



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 70th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)

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

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)
(A/35/3/Add.2, A/35/3/Add.18, A/35/3/Add.22, A/35/3/Add.23 and Corr.1, A/35/3/Add.27, A/35/3/Add.28, A/35/3/Add.33, A/35/3/Add.34, A/35/3/Add.37 and Corr.1; A/35/120, A/35/148, A/35/199, A/35/231, A/35/259, A/35/260, A/35/265, A/35/266, A/35/270, A/35/272, A/35/273, A/35/356, A/35/340, A/35/348, A/35/363, A/35/405, A/35/419, A/35/426, A/35/431, A/35/450, A/35/522, A/35/543 and Corr.1, A/35/614, A/35/622; A/C.3/35/1, A/C.3/35/10, A/C.3/35/11, A/C.3/35/12, A/C.3/35/13; A/C.3/35/L.52/Rev.1, A/C.3/35/L.54, A/C.3/35/L.60, A/C.3/35/L.61, A/C.3/35/L.64, A/C.3/35/L.66, A/C.3/35/L.68, A/C.3/35/L.69, A/C.3/35/L.70, A/C.3/35/L.71, A/C.3/35/L.74, A/C.3/35/L.76, A/C.3/35/L.77, A/C.3/35/L.78, A/C.3/35/L.79, A/C.3/35/L.84, A/C.3/35/L.85, A/C.3/35/L.86, A/C.3/35/L.88; E/1980/14; E/CN.4/1365, E/CN.4/1366)

1. Mr. RODRIGUEZ MEDINA (Colombia), speaking on behalf of Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and Colombia, the five countries of the Andean Pact, said that in 1979 those countries had submitted a draft resolution which had been adopted by consensus by the General Assembly as resolution 34/152. The report of the Secretary-General on improvement of the methodology for monitoring social trends (A/35/340), submitted in pursuance of that resolution, was a disappointment to the Andean countries. Once again they appealed to the international community to resist speaking of the poor in abstract terms and, instead, to identify who they were, where they were and the real degree of their poverty. The report, far from indicating measures that had been taken to improve the methodology for monitoring social trends and to co-ordinate the efforts of the international community in that area, was limited to describing the action taken by various bodies within the system. Thus, the opportunity to find indicators which reflected the social needs of poor countries was being lost.

2. It was not sufficient to indicate the work done by various international agencies, since there were dozens of United Nations documents which daily provided information on the progress made in that field. An example was the progress report of the Secretary-General on national and international work on social indicators (E/CN.3/517), which stated that in many developing countries there was considerable interest on the part of planning authorities in the development of social indicators for monitoring the rate and impact of socio-economic development and assessing the impact of programmes and policies on social conditions. All United Nations documents on the subject pointed to that need.

3. It was precisely in the Third Committee, the Committee on social questions, that the Andean countries wished to express their concern because they did not share the views of those who believed that those items should be taken up in the Second Committee, which dealt with economic questions. They were convinced of the need to formulate a new theory of development measured by social indicators. The overwhelming majority of the indicators currently used were merely quantitative - that is to say, economic - indicators. Undoubtedly they were useful for assessing the level of industrialization and commercialization of a country or a given sector; however, in order to measure social progress and human welfare, social indicators were needed, and that was the business of the Third Committee. If it was agreed that the goal of development must be the human person and not mere production of

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(Mr. Rodriguez Medina, Colombia)

goods and services and that development must be seen in terms of meeting human needs for all with equality and social justice, community participation and protection of the environment, then all must agree that only a system of integrated social indicators could directly reflect those changes.

4. The Third Committee had long been concerned with human rights and had maintained that such rights included not only political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights. It was also the Third Committee which should see to it that development served to achieve the vertical growth of the human person with the full exercise of all rights. Development must be a process of service to mankind. However, the goal must be attained not by social terrorism or statistical hysteria but, rather, by finding indicators which would show the different stages of growth, development and social progress. That would make it possible to know the basic needs of the poorest countries, to improve the services of the more developed countries and to contribute to the well-being of the industrialized countries. To that end, the Andean countries believed, the Third Committee and the Secretariat should carry out fully the mandate set forth in part II of resolution 34/152.

