



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 48th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland)
later: Mr. ESQUIVEL (Costa Rica)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 88: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
(continued) (A/36/3/Add.20; A/36/620; A/36/490; A/C.3/36/L.50, L.51 and L.53)

- (a) WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/36/564; A/C.3/36/L.47)
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- (c) DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND AGAINST COLONIALISM, APARTHEID, ALL FORMS OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, FOREIGN AGGRESSION, OCCUPATION AND ALL FORMS OF FOREIGN DOMINATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/36/476 and Add.1; A/C.3/36/L.48)

AGENDA ITEM 89: STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/36/63, A/36/295 and Add.1; A/C.3/36/L.54)

1. Miss EL-CHICHINI (Representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) reported that since the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, in Copenhagen, substantial conceptual and practical changes had been introduced in the policy and programmes of UNHCR with regard to women refugees.
2. The basic function of the Office, as defined by its Statute, was to extend international protection to refugees, who by definition did not enjoy the protection of their former home country. It was increasingly being recognized that women were a particularly vulnerable group that needed special measures of protection.
3. The most distressing acts of violence were the pirate attacks at sea on persons seeking asylum. Women and children were the most tragic victims of such acts. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner has asked the Office to seek the support of the international community for the continuation and intensification of efforts to protect refugees from acts of violence committed at sea. The Executive Committee had also considered the problems of military attacks on refugee camps in southern Africa.
4. It was worth mentioning that, of the 10 million refugees and displaced persons in the world, women constituted the majority of the adult population. Their plight commanded attention not only because of their high numbers but also because of their pivotal role in the family and in the community. An important step in that direction had been the appointment of a senior officer as a focal point for UNHCR activities relating to refugees and displaced women. Field officers had been instructed to take concrete action to ensure that within the over-all programmes women refugees received fair and equal treatment, and counselling services in the field had been reinforced

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(Miss El-Chichini, Representative,
Office of UNHCR)

to deal with the immediate problems of women refugees and to organize training programmes to assist them rapidly towards self-reliance.

5. In that exercise UNHCR had benefited from the valuable co-operation of sister agencies and organizations within the United Nations system such as ILO, UNICEF, WHO and the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. Moreover, voluntary agencies had taken an active part in the elaboration and expansion of programmes benefiting both rural and urban women refugees.

6. A review of existing programmes and studies on women refugees figured in UNHCR's immediate plans to develop effective programmes towards speedy and durable solutions. Governments had therefore been encouraged to compile data on the number and needs of women refugees.

7. Miss STREDEL (Venezuela) pointed out that, in 1979, Venezuela had established a post of Minister of State for the Participation of Women in Development, thereby demonstrating that central priority had been accorded at the very highest decision-making levels to the task of the promotion and active incorporation and participation of women in all spheres of development.

8. The Sixth development plan of Venezuela (1981-1985) established a series of basic goals in the specific areas relating to women, as part of the development policy. Of these it was worth pointing to the full incorporation of women in the field of work with particular emphasis on the technical and industrial levels. The Sixth Plan also gave particular priority to women in the fields of education, health, economics, all-round training of rural women and their families and rural literacy. In the political sphere there were plans to enhance national and international management capacity through the participation of Venezuelan women in the governing boards of national institutions and international bodies.

9. At present, the Office of the Minister of State for the Participation of Women in Development was taking the necessary measures to obtain legislative approval for the Bill on the Partial Reform of the Civil Code, which was considered a basic element within the framework of a social policy geared to improving women's quality of life and conditions of incorporation and participation. It was important to point out that the reform under consideration was part of the guidelines established in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which Venezuela had signed in July 1980.

10. As was stated in document A/36/564, the conference to review and appraise the achievements of the decade would constitute a major forum for reviewing and appraising progress made during the Decade and would offer an opportunity for the formulation of a strategy which would continue the work of the United Nations in the future.

11. With regard to industrial development, as was correctly stated in the report of the Secretary-General, there was increasing need to take women into account and to provide women with opportunities for employment and appropriate technology so that they could become adequately involved in industrial activities.

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(Miss Stredel, Venezuela)

12. With regard to the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, she was pleased that international and regional projects were being implemented in Latin America which would generate further income for women's groups for training women in non-traditional skills, for the exchange of experiences and for many other activities which would promote women's incorporation in economic and social development.

