



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
(continued) (A/C.3/35/3/Add.19; A/35/286; A/C.3/35/7; A/35/542)

- (a) WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN (A/CONF.94/35;
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AGENDA ITEM 83: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
(A/35/428; A/C.3/35/L.16)

1. Mrs. BAJPAI (India) said that her delegation was happy to note the progress that had been achieved as a result of the efforts started during the International Women's Year, particularly in creating an awareness among Governments and people of the need to improve the status of women and integrate women in development - objectives to which her country was firmly committed.
2. In India the cause of equality had been strengthened by the struggle for independence. Under an enlightened leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who had spoken up for the equality of women at a time when they did not have equal rights even in the colonizing country, the women of India had made steady progress which had culminated in their participation as equals in the independence struggle. Their role in that struggle had won mass support for the women's movement and had equipped women to play a leading part in the life of the country. Those were the precedents for India's election of a woman as the leader of the nation in 1966, nine years before the observance of International Women's Year and the proclamation of the Decade for Women, and again at the beginning of the present year.
3. India's Constitution guaranteed equality of rights to women. Article 14 provided for equal protection before the law for all persons. Article 15 provided that the State should not discriminate against any citizen on grounds solely of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and article 16 contained similar provisions against discrimination in employment or public office. Legislation enacted since independence also covered property rights and equal pay for equal work. The problem now was to ensure full enjoyment of the rights that were guaranteed and, more important, to ensure economic and social development, progress and prosperity, to be shared equally by men and women. However, there were economic, social, financial and attitudinal constraints which could not be overcome by legislative or administrative action alone: education and persuasion were the basic tools in a democracy.

(Mrs. Bajpai, India)

4. Her Government was committed to eradicating illiteracy and providing universal education. Primary education was provided free and secondary and university education, at nominal cost. The enrolment of girls at primary level had increased from 25.01 million in 1975-1976 to 28.20 million in 1978-1979 and, at secondary level, from 2.5 million in 1975-1976 to 2.8 million in 1978-1979. Universal literacy would require an enrolment of 45.2 million children in the 6-14 age group by 1982-1983 and if 100 per cent of girls were to be enrolled, there would be 31.5 million girls in schools. Strenuous efforts were being made to overcome the social and economic problems that inhibited full enrolment. Provision had been made for more women teachers and for free textbooks, clothing and midday meals.

5. The female work force was at present 90 million and was expected to increase to 95 million by 1983. There were more than 20,000 women doctors, 23,450 university lecturers and 100,000 schoolteachers; there were also women Cabinet ministers, governors, chief ministers, judges, lawyers, engineers and diplomats.

6. In the health sector, where the major objectives were control and eradication of communicable diseases, provision of curative, preventive and promotional services and training of medical and paramedical staff for the integrated health centre system, considerable progress had been made and women's life expectancy had risen from 48.8 years in 1971-1976 to 51.6 years in 1976-1980. The task was gigantic for India had a total female population of 270 million.

7. The main obstacles to effective implementation of the various programmes for women were limited financial resources and competing claims and priorities. It was therefore of the utmost importance that all available resources should be utilized as efficiently as possible.

8. The World Conference at Copenhagen had been a success in that it had achieved its aims. Having participated actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee, the discussions in the Commission on the Status of Women and in the Conference itself, her delegation had no hesitation in endorsing that view. The Programme of Action, which was the result of a great deal of preparation and discussion involving Member States as well as international agencies and non-governmental organizations, was a valuable contribution to the advancement of women all over the world. Its recommendations, which covered a wide range of issues and included special measures for assistance to women in southern Africa and to Palestinian women, should be implemented.

9. The integration of women in development was a multisectoral and multidisciplinary objective and she welcomed its inclusion, along with the recommendations of the Copenhagen Conference, in the consensus reached at the recent special session of the General Assembly convened to work out the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. Women's fuller participation on an equal basis with men would have a significant effect on the efforts to establish the new international economic order.

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(Mrs. Bajpai, India)

10. It was difficult to understand the disappointment expressed by some delegations because politics had been injected into the Conference. Politics was not the exclusive preserve of men and unless women participated in politics, there could be no genuine women's emancipation. As the Secretary-General of the World Conference had stated, there was no issue which did not concern women as much as it did men, although there were some issues which concerned women even more than men. On the other hand, she hoped that it would now be possible for the participants to look beyond transient political considerations at the totality of human interests and to join together in a common cause. Her Government was examining the Programme of Action with a view to formulating strategies and plans for implementation, and hoped that all Member States would follow that example.

11. As a member of the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, India had been able to observe closely the excellent work the Fund was doing and was pleased to note that the Fund was receiving the utmost co-operation from other international organizations, in particular UNDP. She noted from document A/35/523 that UNDP had supported 155 projects in 46 different countries.

12. If the Fund was to continue the role envisaged for it, however, it would need adequate resources, and in view of the variety and complexity of projects submitted, it would not be unrealistic to anticipate expenditure of \$6 million annually by 1981 and \$10 million annually before the end of the Decade. She suggested that consideration might be given to accepting contributions in local currency, to help Member States with foreign exchange difficulties and contributions in kind, particularly in the form of technical assistance. She hoped that resources would be found from the regular budget to finance the essential policy-making posts in the regional commissions when the Voluntary Fund ceased to be able to support them after 1981.

13. India had become a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 30 July 1980. Having participated in the formulation of the Convention, India was gratified that the Convention had already been signed by 80 countries. It intended to implement the Convention as fully as possible.

14. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) pointed out that women had made considerable progress in the five years between the Mexico and Copenhagen Conferences. At Copenhagen there had been a discipline in debate which showed that women were quietly advancing towards their political coming of age, as well as a general recognition that the problem of women was a problem of society. Moreover, the regional commissions had met to prepare regional programmes of action and the Economic Commission for Europe - which had never before discussed the question of women - had met in Paris in 1979 to deal with the situation of women, particularly in the economy. At the international level, a great deal had been achieved by the specialized agencies, and it was gratifying that the General Assembly, at its eleventh special session, had agreed to incorporate the Programme of Action for Women in the International

(Mrs. Devaud, France)

Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had now been signed by 78 countries, of which France had been among the first signatories.

15. Thus, the results of the past five years had been positive even though it had been mainly the most-favoured women of the developed and the developing countries who had benefited. There was now a widespread awareness of what still had to be done for the poverty-stricken, the deprived, the disadvantaged, the illiterate, the women of the rural areas - the women on whom the survival of the whole world depended - and it was on those women that efforts during the next five years must be concentrated.

16. The initial focus should be on health and nutrition in order to enable women to feed themselves properly. Ready-made remedies were of no use to the developing countries. What was needed was education, so that women could adapt new techniques and take their place in the modern world which would open to them when they emerged from poverty.

17. Women must also be enabled to participate in decision-making: how could they express themselves if they were never consulted on major decisions concerning their country, especially in respect of development planning? In the transfer of technology care must be taken to ensure that it served women by keeping the family intact and preserving the integrity of society. People must be prepared psychologically for the vast changes that would affect the world in coming years, especially women because it was the women in all countries who influenced the psychology of young people and helped shape public opinion.

18. Regret had been voiced at the politicization of the Copenhagen Conference, but how could the Conference have been otherwise than political? It had been organized by the United Nations and attended by representatives of 155 Member States. It had been concerned with the status of women, which was of necessity a highly political question. She did not regret the politicization of the Conference. What she did regret was that women had not brought a fresh approach into the traditional political debate. They had not yet learned to substitute negotiation for confrontation or opposition, because they were still young in politics. She was confident that at the next United Nations conference, women would bring real political maturity to the debate. The profound technological and other changes that were coming to the world were something for men and women to face together.

19. Mrs. KELESCIAN (Italy) said that although Italy had been unable to support the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference, it still considered that the provisions of parts 2 and 3 of the Programme were extremely useful guidelines for the promotion of the cause of women both at the international and national levels. Italy appreciated the emphasis put on the need for increased participation of women in all fields of production. In the great majority of cases, women were still playing their economic role as "marginal workers", mainly confined to the production of services and with little opportunity for engaging in the vast range of activities still perceived as a traditional domain of men. The Programme seemed

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(Mrs. Kelescian, Italy)

to approach the issue from a very promising perspective as far as national strategies, legislative measures and machinery were concerned, and contained indications which could be considered crucial if the perception of the role of women as limited to reproduction was to be changed.

20. The Programme correctly stressed the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations in general, and grass-roots organizations in particular, in the decision-making processes. It was an experience common to many countries that significant social and legislative changes had been originated by women's groups which were able to exercise an influence on national legislative bodies.

21. Italy intended to increase its current financial support for the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, whose achievements had been most valuable.

22. Some of the most significant resolutions adopted by the World Conference were resolution 1, on family planning, and resolutions which dealt with specific situations where environmental and social factors made women especially vulnerable, such as resolution 5 on battered women and violence in the family and resolution 3 on migrant women.

23. The "women's problem" was a political problem per se and should be dealt with as such on a universal basis, without placing it in the context of specific political situations prevailing in different parts of the world. A solution required intensified co-operation at the international level, and her delegation deeply regretted that the introduction of extraneous and divisive elements had prevented it from associating itself fully with the Programme of Action. Italy also regretted the adoption of unnecessary and damaging resolutions, such as resolution 11 on women's participation in the strengthening of international peace and security, which, by stressing the role of one particular sector of mankind in pursuance of only one of the many objectives established in the Charter of the United Nations, might result in reducing both the importance of other equally relevant objectives and the intensity of the efforts made by mankind as a whole.

24. Those reservations would by no means impair Italy's commitment to the pursuit of the national and international objectives set forth by the Programme of Action in its operative part. Her delegation hoped that a way would be found, in the implementation of the Programme, to re-establish the consensus that could not be reached at Copenhagen and that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would be signed and ratified by an ever-increasing number of Member States. Italy's decision to sign the Convention had been the culmination of a process of major legislative changes that had taken place in Italy in the past 15 years. The Convention, in spite of some questionable preambular provisions, could be considered a very comprehensive and advanced instrument and would constitute a strong encouragement to Governments to make the proper legislative adjustments in a great number of countries.

25. Mrs. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that although the emancipation of women in Benin had slowed during the colonial period, due to the imposition of stereotyped ideas imported from the West on the role of women, it had revived somewhat during the period following the accession of the country to independence. With the revolution of 26 October 1972, however, the struggle of the Beninese people had entered a new phase, characterized by the total elimination of the policy of oppression and exploitation of women.

26. At the national level, a law had been adopted recognizing the equality of men and women on the legal, political, civil and family levels and democratic institutions had been established in which women were represented on all levels. Women in Benin enjoyed the same rights and had the same responsibilities as men in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas.

27. The Copenhagen Conference had aimed at evaluating the progress made and obstacles encountered during the first five years of the Decade and at adopting a Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade. It was regrettable that some delegations, alleging the "politicization" of the Conference, had prevented it from adopting the Programme of Action by consensus. What had actually blocked consensus, however, was the attitude of those who had not been able to detach themselves sufficiently from their own problems to understand that there were those who were more unhappy than they and that the plight of millions of women arose from a political and economic situation which was judged unacceptable by all, including their own Governments. For Benin, the Copenhagen Conference had been a success in that the Programme of Action had allowed measures to be taken on the national and international level to improve the lot of the most underprivileged women in the world: rural women, women of southern Africa, Palestinian women and refugee women all over the world. The Programme was proof that the overwhelming majority of the international community was sensitive to the problems of those women and had resolved to find a remedy.