5. Lastly, his delegation wished to express to the Government and people of Italy the solidarity felt by the Andean countries with respect to the grief, sorrow and tragedy that had afflicted the Italian people in the recent earthquake.

6. Mr. BERGTHUN (Norway) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work being done on the question of indigenous peoples in the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights. Since the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in 1978, very little had been done in that regard even though the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Martínez Cobo, had been carrying out a study on the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations. The Special Rapporteur should be given all the necessary assistance by the Secretariat and the Division of Human Rights in order to finish that study as soon as possible.

7. Norway and the other Nordic countries had already taken concrete action to give expression to their concern for the promotion of the interests and human rights of indigenous peoples. In that connexion, it might be relevant to note the valuable work being done by the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs. His delegation hoped that the next general assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, to be held in 1981 at Canberra, Australia, could provide the basis for more active and constructive interest within the international community.

8. Mrs. SEMICHI (Algeria) said that her delegation would limit its remarks to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Social Aspects of the Development Activities of the United Nations (E/1981/3). It was important to note that before making its recommendations, the Working Group had concluded that the "social" aspects of development were those related to the problem of ensuring that development would become an increasingly people-oriented process, that is, a process directed at all people, both as beneficiaries and as agents of development. With regard to the statement in paragraph 6 of the report, her delegation believed

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(Mrs. Semichi, Algeria)

that there would be an opportunity at a later stage to proceed with an in-depth study of the contents of the report and would like to express its appreciation for the recommendations set forth in chapter II of that report, particularly with respect to the legislative bodies of the United Nations. In that connexion, it was encouraging to note that the Working Group had stressed the primary responsibility of the Third Committee for social development and had made a distinction between its work and that of the Second Committee, as set forth in paragraphs 80 to 85 of its report.

9. With regard to the recommendations for improving the work of the Economic and Social Council, her delegation noted with interest the suggestion that the Bureau of the Council should convene working meetings with the presiding officers of the subsidiary bodies, organize pre-sessional briefings on the agenda of every regular organizational session and organize informal consultations concerning the issues on the agenda. She also hoped that the Commission for Social Development would take due note of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 92 and 93 of the report. The recommendations regarding the Commission on the Status of Women were all the more important in the light of the resolutions adopted by the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. In that connexion, her delegation believed that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had an essential role to play in ensuring effective Secretariat support in the implementation of the resolutions adopted at Mexico City and Copenhagen. In conclusion, she said her delegation believed that the report of the Working Group should be studied further in order to ensure a more harmonized economic and social development.

10. Mr. BELTRAMINO (Argentina) said that the promotion of social development, in accordance with Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter, had received the preferential attention of his delegation, upon whose initiative the General Assembly had approved the Declaration on Social Progress and Development on 11 December 1969. Argentina appreciated the efforts being made to achieve greater efficiency in the implementation of United Nations resolutions and decisions relating to the social aspects of the development activities of the United Nations, as provided for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/45. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be in a position to develop a series of programmes that would not be limited to special groups of the least advantaged population but would also include the three aspects of co-operation envisaged in Article 55 of the Charter. However, humanitarian concerns could not be dealt with in a compartmentalized fashion, apart from the other aspects of social and economic development. The Report on the Distribution of Income (A/35/231) centred on the differences between rural and urban areas and referred to only one of the aspects that must be studied, since General Assembly resolution 33/48 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2074 (XLII) requested that a report should be prepared on income distribution in general. The reference to Argentina in paragraph 39 was not very clear, since his country was one of the major exporters of grains and meats and its population did not suffer from food shortages. Concerning the improvement of the methodology for monitoring social trends (A/35/340), his delegation was glad to observe that the document recognized that the per capita gross national product should be supplemented by other indicators of socio-economic progress.