13. With regard to the important role of the regional commissions, she drew attention to the project of the Economic Commission for Latin America concerning research to increase the integration of women in the development of Latin America. Turning to the recommendations of the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Caracas, she said that the fact that the programme budget for the biennium 1982-1983 made provision for the preparation of reports on appropriate treatment of women by the criminal justice system constituted an important step forward. The fact that the United Nations University was exploring the possibility of establishing an institute for mother and child with particular emphasis on the problems of developing countries was also a positive development.

14. Finally, concerning rural women, she said that rural women suffered most in Venezuela from the consequences of inequality. Attention should be given to rural women through the development and establishment of educational systems which would enable them to face life and society with dignity and with the security of full participation.

15. Mr. HENAR (Suriname) said that his country had taken a positive stand on the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and noted with satisfaction that the relevant agencies and organizations of the United Nations system had already taken specific measures or formulated proposals for future action.

16. His Government was in the process of reviewing its policies and activities with a view to adjusting them to the emphasis given by the World Conference. It would, however, take time to achieve significant results with regard to the full participation of women in economic and social development in his country, although the Government was making systematic efforts to promote and assist grass-roots organizations as one of the instruments of development. Moreover, his Government was stimulating and promoting educational and training opportunities for girls and women, on the assumption that that would prove to be an effective way of achieving equality between men and women.

17. After the World Conference in Copenhagen, his Government had established an institute for women, one of whose objectives was the integration of women in the social, economic and political spheres. It had also set up an interdepartmental working party to study the abolition of the juridical inequality between men and women in every respect. Furthermore, there was a high-level advisory board for the preparation and implementation of the Government's policy with regard to the emancipation of women.

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(Mr. Henar, Suriname)

18. Women were currently actively involved in the decision-making process. Women had long been a driving force in Suriname and were playing an active role in politics. All discriminatory provisions in the social, economic and political spheres and in the legal codes were being examined with a view to repealing those laws that discriminated against women.

19. His Government would like to see the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women continued beyond the end of the Decade. With regard to the location of the Fund, its activities would be seriously impeded if it were separated from its management. Consequently, his delegation associated itself with those who considered that relocation of the remaining staff to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna would enhance the efficiency of the Fund's activities.

20. His delegation noted with great satisfaction the entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since that Convention provided a solid basis for enhancement of the participation of women in many aspects of life, his Government was in the process of adapting its domestic legislation in order to be able to accede to the Convention as soon as possible. His delegation was also pleased to note that so many favourable replies had been received from Governments with regard to the draft Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle for the Strengthening of International Peace and Security. His Government too took a positive attitude towards the draft Declaration.

21. Mrs. MASMOUDI (Tunisia) said that because development efforts required the participation of the entire population, Tunisia had, since attaining independence, adopted dynamic measures for the advancement of women, including legal reforms aimed at ensuring equality between men and women before the law and in all aspects of life. Those measures would have remained incomplete had they not been accompanied by the generalization of education for women, as a result of which the school enrolment rate for girls had increased from 12 per cent to almost 70 per cent. Currently, 20 per cent of workers in Tunisia were women, who had access to all fields of activity, including the professions and the administration of justice.

22. Progress had been slower with regard to the participation of Tunisian women in public affairs. Currently, women occupied only 5 per cent of the elective seats in the town councils and Parliament. There was an organization, the National Union of Tunisian Women, which grouped women of all social classes and occupations and whose aim was to improve the situation of the most underprivileged Tunisian women. The Union, which was active throughout the country, played an important role with regard to both the determination of the new needs of women and the search for more effective ways of responding to them. The Union had also carried out projects on its own account and had opened a nation-wide network of centres which provided occupational training for young women from rural areas or underprivileged urban areas.

23. The Union had likewise represented Tunisia at the World Conferences in Mexico City and Copenhagen and its President had been delegated to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the ratification of which would be submitted to the new Parliament in 1982.

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(Mrs. Masmoudi, Tunisia)

24. Her delegation welcomed the consolidation of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna, especially with regard to the Advancement of Women Branch. In that connexion, her delegation supported the idea of transferring to Vienna the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, since it did not seem logical that the Fund, which was substantively linked to the Vienna Centre, should be separated from it. Furthermore, the Fund should remain in existence after the end of the Decade.

