation and to take a leading role in developing methods to apply existing experience and knowledge to the problems of childhood disability in developing countries. It was also actively supporting efforts to solve the problems of disabled children.

20. In spite of those and other activities there were still serious problems in connexion with the International Year of Disabled Persons, especially the lack of financial resources for implementing the Plan of Action, which required further efforts on the part of all Member States, particularly those that were in a position to make substantial financial contributions. Information activities would also have to be improved substantially. It was likewise very important that the largest possible number of disabled persons should participate actively in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Year at all levels, as well as in all activities connected with the long-term plan of action. His delegation therefore supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that a subitem entitled "Full participation of disabled persons" should be included in the agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

21. His delegation attached particular importance to the holding of a symposium on technical assistance to developing countries in the field of disability and welcomed the offer of the Government of Argentina to host the symposium; UNDP's decision to finance part of the costs of the symposium was also much appreciated. His delegation believed that a part of the resources of the Voluntary Fund for the Year could also be used for covering the cost of the symposium.

22. His delegation also strongly supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee for the revival of the International Institute for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Developing Countries. In its view the revival of that Institute should be one of the important actions in connexion with the Year.

23. With reference to the long-term plan of action recommended by the Advisory Committee, he said his delegation believed that greater emphasis should be placed on the difficult situation of disabled persons in developing countries and on the necessity for creating better international conditions for those countries' accelerated economic and social development. As to the suggestion to convene a world conference of disabled persons, his delegation felt that that recommendation should be examined carefully before a definite decision was taken.

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(Mr. Mateljak, Yugoslavia)

24. The social care of disabled persons was a moral and constitutional obligation in Yugoslavia. Accordingly, a wide network of institutions and services had been developed, specialized staff and financial resources had been provided and a broad legal basis had been elaborated. All of those measures formed an integral part of the social and economic development of the country. As a consequence of that development, Yugoslavia had gradually become a sponsor of and participant in a number of projects of technical assistance and co-operation in the field of disability, primarily with developing countries. In that context it was logical that Yugoslavia had from the outset supported the proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

25. Mr. RAKOTOZAFY (Madagascar) said that the decision to proclaim 1985 International Youth Year and the previous resolutions relating to youth bore witness to the United Nations belief in the importance of youth and its contribution to improving international relations and strengthening peace and security. The central theme of International Youth Year, Participation, Development, Peace, reflected the aspirations of all young people. The international community, despite the differences between social and economic systems, had realized that youth should no longer be considered a social burden but should be seen as a positive force in efforts to establish a new international order based on justice.

26. Since the 1972 revolution, Malagasy youth had liberated itself from the alienation and marginal status resulting from colonialism and imperialism. The Government had formulated a national policy that defined the present and future role of youth. At the national level, that policy was based on the idea of the active integration of youth in all sectors of national life. Young people, who made up more than 65 per cent of the Malagasy population, played an increasingly active role in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. In the political sphere, the voting age had been lowered from 21 to 18 years of age, in order to enable a greater number of young people to participate, and revolutionary youth associations had been established. In the economic sphere, young people participated in the establishment and management of socialist production co-operatives; under a policy of migration to uninhabited areas, unemployment among young people was being lowered. In the social and cultural fields, the Government was taking measures to strengthen the involvement of youth in the society in which they lived.

27. At the international level, Malagasy youth called for peaceful co-operation among States and for mutual understanding among peoples. The Charter of the Malagasy Socialist Revolution established the bases for that action: participation of youth together with the revolutionary forces of the world in the struggle against imperialism and racism; support to national liberation movements; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

28. The problems of youth had an international dimension. As was stated in draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.26, the "preparation and the observance of the International Youth Year will offer a useful and significant opportunity for drawing attention to the situation, needs and aspirations of youth, for increasing co-operation at all levels in dealing with youth issues, for undertaking concerted action programmes in

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(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

favour of youth and for involving young people in the study and resolution of major international, regional and national problems". His delegation was pleased that the problem of the composition of the Advisory Committee for the International Year had been solved at the current session of the General Assembly and hoped that the Advisory Committee would begin its work in 1981. Furthermore, his delegation supported the proposals in the Secretary-General's report (A/35/361).