28. Her delegation reiterated its support for all measures of political, legal, moral and humanitarian assistance recommended in the Programme of Action and for the relevant resolutions supporting the women of South Africa and Namibia. The aid furnished by various agencies of the United Nations system should be channelled through the national liberation movements, which were recognized by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations as the only authentic representatives of the peoples of southern Africa. Assistance for training southern African women would enable them to reach positions of responsibility, first within national liberation movements and later in decision-making bodies at the national level, once their countries had been freed from colonial and foreign domination. Benin also supported all measures of assistance to Palestinian women and women in refugee camps recommended by the Conference.

29. For developing countries in general, and for African countries in particular, improvement in the status of women necessarily implied a new international economic order, international peace and security and the elimination of racial discrimination, apartheid, imperialism and colonialism. In Africa, the struggle was not so much a confrontation between men and women as it was a struggle against misery and hunger.

(Mrs. Hougavou, Benin)

30. She supported the proposal to strengthen the Commission on the Status of Women, which would be in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women. However, in view of the slow progress made during the first five years, it would probably not be possible to carry out the entire Programme. Her delegation approved of the holding of a third conference in 1985 to evaluate the results obtained during the Decade; in addition, a second Decade for the period 1985-1995 should be considered.

31. Benin would take all measures necessary to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as soon as possible. She noted with satisfaction the growing number of regional and subregional projects in countries benefiting from the support of the Voluntary Fund. The activities of the Fund should be extended beyond the present Decade, and she appealed especially to the rich countries to contribute generously to the Fund. Benin had contributed regularly in recent years and would continue to lend its support. She hoped that measures would be taken in the near future so that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women could begin to function normally in Santo Domingo.

32. Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland) said that his delegation attached great importance to the joint efforts of men and women to improve the status of women, especially their participation in politics at the national and international levels. The Decade for Women had been a valuable instrument in promoting consciousness of a need for change. In 1970, even before the beginning of the Decade for Women the Government of Ireland had established a commission to examine and report on the status of women, to make recommendations on steps necessary to ensure their participation on equal terms and conditions with men and to indicate the implications of such recommendations. The launching of the Decade for Women had proved a useful instrument at the national level.

33. The final draft of the Programme of Action contained many elements which Ireland had approved. Nevertheless, it had found the Programme unacceptably politicized in some aspects, and therefore had decided to abstain in the vote on its adoption. By accusing some countries which could not agree to join in a consensus of being unable to face realities, certain delegations had shown that they had come to Copenhagen with a pre-determined view of the "realities" and with the intention of obliging others to assent to their view. He doubted that the Conference had enhanced the image of women in politics or contributed to the campaign to have more women participate in politics, since many political issues were scarcely given the serious and careful consideration which they merited.

34. Notwithstanding the difficulty it found in accepting some elements of the Programme, the Irish Government intended to use the substance of the Programme as a guideline to national policy, whose goal was the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the guarantee of their equality with men and the acceleration of the full integration of women into economic and social development. In Ireland, the Council for the Status of Women was organizing a national forum in Dublin in November, which was to draw up a national programme of action for presentation to the Government. Ireland was fully prepared to join

(Mr. O'Donovan, Ireland)

constructively in the drafting of resolutions in the Committee to follow up the Programme of Action at the international level as well.

35. The Economic and Social Council had referred to the General Assembly the question of elaborating a draft declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression and occupation and all forms of foreign domination (Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/36). In practical terms, that issue had been superseded by the adoption in Copenhagen of the very comprehensive Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women. Although the Programme incorporated a historical perspective, a section on the need to include new data concerning the participation of women in development in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and a major section on international strategies, policies and programmes, some delegations were nevertheless interested in proposing a declaration in the General Assembly. Any such document would require careful consideration in the light of the Programme adopted at Copenhagen; if it was intended to pursue the proposal, the task should be entrusted to the competent expert body, namely, the Commission on the Status of Women. No text had been submitted to date, and the Committee was rapidly approaching conclusion of debate on the relevant agenda item.

36. Dr. AVILES (Nicaragua) expressed his appreciation for resolution 35 adopted by the Conference, which urged the Member States of the United Nations and other international organizations to provide Nicaragua with financial and technical assistance through their development assistance funds and programmes, placing special emphasis on women.

37. Nicaragua was in full agreement with any actions carried out in the struggle to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. In Nicaragua, women had the right to participate equally with men in all the tasks required by the revolutionary process. All Nicaraguans, regardless of sex or age, were supporting the efforts to improve the economy, education and health of a people who had suffered under a military dictatorship for almost half a century. Nicaraguan women of all ages had participated in the armed action against the National Guard. Women held positions of responsibility in the Government and, on the social level, the Asociación Nicaragüense de Mujeres "Luisa Amanda Espinoza" (AMNLAE) had brought together women of all professions and positions to promote participation and training of women seeking to improve their living conditions. In the Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetización (National Literacy Campaign), men and women participated equally. The great majority of university students of both sexes had enrolled in priority programmes such as medicine, agronomy and education. In the rural areas, although "machismo" had not disappeared, the situation would change as the revolutionary process continued.

38. Nicaragua supported the national machinery suggested in the report of the Copenhagen Conference and had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Men and women should work together, as they had in Nicaragua, because all had equal rights and obligations as human beings.

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39. Mr. RIPERT (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that it was clear that Member States attached high priority to the results of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and to the need for effective and timely action to accelerate progress towards achieving the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. The World Conference had reflected the desire of the entire international community to move urgently to redress the disadvantaged situation of over half the world's population; the enormous investment of time and resources at all levels in preparing and organizing the conference bore testimony to those concerns. It would be regrettable to delay in translating the substantive recommendations of the World Conference into action.