25. Tunisia was contributing to the Fund and urged all Member States to do likewise. Her delegation wished to congratulate those States whose substantial contributions reflected their interest in the advancement of women in general and of women in the least developed countries in particular. Her delegation also welcomed the efforts made by the organizations, organs and agencies of the United Nations system in implementing the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade. Tunisia hoped that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would be given sufficient resources, so that it could co-ordinate all activities on behalf of women being carried out by the United Nations system.

26. Mrs. KI (Democratic Kampuchea) said her delegation welcomed the forthcoming inauguration of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which would undoubtedly play a very important role in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

27. Despite all the progress made through the implementation of the Programme of Action, much remained to be done, and in that connexion it should be emphasized that without peace and stability there could be neither equality nor development. The appeal contained in the Programme of Action for an intensification of campaigns of solidarity with women struggling against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid and for national independence and liberation encouraged the women of Kampuchea to continue their struggle against Vietnamese domination, oppression and occupation and for the recuperation of their inalienable right to live in peace, with national honour and dignity, in an independent, united, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea. Currently, Kampuchean women, together with the rest of the nation, were engaged in a very complex and difficult struggle because they were fighting for national survival and against the Vietnamese war of invasion and genocide.

28. Women and children were the most vulnerable in that war of extermination, and an infinite number of incidents demonstrating the cruelty of the invaders could be cited. In their obstinate determination to eliminate national resistance, the Vietnamese invaders were continuing to use hunger as a means of suppressing the population. Thus, they diverted international humanitarian aid and used it to feed the invading forces. Furthermore, the Vietnamese forces were resorting to chemical warfare in open violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Convention on Biological Weapons.

29. Kampuchean women were fighting in guerrilla bands to defend their villages and in the transportation and logistics units of the armed forces. They also occupied high posts in the Government, in the Grande Union Nationale Patriotique et Democratique

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(Mrs. Ki, Democratic Kampuchea)

in village and district committees and in the diplomatic corps. The women of Kampuchea were proud of their struggle, not only because they were helping to ensure the continued existence of Kampuchea but also because they had succeeded in halting Vietnamese expansionism in South-east Asia and hence were defending peace, security and stability in the region and in the rest of the world.

30. The women of Kampuchea appealed to all women and to all peoples and Governments that cared for peace and justice to comply with the Programme of Action for the Decade, and to undertake solidarity campaigns in order to help them to achieve the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchean territory and enable the Kampuchean people to exercise freely their right to self-determination in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 34/22, 35/6 and 36/5.

31. Until those goals had been achieved, the women of Kampuchea would not witness an era of genuine peace that would enable them to participate actively in the development of the country on an equal footing with men and to co-operate closely with all the women in the world in order to ensure the success of the United Nations Decade for Women.

32. Mr. Esquivel took the Chair.

33. Miss OBAFEMI (Nigeria) said that the Constitution of her country embodied the principle of equality of citizens regardless of sex. With reference to fundamental human rights, it established the principle of equal opportunity for men and women to participate in the social, economic and political life of Nigeria. Nigerian women workers were also entitled to maternity leave and other disability payments over and above their annual leave entitlements.

34. Since the adoption in Mexico in 1975 of the World Plan of Action, the Government of Nigeria had initiated specific programmes in the fields of health, education and employment. A women's affairs section to monitor the implementation of and co-ordinate those advances had also been set up. At the international level, her delegation noted with satisfaction that the measures recommended in the Programme of Action were being adopted. However, she would like further details concerning the co-ordination of issues relating to the status of women within the United Nations system. Also, the Commission on the Status of Women should play a central co-ordinating role, and in that connexion she welcomed the establishment of a liaison office of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at United Nations Headquarters.

35. The Government of Nigeria reaffirmed its commitment to the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, expressed its satisfaction with the support the Fund was receiving from many Governments, and hoped that that support would be continued, but regretted that it had not been possible to reach a final decision at the current session with regard to the location of the Fund. Her delegation and others had prepared a draft resolution which would request the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session his proposals for the timing and modalities of the relocation. It was to be hoped that the draft would be adopted without a vote, and her delegation was open to constructive proposals in that regard.