29. With regard to item 70, "Preservation and further development of cultural values, including the protection, restitution and return of cultural and artistic property", his delegation expressed its gratitude to UNESCO for the work it was doing in that field and to its Director-General for his excellent report contained in document A/35/349. With regard to the establishment of an intergovernmental committee to facilitate the restitution of cultural property to the country of origin, his delegation felt that such a committee would provide an ideal framework for facilitating such transfers. Restitution was an obligation of the countries holding cultural property, and the compensation system proposed by certain States could not be considered a final solution, since it would imply renunciation on the part of some States of their legitimate rights. Also, States that sought the restitution of cultural property had the obligation to establish an infrastructure capable of receiving such property in the context of a specific national cultural policy.

30. Madagascar agreed that the cultural factor was an important element in development. The acceptance of that concept made it possible for each nation, on the basis of its people's own genius, to initiate its own mode of development with the support of all active elements of the population and the use of all of its resources.

31. Mr. MORENO-SALCEDO (Philippines) said that International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, could be seen as an extension of the International Year of the Child. International Youth Year, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, should be considered not as an isolated event but as the foundation of a new edifice: an improved social and economic order for the future. Adolescents and young people had often been relegated to positions of social passivity and dependence, even when economically productive or intellectually capable. Co-operation must be carried out both horizontally and vertically: horizontally, between young people of different nations, and vertically, between the younger and older generations. The generation gap, enormous during the 1960s and gradually narrowing during the 1970s, should be closed during the 1980s.

32. the problems of youth in poor and underdeveloped countries were not the same as those of youth in the rich or developed countries. From the economic standpoint, the youth of developing countries had to contend with unemployment, poverty and deprivation, whereas the youth of rich countries were protected by labour laws. From the social standpoint, the youth of the third world suffered from problems arising from social injustice and a low standard of living, whereas youth in the industrialized countries were often victims of alcoholism and drugs, making them potential juvenile delinquents. From the cultural standpoint, the primary and secondary education that was available to youth in the rich countries was a luxury for the youth of the poor countries.

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(Mr. Moreno Salcedo, Philippines)

33. In the third world there was a clear difference between urban and rural youth. The neediest were those in rural areas, who were forced to work at an early age and had less access to health services and educational opportunities.

34. The Philippines was faced with the typical problems of the third world. Since 56 per cent of the population was under the age of 21, in less than 10 years over 27 million people would have to be absorbed in the country's economy and accommodated into socio-political life. One of the country's main concerns was how to make formal and non-formal education accessible to all young people. The Philippines hoped to raise levels of school attendance among young people in rural areas and increase their productive participation within their respective communities. Vocational training centres would be established for rural areas and employers would be given incentives for employing young people who abandoned school. Government agencies and bodies had also established development and participation programmes for young people. The Kabataang Barangay, a youth group to which 7 million Filipinos of 21 years of age and under belonged, was responsible for many community development programmes. That organization participated in all fields of activity and operated at the local, provincial, regional and national levels with a national executive committee composed of a central body responsible for the organization's programmes and policies and five standing committees handling organization, planning, information, education, finance and other special projects.

35. The concept of young people and their problems differed from region to region and from State to State. In the same way, International Youth Year was viewed differently by developed and developing nations. For the former, the Year would be an opportunity to facilitate contact and co-operation between youth organizations; it would have a psychological and cultural impact and would constitute a means of enhancing the intellectual and cultural development of young people. The developing countries viewed the Year in a more utilitarian light; they hoped to be able to draw the attention of the world to the need to provide young people with an opportunity to work, to be educated and to develop freely. At the same time, the atmosphere of international solidarity should strengthen them in their struggle against colonialism, racism, apartheid and oppression. Thus the third world concept of the year 1985 would be a reflection of some of its most urgent problems: poverty, exploitation, lack of education. His delegation hoped that International Youth Year would succeed in merging those two concepts and would offer adequate solutions to the differing needs of young people throughout the world in accordance with each country's stage of economic development.