40. It had been in recognition of that urgency that the World Conference had adopted resolution 22 which requested the Secretary-General to report to the current session of the General Assembly on what arrangements should be made to implement the Programme of Action. The report of the Secretary-General (A/35/556) had been made available at a late stage because time had been needed to analyse the implications of some of the recommendations of the World Conference and to complete the internal consultations necessary within the Secretariat. Nevertheless, he hoped that the report would provide some indication of the lines along which it would be useful to proceed to ensure the effective implementation of the report of the World Conference. The proposals contained in the report did not in any way prejudge the decisions of the current session of the General Assembly on the report of the World Conference. It was essentially an initial and, to that extent, partial response to resolution 22 of the World Conference and it was the intention of the Secretary-General, if so requested, to present a more comprehensive report on the matter to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly in the light of the decisions of the current session. That would be done in close consultation with the heads of specialized agencies and organizations within the context of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. That more detailed report would deal with methods for strengthening interagency co-ordination to implement the Programme of Action.

41. The report of the Secretary-General was confined to some aspects of international action outlined in the Programme of Action. The substantive recommendations made in that connexion necessitated concrete action and measures to catalyse further efforts. The Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme) had already considered interagency aspects of the follow-up to the World Conference at its recent session and had concluded that that subject should be a main theme of its session in March 1981.

42. All organizations of the United Nations system had been called upon to establish and/or strengthen machinery in order to integrate women in development and necessary action in that connexion would be taken. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system would also present information on their activities to implement the Programme of Action. Within his own Department, efforts were being made to respond to the substantive recommendations of the World Conference within the context of the programme budget proposals for the next biennium, 1982-1983.

(Mr. Ripert)

For example, action was being taken to reorient and/or reinforce activities in programmes relating to population, statistics and development research and analysis in recognition of the fact that there was an urgent need to give high priority consideration to issues of concern to women in all substantive areas of activity.

43. It was imperative to reinforce the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and its Advancement of Women Branch since it would play a pivotal role in the implementation of the Programme of Action and needed to be able to respond to the pressing mandate inherent in the recommendations of the World Conference. The Advancement of Women Branch had to be provided with the necessary technical capability to enable it to link women's issues to the mainstream of development concerns. There was also an urgent need for the Assistant Secretary-General of the Centre to have assistance from the Advancement of Women Branch at a higher managerial level than at present which would reflect the importance attached by Member States to issues relating to women and ensure more effective interaction at the policy-making level, both with Member States and within the United Nations system, in implementing the Programme of Action.

44. Close and continuing contacts needed to be maintained between the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the relevant United Nations bodies located at United Nations Headquarters and with some Member States and non-governmental organizations which did not yet have representation at Vienna. It was for that reason that a small unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at United Nations Headquarters was envisaged, which would be concerned primarily with liaison work and would assist the Centre in integrating the contributions of other substantive units at Headquarters in implementing the Programme of Action.

45. The Programme of Action had also emphasized the importance and urgency of establishing and strengthening machinery for the integration of women in development at the regional level and that matter also deserved urgent consideration by the Committee.

46. The report of the Secretary-General contained initial and preliminary suggestions regarding arrangements for the implementation of the Programme of Action. That implementation had to be seen as an evolving exercise, the progress of which would need to be periodically reviewed.

47. Mr. ERRAZURIZ (Chile) said that, throughout its history, Chile had always afforded a leading role to women and it believed that it was essential that women should contribute to finding a solution to the problems of the contemporary world. Chilean women had assumed a dual responsibility as mothers and as active agents in the country's development process.

48. Chile had hoped that the World Conference would consider the problems of women in their totality so that the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women could be properly evaluated and analysed. Chile had been disappointed that the World Conference had taken up extraneous political matters. It had criticized

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(Mr. Errazuriz, Chile)

political interference in the World Conference not because it believed that questions concerning women should be considered in isolation from the political context of their lives, but because it believed that the World Conference should not have encroached upon the spheres of competence of other forums, thus duplicating efforts and discussions and losing an opportunity to analyse the special problems of women in the necessary detail. It did not seem logical that a conference designed to consider the general and universal problems of women should have adopted manifestly selective and discriminatory resolutions on the basis of political and short-term interests. The Chilean delegation at the World Conference had therefore rejected resolution 18, which was based on selective, discriminatory and politicized criteria. It had also made reservations in relation to various resolutions and parts of the Programme of Action, such as paragraph 5.

49. The Programme of Action contained a number of useful proposals whose implementation by Member States and international organizations would help achieve equality between men and women and promote the active and real participation of women in development and world peace. The proposals were complemented by a number of resolutions adopted by consensus reflecting world concern about specific aspects of the general problems of women, and the resolutions on improving the situation of disabled women of all ages, migrant women and elderly women and their economic security were particularly relevant.

50. The paper submitted by Chile had provided a detailed explanation of national experience in the spheres of education, health and employment, which were fundamental areas for the advancement of women. Chilean women participated in all national activities and excelled in the fields of education, arts and letters. They had always participated in government and they were assuming increasing responsibilities in the private sector. Their concerns were channelled through the National Secretariat for Women; a Ministry of the Family would be set up shortly and the participation of women would be the foundation for its success.

51. His delegation welcomed the increased number and quality of activities to which the Voluntary Fund provided support and the increased efficiency with which resources were used to meet the priority needs of the poorest women in the developing world. His Government had decided to maintain its voluntary contribution for the fiscal year of 1981.

52. His Government had enthusiastically supported the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and had decided to contribute to its financing.