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(Miss Obafemi, Nigeria)

36. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of the International Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and commended the Government of the Dominican Republic for offering to host that body.

37. With regard to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, her delegation was heartened to note that it had been signed by 86 countries and acceded to or ratified by 28. Nigeria intended to become a party to the Convention at an early date, a number of the provisions of the Convention being already reflected in its Constitution.

38. Miss SAMPSON (Guyana) said that one of the major difficulties arising from the process of development was that of the full and effective utilization of all available factors, human and material. The developing countries were particularly conscious of the need to involve every sector of society in the development process. Perhaps the most unappreciated contribution in that respect had been that of women. Accordingly, the equal participation of women in the development process had become one of the primary objectives of the development strategy. Guyana was particularly aware of that need because its population was small.

39. The President of the Republic of Guyana was one of the strongest advocates of making use of the potential of women for development. Moreover, the right of women to equality had been incorporated in the new Constitution of Guyana, article 9 of which proclaimed the equality of rights of men and women and established the framework for the future development of laws which would enable women to achieve effective equality.

40. It had also been decided to establish a Women's Bureau, to be administered along the lines agreed upon by non-governmental women's organizations and the Ministry responsible for women's affairs. There were many women holding important posts in Guyana. As a result of the most recent general elections, held in December 1980, 25 per cent of the members of Guyana's Parliament were women. In addition, Guyana had three women Ministers.

41. A vital catalytic role was played by the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement, to which she belonged, in promoting the incorporation of Guyanese women into the process of development. That organization had launched a number of projects aimed at assisting the women of Guyana, especially in the sphere of agriculture. She wished to express the organization's gratitude to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women for its assistance to the financing of one such project. It was likewise grateful to UNICEF for the help it had given Guyana in the matter of technology.

42. Guyana had benefitted from the commendable work of the Fund and hoped that its activities would continue beyond the end of the Decade for Women. With regard to the location of the Fund, her delegation was concerned over its possible transfer to Vienna. It felt that the Fund should continue to be located in New York, where it had the advantage of greater proximity to the United Nations system and to national delegations.

43. Guyana's efforts to create conditions of equality, development and peace for its women had been encouraged by the knowledge that other peoples who were engaged in a

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(Miss Sampson, Guyana)

similar struggle had been successful. By the same token, when other peoples failed their efforts, Guyana's own success seemed threatened; that was the feeling it had when it considered the situation in South Africa under the brutal conditions of apartheid. Even as it rejoiced that Zimbabwe was free, it could not but be aware of the oppression suffered by the inhabitants of Namibia and Azania, separated from their families and forced by circumstances to work for the benefit of others as migrant workers in their own land. The situation of Palestinian women and refugees suffering a loss not only of their homes but also of their dignity was not very different.

. Lastly, she was proud to be able to state that during the World Conference at Copenhagen Guyana had signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and to announce that her Government had decided to seek membership in the Committee on the implementation of the Convention.

. Miss KOUYOKILA-SOUMINA (Congo) recalled that in his message to the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women the President of the Congo, Mr. Sassou-Nguesso, stressed the importance of the struggle of women for their liberation in order that they might be able to secure their equality, participate fully in development and consolidate peace in the world. Furthermore, as stated at the Meeting of High-Level Experts Concerned with the Role of Women in Development, held at Havana in 1981, the concept of equality was closely related to the concept of development and, indeed, to the concept of peace. In that context, her delegation supported the draft Declaration on the Participation of Women, for that text was entirely in consonance with the spirit of the Copenhagen Conference.

. The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women was an instrument of enormous importance, the dissemination and implementation of which should be ensured so that the Conference at Nairobi in 1985 could constitute a fitting culmination of the efforts made on behalf of women. It was to be hoped that the Advancement of Women Branch would make rapid progress and would prove to be an important element in the attainment of the objectives of the Decade.

. Her Government, which had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, welcomed the Convention's entry into force and urged States which had not yet acceded to it to do so.