36. Mrs. ONYANGO (Kenya) said that her delegation had carefully read the report of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons; the aim of the report coincided with her Government's plans, and her delegation therefore commended the report for adoption. The purpose of the Year was to promote the full participation of disabled persons, who made up nearly 10 per cent of the world population, in the social life and development of the societies in which they lived on a basis of equality. Her delegation hoped that much would be done for that group which had sometimes been treated like an unwanted class.

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(Mrs. Onyango, Kenya)

37. Her Government had taken steps to help the disabled and was determined to facilitate their life in society. It was estimated that in Kenya there were about 280,000 physically handicapped persons, and a survey to obtain more specific information on the number of such persons and the nature of their disabilities was to be conducted.

38. Her Government had also realized that physically handicapped people needed special attention and that was reflected in the National Development Plan for 1979-1983. In the course of the five-year plan, the rehabilitation programme, which currently had 18 centres, would be extended to the entire country.

39. The long-term objective of Kenya's vocational rehabilitation programme was to reach all the disabled persons in the country through assessment, training and resettlement activities. The improvement of transportation services so as to facilitate the access of disabled persons to medical centres continued to be one of her Government's objectives. Similarly, rehabilitation centres would be established in areas which currently had none for the purpose of providing more resettlement and placement opportunities.

40. Up to 1970, her Government had participated in special education mainly by assisting voluntary organizations which conducted programmes for the handicapped; since then, it had assumed greater responsibility for special education. The Government's programme stressed economic rehabilitation rather than handouts in cash or in kind. The goal was to ensure that disabled persons could benefit from programmes which so far had been intended mainly for the able-bodied.

41. Her delegation attached great importance to the activities planned for the International Year of Disabled Persons; Kenya's efforts included a fund-raising rally organized by the President of Kenya which had raised more than 19 million shillings which would be used to construct educational institutions for the disabled and help end the dependence on voluntary contributions for activities for the disabled. For that purpose, President Arap Moi had declared 1980 the National Year for Disabled Persons in Kenya; a Disabled Person's Act was to be promulgated and the National Vocational Rehabilitation Programme would be reviewed.

42. He proposed that during 1981 programmes should concentrate on preventive and curative measures, since it was estimated that 60 per cent of disabilities were acquired and not inherited; regulations on the consumption of drugs and alcohol, which often caused physical or mental disabilities; and the pooling of experience with various regions of the world regarding the cure and treatment of disabled persons and their rehabilitation.

43. Her delegation expressed appreciation to the International Labour Organisation for its constant advice and help on programmes for Kenya's disabled. In conclusion, she said that no disabled person willingly went out into the streets to beg; they were forced to do so by circumstances; they needed consideration rather than pity, and a little more encouragement and assistance. Efforts should be united to help the handicapped live normal physical and emotional lives.

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44. Mrs. ROSER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that her country would be a member of the Advisory Committee of International Youth Year and would therefore be actively involved in the preparations for the Year. The effective participation of young people in the Year was especially important, so that they themselves would promote the other two themes of the Year: Development and Peace.

45. Society in the Federal Republic of Germany was characterized by a great variety of political, social and cultural forces and organizations. Young people formed part of that society and had the right to choose their own orientations and structure their own organizations within the framework of the Constitution. The prime objective of youth work was to promote self-realization, freedom and equality of opportunity, thus strengthening the motivation of young people to participate responsibly in the country's political, social and cultural life. That, in turn, helped young people become integrated into the process of developing and shaping a democratic society.

46. In the Federal Republic of Germany youth work was carried out mainly by voluntary organizations which worked in partnership with the competent public bodies and had a wide variety of objectives including civic education, cultural affairs, work-related programmes, social activities, health and recuperation, youth counselling and international youth exchange. All those activities were considered a legitimate expression of the right of free association and, for that reason, youth aid programmes were supported with public funds.