53. One of the most important achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had been the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. His Government had signed the International Convention on 14 August at Copenhagen even though some of the provisions of the Convention did not fully accord with existing Chilean legislation. Various proposals for appropriate changes to the Civil Code were currently being studied.

54. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that the Programme of Action and the other resolutions adopted at the World Conference had unmistakably shown that women's concerns affected every aspect of individual, community and national life. At the Conference, men and women delegates had expressed concern mainly with the economic and social needs of women and others, and with the political and larger economic issues which affected their lives not only as individuals but also as citizens and leaders of their countries. It was to be expected that future conferences on women would reflect and further define that enlarged awareness of economic, social and political issues related to women's concerns.

55. Her delegation welcomed the emphasis in the Programme of Action and related resolutions on the participation of women in the economic development of their countries. Economic growth resulting from industrialization as well as the mechanization of agriculture in developing countries could lead to a debasement of women. That was already evident in the electronics industry, in the handicrafts industry geared for export and in the development of agricultural estates where women provided cheap labour. Thus, although the economic role of women should be emphasized and be given the highest priority, the social and human rights aspects of the status of women should not be underemphasized.

56. Her delegation believed that the new international economic order did not only mean a more just relationship among nations but also meant a more just distribution of wealth between men and women. It therefore saw the women's issue as a major and forceful catalyst in bringing about basic reforms in the social, legal, economic and political fields within individual countries and in making developed countries recognize that the existing trading and commercial patterns must give way to a more equitable international economic order. For that reason, her delegation also saw a major role for agencies like UNIDO and FAO in ensuring that economic growth brought about by industrial and agricultural progress in the developing countries would also bring about the economic and social advancement of women.

57. Her delegation welcomed resolutions 5 and 43 of the World Conference because they introduced new dimensions of the problem of the advancement of women for consideration by the international community in the forthcoming decade. The signing of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women by over 80 countries was also a major event inspired by the World Conference.

58. From 29 to 30 October, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women would conduct a nationwide post-Copenhagen seminar to study ways and means of implementing the Programme of Action and other resolutions in relation to the Philippine national plan of action. The seminar would be repeated in several regions of the Philippines to ensure that the Philippine plan of action reached the women in need of the greatest assistance, namely, the urban poor and rural women. Her Government also intended to suggest to its ASEAN partners, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, that an ASEAN subregional meeting on the World Conference should be held after those countries had organized their own national seminars.

(Mrs. Shahani, Philippines)

59. Her delegation welcomed the positive attitude of the Secretary-General in putting forward concrete proposals for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Programme of Action must be supported by effective machinery whose resources, human and financial, were realistically geared towards the demands and requirements of Member Governments. The report of the Secretary-General attempted to bring some order to the activities of various bodies within the United Nations concerned with the implementation of the Programme of Action. Her delegation also recognized the very important role which the specialized agencies had played and would continue to play in programmes relating to women. It noted with satisfaction paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/35/556) outlining several areas of action for which the ACC and its committees would assume responsibility. The strengthening of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and of the Advancement of Women Branch was imperative, especially in the light of the decisions taken at the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the establishment of a liaison unit at United Nations Headquarters under the jurisdiction of the Centre would also be necessary. The Committee must examine soberly and objectively the organizational set-up within the United Nations relating to women's issues. The need for consolidation and integration of the disparate units dealing with women's issues had become an ineluctable necessity. She hoped that the measures outlined in the Secretary-General's report would be reflected in the resolution adopted by the Committee on the item.

60. Her delegation hoped that the Committee would rally to forge a united stand on the issues which faced both delegations and the Secretariat and that the spirit of co-operation, realism and sobriety would prevail over that of dissension so that the new era ushered in by the Programme of Action could be translated into concrete achievements and accomplishments.

61. Mr. RIGIN (Indonesia) said that it was now an accepted fact that women, together with men, shared an important role not only in fostering a happy family and in guiding the younger generation, but also in the development of a nation in all aspects of life. In carrying out national strategies for accelerating the full participation of women in economic and social development, the Government of Indonesia had taken that fact into account and its over-all development plans explicitly provided that development required the maximum participation of men and women in all fields. Women therefore had the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as men to participate fully in development activities.

62. However, one of the problems that prevented women from participating in the development process was widespread poverty and illiteracy, especially in rural areas and remote villages. Ignorance among women of minimal standards of health, nutrition and sanitation had resulted in high infant mortality rates. To eliminate those conditions, the Government had provided basic education and primary health care and had introduced family planning. The Indonesian Government had initiated family planning activities in 1957 with the establishment of the Indonesian Family Planning Association. Various campaigns covering all strata of the community, in

(Mr. Rigin, Indonesia)

the fields of education, information, attitudes, etc. were required to encourage small and prosperous families. Those attitudes should be implanted in childhood through instruction within family circles, and developed further through teaching on population problems in and outside of schools. Indonesia had also provided better opportunities for women in the areas of education and vocational training and had appointed a Minister of State for the Role of Women who was entrusted with protecting women's interests in all development activities.

63. The Indonesian Government had already signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which provides the basic framework for the attainment of equality between women and men all over the world.

64. Mr. BADJI (Senegal) said that women, because of the preponderant role which they played in the family, the basic unit of society, were the group around which conditions for real change in the life of families must be created. Women played the roles of wives, mothers, nurses, educators and food producers, and in most cases without remuneration and sometimes without education. The burdens of those labours undoubtedly affected the physical and mental health of women. It was for that reason that the Government of Senegal, after a critical in-depth study of the situation of women in various sectors, had, following independence, taken measures to ensure that women would play a more effective role as agents of development.