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(Mr. Beltramino, Argentina)

11. The illegal drug traffic had become one of the most pernicious criminal activities in the modern world. States should adopt measures to prevent and repress such illegal traffic, not only for the moral and physical health of their populations but also because the internationalization of that phenomenon meant that the relaxation of control in one country had harmful repercussions on the rest. International co-operation should be strengthened, especially at the regional level. He welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/22, which urged the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control to assist the Permanent Secretariat of the Conference of the South American Agreement on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in carrying out a study of the present situation in the region, identifying the resources available and the programmes to be implemented in pursuance of the Agreement.

12. Education should include efforts to prevent drug abuse and similar evils, since youth was the great hope of humanity. His delegation had noted with satisfaction that the tasks being carried out by UNESCO tended to comply with the objectives of General Assembly resolution 34/170 and that there had been a considerable increase in the allocations for that purpose in the 1981-1983 budget. Argentina had sent abroad specialists in various branches of education and had admitted many students, especially from Latin America; it provided foreign students with free education under the same conditions as Argentine students.

13. His delegation had attentively followed the debate on the points relating to human rights in agenda item 12. Argentina's active participation in the United Nations and in the efforts to promote the full implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms was in keeping with the tradition established in Argentina since the beginning of its independence, as embodied in its national constitution and laws. The accomplishment of the objectives of the Charter in the field of human rights required a long period of time, precisely because the institutions and machinery were not perfect. It was essential that everyone should respect both unalterable principles, such as the sovereignty of States, and the political, economic and social reality of each State. For that reason, Argentina was concerned about the recent tendency in the United Nations to present partial and self-interested aspects of reality. Another disturbing trend was that towards differentiation according to countries, regions or groups of persons, under which an objective and universal value such as human rights was recognized as valid in one case but not in another. Respect for the principle of the sovereignty and sovereign equality of all States Members of the Organization, on which the United Nations system was based, was of fundamental importance. His delegation felt compelled to make that observation because there were certain positions which tended to interfere with the political, economic or social organization of particular States and exert political pressure on them, through the promotion of United Nations activities said to be aimed at the defence of human rights. In that connexion, he recalled the decision taken by the Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries at Havana, which condemned the exploitation by the great Powers of questions relative to human rights as a political instrument in confronting different social systems with the purpose of intervening in the internal affairs of other States. Regarding the reference made in the Committee to the modus operandi for the protection of human rights in some regional organizations, he observed that no Committee or working group could prejudge the existence of presumed violations of human rights, nor ignore the violence in some countries that had become the victims of armed aggression without a formal declaration of war.

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(Mr. Beltramino, Argentina)

14. The appropriate and impartial application of the existing machinery of the Organization, the co-operation of all Member States, the strengthening of national institutions in each State, the holding of seminars, the elimination of approaches which led to unnecessary confrontations between States, and lastly, the application of norms uniformly to all situations, groups of persons and States would enable the Organization to attain the high goals defined in the Charter.

15. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius) said that the question of education would be dominant in the consideration of the new world order. There were hundreds of millions of uneducated and illiterate men, women and children a figure that by the end of the century might reach one billion if current trends continued. To that number must be added hundreds of millions more who had an education barely sufficient to meet the standard of knowledge required to cope effectively with the rising complexities of national problems.

16. Draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.68 on the right to education placed the burden of implementation on Governments, demonstrating a painful paradox: the very Governments which at the United Nations adopted resolutions to deal with life-and-death issues did not enjoy the backing of their own people, mainly because of ignorance or insufficient education to digest the moral and technological problems involved. However, literacy was not enough today, when international problems were growing too complex for even the most advanced Governments with the most advanced concepts of a progressive social order. One of the merits of the draft resolution was that it carried the scope and the standard of the educational process beyond the ground-floor level of literacy to a complete primary education and paved the way to a secondary education on a free and compulsory basis. Mauritius had a full educational programme from the primary level up to the doctorate. But the draft resolution realistically took account of the budgetary limitations of Governments and went far when it recommended a right to universal and gradually free secondary education. His delegation felt that the gradualness should be somewhat speeded up in a policy that gave education a higher priority. Governments might consider the close relationship of education to a speeded-up tempo of development and, on that premise, incorporate education as a component of the infrastructure for development. The draft resolution should be regarded by Governments as a mandate for action, not merely a recommendation. More than a right, education was now an imperative. The right to education today included the newly recognized right of women to education on an equal basis. His delegation was happy to note the tribute to UNESCO in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution and hoped that it would bring the United Nations and UNESCO into closer partnership. In so far as it was founded on the need to win entire peoples over to governmental ideals and objectives, the draft resolution was just as much a concern of the developed as of the developing nations. It should therefore be adopted unanimously.