47. The Youth Welfare Act encompassed a great number of fields and assigned special importance to the concept that not only should young people be helped after their development had been impaired but also such occurrences should be prevented through educational, training and occupational opportunities. The Federal Youth Plan, during its 30 years of existence, had helped overcome prejudice, increase tolerance and foster international understanding and co-operation among young people in order to heighten their awareness of the need for development and lasting peace. Those activities were currently being carried out successfully not only with other European countries but also with developing countries.

48. With regard to draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.27 concerning International Youth Year, her delegation had serious doubts about operative paragraph 6 and requested the Secretariat to provide the Committee with information on the projected financial implications for the entire period in question, namely, up to the end of the International Year in 1985.

49. Mr. BARRINGTON (Ireland) said that the population of his country was, to an unusual degree, made up of young people: over half were under 25, and a total of 30 per cent were under 14. Youth policy was therefore a matter of the highest importance to his Government and was based on the belief that young people were not a unified mass with common problems responsive to stereotyped solutions. For that reason, his Government's policies were drawn up after the closest consultation with voluntary youth organizations, which it regarded as the indicators of and spokesman for the real needs and problems of youth. His Government employed professional youth workers for that purpose who were in contact with young people and were able to give professional advice to youth organizations.

(Mr. Barrington, Ireland)

50. Ireland placed considerable importance in International Youth Year and believed that youth organizations must participate actively in national activities. It felt that the Advisory Committee organizing the Year should be composed of young officials directly concerned with youth programmes and familiar with the aspirations of young people.

51. The Programme of Action for the Year, at the national level, should map out projects to be carried out through secondary schools and youth organizations and set up seminars where young people could meet to clarify their aims, ideals and hopes. There was also a need for education of young people in the use of leisure time by promoting their participation in recreational activities. Young people should also participate in the management of institutions directly concerned with their development. On a wider plane, his delegation would like to see a national and international publicity campaign to highlight the role of youth in society and a call to all countries to review their strategies for the promotion of the well-being of young people, particularly in the areas of health, recreation, social education and employment. His delegation wished to stress that the success of the Plan of Action and of the Year itself would depend upon the capacity to mobilize and inspire young people.

52. Ireland believed that the International Year of Disabled Persons would provide a needed impetus to all countries to tackle more effectively the problems of the disabled so as to ensure their full and equal integration in society. His Government recognized the right of the disabled to full participation and took into account the fact that many disabled persons had become productive members of society through concrete programmes which identified, assessed, developed and trained the disabled in relation to their potential ability to work. For those reasons, adequate resources should be provided for the International Year, at least equal to those allocated to other international years.

53. Ireland had set up a national committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons with the mandate to co-ordinate and stimulate activities which would create a greater awareness of the needs and potential of the disabled and promote their well-being. A Plan of Action for the Year would be published shortly which would refer to services for the disabled and would promote awareness of the needs and abilities of the disabled among politicians, employers, trade unions and the general public. His Government would organize a competition for the entrance of disabled persons into the civil service and it proposed to fill 3 per cent of the jobs in the public service with disabled persons. In addition, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was drawing up a programme to alert trade unionists to the needs of the disabled, and the Union of Voluntary Organizations for the Handicapped would draw up projects in the areas of employment, education and public attitudes.

54. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) said that the objective of the international years dedicated to the elderly and to disabled persons was, above all, to integrate them into the over-all population and their respective societies. That integration was *necessary* for developmental, social and humanitarian reasons. The solutions found to humanitarian and social problems very often contributed to the development process.

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(Mrs. Devaud, France)

55. The disabled must be included not only in the working world but also in all social and cultural activities, and they must be afforded all human rights. The International Year of Disabled Persons should be a good opportunity for bringing about a far-reaching change in outdated traditional attitudes and promoting awareness of the need for social investment in special education for the disabled, not only in their own interest but also in that of all mankind.