. With regard to the situation of women in the People's Republic of the Congo, she recalled that the Revolution of August 1963 and in particular the founding of the Congolese Labour Party had not only enabled women to unite in a great vanguard organization, the Revolutionary Union of Women of the Congo, but also enabled that organization to take part in the social, political and economic life of the country. In the People's Republic of the Congo women enjoyed the same rights as men and were represented at the highest levels of decision-making, in the Party on the one hand and in the Government and National Assembly on the other. Congolese women were aware that their liberation and well-being depended on the liberation and well-being of all the women of the world.

. The difficulties confronting the women of the developing countries were legion. For that reason it was essential to insist on the need to establish structures which

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(Miss Kouyokila-Soumina, Congo)

would enable them to participate fully in the development of their country. In that connexion the provision of certain services, such as nursery schools and kindergartens, was of paramount importance, because women could use the free time made available to them by the existence of such services not only to acquire technical skills that would enable them to fulfil their economic function but also to participate in community affairs and even provide community leadership. The developing countries should give greater attention to services which lightened the tasks of mothers just as they did, for example, to the construction of roads.

50. Mrs. RAZALI (Malaysia) said that her delegation was happy to note that the Governments of many Member States had adopted positive attitudes and taken the necessary measures to ensure the equal participation of women both as agents and as beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the development process. At the international level, the new International Development Strategy had further complemented those measures and provided the necessary policy guidelines.

51. Since the Copenhagen Conference, Malaysia, like other Member States, had taken specific steps to ensure the integration of women in all development activities. In fact, more than two decades earlier her Government had taken the necessary measures to ensure the equal participation of women in political and management activities, and to encourage them to become involved in all aspects of the nation-building process. Her country possessed the necessary ingredients: material and human resources, a strong social and economic infrastructure, the effective participation of the masses and a clear commitment by the Government to integrate women in all aspects of the nation's development. However, there was still room for improvement in realizing the development goals of the Decade. Her Government was trying to remove some of the traditional constraints stemming from the country's historical and cultural heritage.

52. The establishment of several nation-wide women's organizations with social and economic objectives had led to the need to establish, in 1976, national machinery, in the form of the National Advisory Council, to provide additional impetus. The Council was a multisectoral body comprising representatives of governmental and non-governmental sectors. As part of its activities, the Council provided advisory services on legislation and programmes affecting women, carried out research and disseminated information, and served as a link between women's organizations and the Government.

53. Consistent with the appeals made at international forums, Malaysia was striving for a fair distribution of income and a restructuring of economic relations. Women accounted for 50 per cent of Malaysia's population and 36 per cent of its labour force. Consequently, efforts had been made to provide the women of Malaysia with better technological and management know-how so as to enable them to perform more effectively as agents of development and as partners in the management of the household economy. In 1978, women constituted the bulk of the labour force in the agricultural sector and about 18.8 per cent of the labour force in the manufacturing sector. In the Fourth Malaysia Plan for 1981-1985, women were given more opportunities to participate fully in development efforts.

54. In the area of social security, new approaches and policies were being formulated to encourage the effective participation of women, such as those reflected in the

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(Mrs. Razali, Malaysia)

establishment of training centres, family counseling, and maternity and old-age services. With regard to education, Malaysia had a literacy rate of 60.8 per cent; 49.9 per cent of that total was accounted for by women. Her Government's national education policy was geared to the participation of all in the national development process through an educational system that aimed at productive investment in human capital. With regard to the participation of women in national politics, as early as 1946 one of the leading national political parties had had a women's wing. Today, her country had 16 women State representatives, two ministers and two parliamentary secretaries.

55. As the 1985 Nairobi Conference drew nearer, there was a need to adopt effective measures to ensure the attainment of the objectives envisaged in the 1975 World Plan of Action, particularly with respect to the contributions of regional commissions and international organs. As indicated in the Secretary-General's progress report on the steps already taken by the United Nations system to implement the Copenhagen Programme of Action (A/36/564) and the report of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/36/490), significant progress had been made, but there were also limitations that must be overcome. The Secretary-General's report indicated that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had not made significant efforts to bring about the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action. Her delegation requested the Secretary-General to provide the adequate funding and machinery for lack of which ESCAP had so far been unable to attain that great objective. It must be remembered that in that region the percentage of women in the population was higher than in any other region of the world.