17. Mr. WHYTE (United Kingdom) said that although the Committee had on its agenda a number of related and primarily "social" items, those subjects had been dealt with piecemeal and little or no attempt had been made to see their interrelationship, the close connexion between social development and human rights and the link between social and economic development. That failure to come to grips with the important issues in the General Assembly was all the more remarkable when one considered the

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(Mr. Whyte, United Kingdom)

important developments which had taken place during the past year, such as the adoption of the International Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade and the publication of the Brandt Commission Report and the World Bank's 1980 World Development Report. Another recent event which could act as a catalyst in improving the General Assembly's performance was the issuance of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Social Aspects of the Development Activities of the United Nations (E/1981/3). His delegation had made a rather critical statement on the first draft of the report; since that time, the draft had been extensively revised, and his delegation was glad to see that some of its comments had been taken into account. The Working Group had surely identified the core of the problem in suggesting that the main task of the United Nations was to improve the capacity to put its social development goals into practice. There was a need to improve the quality of the work of the social sub-bodies of the Council, especially the Social Development Commission. His delegation wished Mrs. Shehani well as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group in the difficult task of putting into practice the general philosophy of the report. The problem was one of consciousness-building, that is, of ensuring that the social element was taken fully into account in discussion and decision making in the United Nations system, especially in relation to economic development and development assistance.

18. The discussion of social items was closely related to the question of human rights, as was recognized in the Charter, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development. The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group drew attention to that interrelationship and rightly took into account the work under way in the Commission on Human Rights.

19. Civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights complemented and reinforced each other. Yet although human rights were indivisible and interdependent, they did not all have to be pursued in exactly the same way. It was recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that many of the rights mentioned in it were of a different nature from those set forth in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and that, with the best will in the world, Governments could not guarantee some economic and social rights that were in the nature of collective goals to which mankind could aspire. For the same reason, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights did not provide for the strict implementation machinery set up in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, the pursuit, and even the achievement, of economic, social and cultural rights could not be an excuse for neglecting political and civil rights. The two sets of rights interacted both nationally and internationally, and in a truly democratic society, where individual political rights were respected and there was participation in the decision-making process, people shared more effectively in economic and social development. Neglect of that factor had led to the collapse or overthrow of a number of régimes in recent years, and it was no accident that victims of violations of civil and political rights were often those who were working to promote the realization by deprived groups of economic, social and cultural rights.

20. The concept of the right to development could be traced to some of the fundamental human rights documents, such as the Charter, the Universal Declaration

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(Mr. Whyte, United Kingdom)

of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; it was in a very early formative stage and required an open-minded and unhurried debate with the aim of reaching a workable definition, so that the international community could build from a generally accepted base. The concept tended to be seen against the background of demands for a new international economic order, but the core of the right to development was the personal fulfilment of the individual and the enrichment of his life. The main responsibility for development rested with the developing countries themselves in the light of their national circumstances, their priorities and their policy choices. At the same time, the international community was committed to the promotion of the individual's dignity and well-being. When demands for the international transfer of resources came from developing countries in which there was great internal economic and social inequality and political oppression, they were likely to be received less favourably.

21. Document A/35/231 was a useful and commendably brief analysis of the limited but important part of the subject area referred to in General Assembly resolution 33/40 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/24, and it underlined the oversimplifications which could occur in complex situations. The United Kingdom looked forward to further contributions in time for consideration at the next session of the Commission for Social Development, to which the document should be referred for detailed consideration.