56. Mr. Garvalov (Bulgaria) took the Chair.

57. It had not so far been sufficiently stressed that the problems of the elderly and those of young people were linked and, demographically speaking, presented a new aspect: the risk that in the years to come the entire structure of society would be changed. It was the first time that four or five generations were coexisting and the great increase in life expectancy in developed countries, which was beginning to appear in developing countries as well, meant that the number of persons over 60 would double in the next five years. Moreover, while in the developed countries falling birth rates were causing a crisis, in the developing countries the increase in the population had not been checked and the demographic problem persisted because the inactive population represented a very heavy burden on the active population. During International Youth Year and the year dedicated to the elderly, it would be necessary to consider carefully the problem of facing that situation and ensuring that the active population, which was hardly increasing at all, would be able to support the burden of an inactive population composed of young people and elderly persons whose needs were constantly increasing and who were demanding better living conditions. The problem lay in finding the means to meet such needs.

58. The fact that there were many elderly persons who could continue to work and were able to take care of themselves had not been properly studied. In addition, there was the group of totally dependent persons, whose number was gradually increasing, posing the problem of collective services for the aged.

59. Speaking on the question of youth, she stressed the need to impart to young people a human and humanistic training so that they would maintain an open attitude towards the needs of the world and, at the same time, the need to provide them with not only vocational but also basic training so that they could adapt to the changes in technology and face the problem of unemployment.

60. Finally, her country firmly supported the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child and, in 1978, had joined Poland in sponsoring a resolution requesting the conclusion of such an instrument. The situation of children had never been so tragic as at present. A meeting held recently at Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had considered the appalling situation of refugee children in all parts of the world. Accordingly, her delegation urged that the convention on the rights of the child should soon become a reality.

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61. Miss HERATA (Sri Lanka) said that the subject of youth had always been in the forefront of the policies of the current Government of Sri Lanka. As in many developing countries, the demographic structure in Sri Lanka showed a remarkably youthful population. In 1977, 60 per cent of the total population had been below the age of 24. The crucial age group between 15 and 25 constituted some 20 per cent of the total population. Because of the system of free education, the literacy rate for that age group was very high, about 90 per cent, highlighting the potential for the positive involvement of youth in development and employment. In recognition of the complexity of the problems facing young people and the need to have them participate fully in the development of the country, a Minister of Youth Affairs and Employment had been appointed for the first time in Sri Lanka in 1978. The Government of Sri Lanka firmly believed that youth representation in all national political and social institutions should be encouraged and facilitated.
62. Sri Lanka saw policies for youth as an integral part of the over-all strategy for economic and social development. In that context, it focused in its development programmes on the need to foster an awareness of social and economic problems and a sense of the dignity of labour. Voluntary service was an integral part of programmes for youth. In view of the benefits of that tradition for the individual, the environment and the community, her country had offered to share its experience with the international community during International Youth Year, proposing that youth from different countries should meet in a developing country or an underdeveloped area of a developed country and work together on some rural or urban project. That type of project would usefully complement the international conference.
63. Her country agreed with the Secretary-General's view that International Youth Year should be seen as a step in a long-term planning and development process; in that connexion, it welcomed the Committee's decision concerning the appointment of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, in which Sri Lanka was proud to participate, and hoped that the Advisory Committee would be able to start work without further delay on the preparation of a programme for the Year.
64. Her country supported the suggestion concerning short-term internships for young people, in the regional offices as well as at Headquarters, to increase their awareness of United Nations activities. The suggestions might be broadened to cover the United Nations country missions where programmes for youth could usefully be organized in the national languages.
65. Mrs. TASHIBEKOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that her delegation supported international co-operation on a footing of equality among all countries in the promotion of human rights. She hoped that such co-operation would be achieved in accordance with the Charter on a legal basis. The Human Rights Covenants could provide such a basis, since they imposed specific obligations on States. They covered a broad range of specific rights and freedoms.
66. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had participated in the preparation of both Covenants; it had pressed for a single document, and in the long run had