65. In accordance with the Plan of Action that had emerged from the 1975 World Conference at Mexico City, a State Secretariat on the Status of Women had been established and the Government had strengthened the machinery for dealing with the problems of women. Since women were no longer regarded merely as mothers and wives but also as producers of economic goods, priority measures had been taken to benefit rural women. Efforts had also been made on behalf of urban women, whose problems were more numerous and complex. The object of all those efforts was to achieve functional literacy, health for all by the year 2000 and equal rights for men and women before the law.

66. Senegal had participated actively in various international forums dealing with the advancement of women and its delegation at Copenhagen had comprised women from all walks of life. It greatly appreciated the attention given at the Conference to the most disadvantaged women, in particular, women of the Sahel, refugee women, Palestinian women and Namibian women. Even though a consensus had not been reached on the adoption of the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade, his delegation believed that the Conference had been an important step towards fulfilling the legitimate expectations of all women throughout the world.

67. Senegal, although a small country, geographically and demographically aspired to be a great people and it was for that reason that it played its part in international co-operation. In that connexion, his delegation believed that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women would be a useful tool for the exchange of experiences and mutual enrichment. In addition, following its signing in July 1980 of the Convention on the Elimination of All

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(Mr. Badji, Senegal)

Forms of Discrimination against Women, Senegal was striving to complete all the internal formalities required for its ratification. Senegal also supported the idea of holding a third world conference on women at the end of the Decade.

68. Miss WELLS (Australia) said that the experience of the first five years of the Decade for Women had been enlightening, if not altogether encouraging. The complexity of the issues involved and the goals of the Decade were now more clearly perceived. As had been established at Copenhagen, while women represented 50 per cent of the world's adult population and one third of the official labour force, they performed nearly two thirds of all working hours, received one tenth of the world's income and owned less than 1 per cent of world property.

69. At Copenhagen, there had been a lot of talk about the importance of the integration of women into development, and all had unhesitatingly agreed with that basic premise. Poverty, limited earning capacity, lack of employment and access to education were indicators that social conditions would probably not improve until women shared in the development process. Australia believed that the primary responsibility for furthering the integration of women in national development lay with the developing countries themselves. While Australia provided assistance in response to requests, it was concerned that such assistance should positively include women as equal beneficiaries and not, even unintentionally, disregard women as active participants in development programmes or disadvantage them in the introduction of such programmes.

70. The other fundamental theme to emerge at Copenhagen had been the realization that the issues of concern to women could not be discussed in a vacuum, in other words, that they were affected by the international situation. The corollary of that was true, but less explicit. The international movement for the advancement of the status of women was itself influencing international relationships and the pattern of global change. The realization of equality between women and men was inevitably coloured by the political, economic, social and cultural circumstances in which they lived. While recognizing that reality, the Programme of Action placed particular emphasis on those women who were most disadvantaged, the rural and urban poor, those in minority groups, the disabled and those who were victims of events over which they had no control, like refugees.

71. The follow-up of the Programme of Action was of particular relevance to the discussion in the General Assembly. Australia was particularly interested in seeing better co-ordination of issues relating to the status of women within the United Nations system. It was pleased to see that the report on that matter had now been issued in document A/35/556. In that connexion, she would suggest that the statement made by the Under-Secretary for International Economic and Social Affairs should be reproduced as a document of the Third Committee.

72. In focusing attention on the follow-up to the Programme of Action, Australia believed that: (a) the concerns of women should be an integral part of the consideration of issues, policies and programmes in all spheres of United Nations activities; (b) there was a need for a new approach to the co-ordination of the

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(Miss Wells, Australia)

diverse efforts of all specialized agencies and other bodies in the United Nations system and for a reordering of priorities within current budgetary allocations in order to further efforts to raise the status of women; (c) there was a need for effective measures to ensure the active participation of women in development and that required appropriate institutional arrangements within the United Nations system to co-ordinate and monitor progress in achieving the goals of the Decade; (d) all organs of the United Nations system should give sustained attention to the integration of women in the formulation, design and implementation of development projects and programmes; (e) the regional commissions should be encouraged to establish procedures to facilitate the integration of women in development and, in that regard, give early consideration to the establishment of interagency committees at the regional and country levels.

73. While the response of the United Nations in structural and operational terms was crucial to the advancement of women, so too was the policy commitment of Governments. In the evolution of policies, the concepts used inevitably came into question. The Administrator of UNDP had stated at Copenhagen that he considered certain terms such as "contribution", "participation", "involvement" and "integration" of women in development to be undesirable because they were not used in relation to men. The debate at Copenhagen on the concept of sexism had highlighted that point. The concept of development implied change in a positive sense, change in people's living conditions, change in the relationships between peoples and between States and even change in the words used to describe those phenomena. A significant instrument of change would be the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Australia had participated at the signing ceremony at Copenhagen and discussions would soon begin within the framework of Australia's federal system of Government on the question of ratification. Australia valued that Convention because of its practical orientation.

74. Australia, however, had no time for the propaganda pursuits of those who sought to harness the advancement of women to their own ideological advantage. It would dismiss as irrelevant proposals for a declaration to be adopted on what was called "struggling women". Women were not struggling in a tug of war with men. The advancement of the status of women had become a social pact in which men and women were discovering the mutual advantage of working together as equals to create a better future for their children.

75. Because of its commitment to the promotion of the interests of women, the Australian Government deeply regretted that it had voted against the Programme of Action. It had done so only because the Programme contained certain political references, including, in particular, the reference to zionism in paragraph 5, which the Australian Government could not accept. That vote did not mean that the Australian Government rejected those parts of the Programme designed to advance the interests of women nationally and internationally. Australia was now working to develop its national plan of action based on the substantive and constructive aspects of the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen.