22. His delegation hoped that in 1981 the Committee would hold a fuller and more comprehensive debate on social development and related topics on the basis of the discussions and recommendations of the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, as well as those of the Commission on Human Rights, in further elucidation of the concept of the right to development. Such a discussion must help to supplant the view that economic matters were of legitimate and overriding international concern, while social matters and human rights were of lesser and mainly national concern; it would help to show that economic, social and human rights matters were all inseparable ingredients in the process of making life more tolerable for individual human beings.

23. Mrs. EFTEKHARI (Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, in response to references made during the debate on agenda item 12 with regard to alleged violations of human rights in Iran, that, as everyone was aware, the Iranian people had made tremendous sacrifices in lives and property in order to bring about a basic change in the economic, political and cultural structures within Iranian society, and Iran was currently going through a difficult period of reorganization and reconstruction. The purpose of those sacrifices was not, as some mistakenly assumed, to gain international praise. The Iranian people had not yet forgotten the praise that the international community had ostentatiously given the régime of the Shah even though it was well established that his régime had been one of the most brutal and inhuman régimes in the world. The international community had forgotten about human rights in Iran because most countries of the world had enjoyed profitable relations with the Iranian monarchy. Moreover, the Iranian people had not made its sacrifices in order to secure extra privileges for certain minorities in Iran. All Iranians were going through the current period

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(Mrs. Eftekhari, Iran)

together, and no single group was receiving any better or worse treatment than others. It was interesting to note that none of the delegations which had deceptively shown concern for human rights had objected to the murder of Iranians by indiscriminate bombing and the use of surface-to-surface missiles against residential centres in Iran.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.55 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/C.3/35/L.53/Rev.1, L.58, L.59/Rev.1, L.87, L.89, L.90)

Draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.53/Rev.1

24. Mrs. FLOREZ BRIDA (Cuba) said that as a result of intensive consultations, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.53/Rev.1 had agreed that in the eleventh preambular paragraph and in paragraph 1 of the operative part, the phrase "within the existing structures of the United Nations system" should be deleted. That concession reflected the sponsors' spirit of compromise and goodwill. Furthermore, in paragraph 7, the words "which is essential for" should be changed to "which is an essential element for".

25. Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland) said that although there had been intensive consultations in connexion with draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.53/Rev.1 and his delegation appreciated the changes which had been made by the sponsors in a spirit of co-operation, his delegation continued to have substantial difficulties with the draft resolution. He had referred previously to General Assembly resolution 32/130; his delegation had not originally supported that resolution, and it attached importance not to the exact phrases the resolution contained but to its value as the first major contribution by the non-aligned countries to the continuing debate in the United Nations about the nature of human rights and the machinery needed for their realization. The dialogue which had led to the adoption of that resolution had continued. Draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.53/Rev.1, even as revised took insufficient account of civil and political rights. Nevertheless, after intensive consultations, and noting the further changes made in the draft resolution, his delegation would not insist on a vote on its amendments and would prefer to continue the discussion in the Commission on Human Rights and at the next session of the General Assembly. Every delegation had the sovereign right to submit amendments, but since intensive and delicate consultations had taken place, his delegation hoped that the Committee would proceed directly to a vote on the draft resolution and that there would be no more amendments.

26. Mr. EDIS (United Kingdom) said that much of what he had planned to say had already been said by the representative of Ireland. His delegation appreciated the changes made by the sponsors in the draft resolution, and, on the understanding that there would not be a vote on draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.58, since it was to be revised, it would not press its amendments. It still maintained its reservations and would therefore be unable to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

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27. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that her delegation had not been invited to join in the intensive consultations. It continued to support the amendments which had been submitted but, in a spirit of compromise, would take up only two of them.

28. The fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.53/Rev.1 should be amended to read: "Recognizing that the efforts of States and of the United Nations for the promotion of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights should go hand in hand with the establishment of the new international economic order in order to ensure the full enjoyment of those rights".

29. She requested a roll-call vote on the inclusion of the words "with appreciation" in the twelfth preambular paragraph.

30. Paragraph 3 should be amended to read: "Stresses the fundamental importance of the establishment of the new international economic order to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone".

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.