(Mrs. Tashibekova, USSR)

been proved right. General Assembly resolution 32/130 showed the indivisible nature of human rights. The category of social and economic rights had come into being as a result of support by the USSR and other socialist countries. The USSR had been the first member of the Economic and Social Council to ratify the Covenants, which was only natural since the rights they embodied were a fact of everyday life in her country. The Constitution of the USSR guaranteed the social, economic, political, and cultural rights of all. The Covenants provided for an international mechanism for implementing their provisions: the Human Rights Committee, which had recently expressed its satisfaction with the report submitted by the USSR and had confirmed that there was no need for changes in that country's domestic legislation to bring it into conformity with the Covenants. The report of the USSR had also been found satisfactory by the Working Group of the Economic and Social Council. The USSR guaranteed the right to work, freedom of association and the right to join a trade union, the right to leisure, and social security and freedom to choose one's type and place of work. However, other reports showed that not all countries respected those rights or included them in their legislation. Failure to guarantee the right to work, at a time of growing unemployment, was a matter of particular concern.

67. With regard to the positive results of the second session of the Working Group set up by the Economic and Social Council, she hoped that the Working Group and the Human Rights Committee would continue their consideration of that matter in order to contribute to the development of friendly relations among States.

68. One of the important activities of the United Nations in the social sector was the strengthening of international co-operation in questions relating to human rights. First of all, the International Covenants should be ratified by all countries, but some countries, including the United States of America, were not yet parties to them. There were countries which spoke loudly about individual rights in the world but did not respect those rights themselves.

69. The recent signing of the Covenants by a person who did not represent anyone was contrary to law and had no legal force. The abominable farce of the Pol Pot régime was an insult to the memory of more than 3 million Kampuchéans tortured by that Government, and the signing of the Covenants was an attempt to discredit an international instrument and human rights themselves.

70. As to the comments of the Netherlands representative, he would do better to explain why his country was waiting so long to ratify the Covenants. With regard to the mentally ill, moreover, she recalled that in October 1979 the European Court had noted that the rights of the mentally ill were being violated in the Netherlands and that the Van Dyke Parliamentary Commission had reported in April 1979 that psychiatric treatment in the Netherlands did not respect the rights of citizens because it included electro-shock, brain operations, castration and sterilization.

71. Miss MONTEIRO (Mozambique) said that the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique warmly welcomed the General Assembly resolutions designating 1985 as International Youth Year and establishing channels of communication among the United Nations, governments and youth organizations. Those channels of

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(Miss Monteiro, Mozambique)

communication should contribute to a multilateral approach to the problems of the world's youth and facilitate the exchange of views regarding the struggle of the peoples for freedom, peace, development and the promotion of social, political, economic and cultural co-operation at the international level. Young people represented the guarantee of the nation and the hope of the people for better living conditions.

72. The FRELIMO Party in Mozambique had assigned to youth the noble task of participating in the building of socialism in the country. The Organization of Mozambican Youth (OJM) had been formed in 1977 to give young people a sense of their historical responsibilities and their duty to help achieve the objectives of national reconstruction.

73. The young people were involved in all activities of the nation in both the rural and urban sectors. They organized the unemployed, who enlisted in brigades working on economic and social projects, and thus gained experience in various skills which would later enable them to play active roles in the country's economic sector. The young people also participated in the fight against illiteracy and assumed responsibilities relating to the enrichment and dissemination of culture and traditions.

74. The young people's task was implemented all over the country through youth clubs which promoted cultural interaction and provided a means of sharing experience and improving relations between young people and workers. Cultural festivals and tours in which youth from other countries participated were organized.

75. The role of OJM was to educate youth with regard to its international duties, friendship with young people from all over the world and its responsibility for supporting the struggle of oppressed peoples against colonialism, racism, apartheid, zionism, neo-colonialism and imperialism and for international peace and security and the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.