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76. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the suggestion by the representative of Australia that the Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs should be reproduced as a document of the Committee, said that the summary records would fully and adequately cover that statement.
77. Miss RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela), speaking on a point of order, said that in view of the importance of agenda items 80 and 83, she wished to ask, on behalf of the Group of 77, that they should be given until 6 p.m. on 27 October to prepare draft resolutions on those items.
78. Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland), supported by Miss FAWTHORPE (New Zealand), said that he hoped the draft resolutions in question would not be submitted before informal consultations had taken place with those interested.
79. The CHAIRMAN suggested to the Committee that the final deadline for the submission of the draft resolutions should be extended to 6 p.m. on 28 October.
80. It was so agreed.
81. Mr. RAZZOOQI (Kuwait) said that before the discovery of oil in his country men and women had always worked side by side to earn their livelihood. Since oil had been discovered in the 1950s the whole structure of society had been radically transformed, and past experience of sharing life had been embodied in specific articles in the Constitution. Legislation now guaranteed legal rights for women in employment, education, health and other aspects of national life.
82. Since the adoption of the World Plan of Action in Mexico in 1975, Kuwait had taken steps to implement the Plan. Whereas previously girls and boys had depended upon the Koran and Islamic texts as their major source of study, as society had been modernized, programmes of secular and scientific education had supplemented religious instruction. The Government had taken measures to abolish illiteracy among women, such as Act No. 11 of 1965, making elementary education compulsory for all girls and boys. Education was free from kindergarten through post-graduate studies. All students had free textbooks, uniforms, meals and transportation, and women were on an equal footing with men in managerial and vocational training. Women's education was diversified to cover all aspects of arts and sciences, and to translate legal equality into practical measures to improve the status of women.
83. Vast resources were devoted to health programmes, and full health services were provided for all without charge. From 1911 until 1949 there had been only one hospital in Kuwait, whereas in 1975 there were 1,100 doctors employed by the Government, as against only 4 in 1949. There were extensive programmes for the participation of women in family planning and for promoting the welfare of mothers and infants.
84. In employment Kuwaiti women represented a significant proportion of those employed in the public sector. They participated in all types of work ranging from diplomacy to engineering. Between 1970 and 1975 there had been an increase in the percentage of women working in technical and scientific professions and in

(Mr. Razzoqi, Kuwait)

executive and secretarial jobs, while the percentages of women in the service sector had decreased. Women were given equal treatment with men in terms of access to work and equal pay.

85. Kuwait viewed the decisions adopted at Mexico as a first step towards a programme dealing with the political, economic and social situation of women all over the world. The Copenhagen Conference was a further step in the long march of women towards emancipation from all forms of discrimination.

86. There had been attempts after the Mexico meeting to minimize its importance, and there appeared to be similar attempts to minimize the importance of the Copenhagen Conference by claiming that it had paid too much attention to political subjects. The introduction of political issues had been dictated by the nature of the problems under discussion. Women were not living in a vacuum; discrimination against them was political, economic and social, and all those elements interacted. For example, in South Africa the economic and social situation of black women was directly affected by the political situation there. The Pretoria régime illegally occupied Namibia, depleted its natural resources, and used its men and women as cheap labour to provide luxury and comfort for the white minority.

87. The racist laws in South Africa had resulted in 19 million blacks occupying 13 per cent of South Africa's territory, while 4.3 million whites owned 87 per cent. It was therefore inevitable that women should look for work in urban areas. White women workers might suffer from discrimination as compared with white men, but a black woman suffered as a worker, a woman and a black. In the manufacturing industry one of every five workers was a woman. In 1970, out of 214,000 women workers in industry, there were 72,000 Coloured, 70,000 African women, 58,000 white and 13,000 Indian. Most of the black women did manual work in harsher conditions than their male counterparts and received lower pay. Under the apartheid law, African women were robbed of their productive land and came to be regarded by law as "superfluous appendages". Black men and women living in the cities became illegal immigrants in their own country, and people were removed from ghettos around the city to other ghettos and reserves.

88. Another policy was still affecting a whole nation, namely, the Israeli racist practices in the occupied Arab territories. The report of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) at the Copenhagen Conference had presented a comprehensive view of the plight of the Palestinians. For over 30 years, they had struggled for the restoration of their inalienable rights and had suffered continuous humiliation and denial of their rights by the Zionist Israelis. Israel had inflicted suffering in the occupied Arab territories by diverting the water, deporting innocent families to the desert, demolishing houses, and permitting vandalism by gangs of fanatical Jewish groups, all with the object of terrorizing men and women and driving them out of their lands. Those policies endangered the very existence of men, women, the young and the elderly.

89. In resolution 446 (1979), the Security Council had established a Commission to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Arab territories occupied

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(Mr. Razzooqi, Kuwait)

since 1967, including Jerusalem. After a visit to the area, the Commission had reported that the Arabs there were subject to continuous pressure to emigrate in order to make room for new settlers, who were encouraged to come into the area. On 20 May 1980 the Security Council had invited the mayor of Halhul, Mr. Milhem, who had been expelled from the occupied Arab territories for security reasons, to speak about the situation in those territories. Mr. Milhem had been punished for trying to protect the well-being of his people.

90. Items dealing with the injustices inflicted upon innocent blacks and Palestinians had been included in the agenda of the Copenhagen Conference because of their impact on international peace and security, and because men and women were suffering equally. Only eradication of such injustices could lead to real peace. He expected the Third Committee to adopt, endorse and fully support the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen because it reflected the reality of the position of women in the so-called civilized world.

91. Ms. HORBAL (United States of America) said that during the first half of the United Nations Decade for Women innumerable women all over the world had had a chance to know each other, to work as a community, and to devise cross-cultural tactics to defeat the caste systems of sex and race that divided, humiliated and endangered the human race. At the Copenhagen Conference women had met other women from different countries with whom they had more in common than they did with their own government authorities.

92. Women in the United States felt very much a part of that international community and shared purpose, despite the negative vote of the United States on the principal document of the Conference. That vote was due to the inclusion in the document of three paragraphs which did not address themselves to the broadly shared social, economic and political concerns outlined in the main part of the document. The United States had registered its dissent, and sincerely hoped that it would not have to do so again. It hoped instead that it would be possible to concentrate on the large area of consensus that had emerged at Copenhagen.

93. Women in the United States were more fortunate than many others, but they still lacked the ability to control their own lives in terms of reproductive freedom for both poor and middle-class women, the right to shared parenthood and work at home or shared opportunities outside the home, and the right to participate in making the decisions that determined the fate of the nation and its policies towards the rest of the world.

94. Technology and industrialization did not inevitably benefit women; it benefited those who controlled them. In developed countries, the secrets of technology had been taught mainly to men, thus polarizing the sex roles and increasing the power differential between men and women even more than in many agricultural societies. Women in the United States had much to learn from women in *third world countries* and much to warn them about concerning the dangers of being left behind in the process of national development.

(Ms. Horbal, United States)

95. The United States welcomed the provisions of the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women relating to national programmes. Implementation of those provisions would help women in the United States to learn the secrets of technology by which the world was increasingly governed, and thus achieve influence in the making of United States domestic and foreign policy. It would also shield them from culturally encouraged male violence. Women in the United States could never be free to use their human talents outside the home until men used their human talents equally inside the home.

96. The provisions of the Programme of Action concerning parental leave and other measures necessary for equal parenthood were crucial. If women participated in what had been traditionally considered men's work and men did not participate in what had been traditionally considered women's work, women in the world would either be handicapped, obliged to attempt a dual role requiring super-human effort, or forced forever to limit their work and influence in the world. Furthermore, if children were still to be raised mainly by women, it would perpetuate the false belief that women were "naturally" more emotional and nurturing, while men were "naturally" more rational and active in the outside world. The aggression against women necessary to maintain that false inequality would continue to be regarded as proof of manhood and thus become a constant and dangerous force among the male decision-makers of the world. Finally, any evolution of a new international economic order that merely distributed the wealth of the world among fathers and sons, without reaching down to the female population of each country would for most women still be an old economic order.

97. In the spirit of its commitment to the struggle for women's equality, the United States had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the signing ceremony in Copenhagen. The ratification of the Convention in accordance with United States constitutional law had already begun. The issue of women's rights, as a specific category of human rights, was a legitimate concern of the international community. The United States had recently ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

98. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) also fostered international co-operation in advancing equality for women. The United States strongly supported the activities of the Fund, which was the sole source of funds in the United Nations system specifically aimed at improving conditions of women. The United States had already contributed \$5.7 million of the Fund's total budget of \$11.6 million, and was pleased to pledge a further \$1 million to the Fund for 1981. The Secretary-General had pointed out (A/35/523) that demands on the Fund's resources had already exceeded donations. Although 22 countries had announced new or increased pledges at Copenhagen, the United States hoped that more countries would join in strengthening the Voluntary Fund. Under the administration of the Consultative Committee, the Fund had become a new and effective vehicle, partly as a result of the close co-operation with United Nations agencies made possible by its presence in New York. The main beneficiaries of its technical assistance had been women in the least developed countries, which

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(Ms. Horbal, United States)

had limited financial resources for carrying out their national plans for the advancement of women. The Fund's relationship with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strengthened its co-ordinating activities through the United Nations regional commissions, and the linkage with UNDP was therefore vital to the Fund's continued success. Only strong support for the Fund during the second half of the Decade would make possible a substantial United Nations programme for women. Otherwise, the momentum generated by the Fund, which should continue long after the Decade, would be lost.

99. INSTRAW could be another mechanism for promoting the advancement of women, and the United States was looking forward to reviewing the results of the 1980-1981 work programme. It supported maintaining the Institute at Headquarters until it could be firmly established in the host country.

100. The question of proportional representation of women within the United Nations system was also crucial, and the United States deplored their under-representation in the Professional ranks of the system. General Assembly resolution 33/143 called for quantifiable improvement in women's employment opportunities in the Secretariat, but as the Joint Inspection Unit had indicated, there had been little change over the past three years. At the current rate of growth of the proportion of women in the Professional ranks of the United Nations system, it would take 89 years for women to fill 50 per cent of the posts. Under-representation of women in the United Nations often reflected the refusal of office directors and programme managers to give them serious consideration. The United States trusted that the Secretary-General would continue to monitor the situation by periodically reviewing the efforts of individual directors and managers.

101. Those areas suitable for international co-operation had been discussed at Copenhagen, and their diversity was reflected in the resolutions adopted. The resolutions also showed that women's issues and concerns included a wide range of social, economic, cultural and political questions. The debates on most issues had resulted in a broad consensus, and that was further demonstrated by the adoption by consensus of the excellent Programme of Action at the national level, as well as the adoption by consensus of 33 out of 48 resolutions. The United States was particularly interested in follow-up action on those resolutions strengthening the status of women in health, education and employment.

102. The Conference had focused long overdue world attention on pressing needs of women, including the continuing denial of equality throughout the world, whether in developed or developing countries, capitalist or centrally planned economies, authoritarian or democratic political systems. Whatever their cultural differences, women suffered restrictions based solely on gender. Conferences such as those held at Mexico City and Copenhagen beamed a spotlight on that caste system, and it would not be able to survive in that light of truth. The system was itself political, and political action was therefore not alien to women in the United States. What was alien was the division of women over traditional international political issues that inhibited shared action by women against both sex and racial discrimination.

103. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the list of speakers on items 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 79 and 81 should be closed on 30 October at 6 p.m.

104. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.