56. Another international concern was the need to provide adequate information on the progress achieved by women in development and as contributors to international understanding. What was needed in order to bring about change was not a legalistic and administrative approach but concerted efforts to change attitudes and develop correct concepts of planning in which women were not considered as merely marginal contributors to national economic wealth or marginal participants in the household economy.

57. Mrs. YANISHCHITS (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women had given a new impetus to progressive forces at the national, regional and international levels with respect to the equality of women and their participation in economic, political, cultural and social life. The majority of countries recognized that efforts to improve the situation of women were linked with the struggle for peace and security, independence and self-determination and against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, imperialism, apartheid, aggression and interference in the internal affairs of other States. Without the participation of women, the objectives of the Decade - equality, development and peace - could not be achieved.

58. The fact that peace was one of the objectives to be attained during the Decade reflected the reality of the modern world, for it had been universally recognized that the equality and development of women could be achieved only in a peaceful atmosphere free from the threat of nuclear war; those were the conditions under which international security, disarmament and co-operation among the peoples of the world, on a footing of equality, could be achieved.

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(Mrs. Yanishchits, Byelorussian SSR)

59. The decisions adopted during the International Women's Year were very important because, like the relevant General Assembly resolutions, they had urged the United Nations to devote greater attention to the interests of women. Most of those resolutions had been adopted at a time when the policy of *détente* had held out encouraging prospects and permitted women to hope that future generations would be spared the horrors of war. Recently, women had become increasingly aware of the possibility of a nuclear catastrophe and had been watching the acceleration of the arms race, which constituted a heavy burden for women to bear. In the capitalist countries, the arms race had produced serious consequences such as unemployment, inflation and the closing of hospitals and schools. It was therefore understandable that women all over the world were participating more and more actively in the mass movement against the arms race and in favour of international peace and security.

60. The women of the Byelorussian SSR and women all over the world considered disarmament and *détente* indispensable for maintaining peace and security and guaranteeing a happy future for their children. Peace-loving forces had paid a high price for the right to live in peace. All the peoples of the world needed peace, especially women, for it was they who had the primary responsibility for preserving future generations. Women could play an important role by educating future generations in an atmosphere of peace and could promote the formation of individual and social attitudes based on mutual respect and co-operation in the interests of a lasting peace. The more active women were in the struggle for peace, the better would be the results. That was why her delegation particularly welcomed the initiative taken by the delegation of the German Democratic Republic and other countries in presenting the Draft Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle to Strengthen International Peace and Security and against Colonialism, Apartheid, All Forms of Racism and Racial Discrimination, Foreign Aggression, Occupation and All Forms of Foreign Domination. The adoption of that instrument would permit more favourable conditions to be established for the participation of women in social and political activities and eliminate possible antisocial phenomena.

61. In reaffirming the unflinching position of her delegation she wished to stress the invalidity of the objections of some delegations to the Draft Declaration on the ground that it would lead to the establishment of distinctions based on sex and to the selection of some aspects of the matter at the expense of others. If world problems such as those to which the draft addressed itself were to be solved, the enormous potential of women would have to be tapped.

62. The adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - which the Byelorussian SSR had ratified on 4 February 1981 - was an important achievement by the international community in the implementation of the aims and objectives of the Decade. She supported the appeal to all States made at the Copenhagen Conference and at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly to sign or ratify the Convention or to abide by its provisions in practice.

63. The implementation of the aims and objectives of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade would depend on the nature and extent of the efforts of each country. Since the early days of the establishment of Soviet power, the

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(Mrs. Yanishchits, Byelorussian SSR)

Byelorussian SSR had been taking measures to ensure genuine equality for women. The principle of equality between men and women was embodied in the new Byelorussian Constitution of 1978, and was guaranteed by law.

64. The number of women in positions of responsibility bore witness to women's participation in the political life of the country. Women constituted 37.1 per cent of the total of 485 deputies elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR in 1980 and 49 per cent of deputies to the rural and urban Soviets. Women's participation in the management of State enterprises and the administration of co-operative and social organizations amounted to 64 per cent.

65. The fact that women were able to develop all facets of their personality enabled them to show their competence in all spheres of the country's life. They represented 53 per cent of the total labour force in the Byelorussian SSR. There was a large majority of women in the fields of health, education and social services. Women also constituted a majority in intellectual and mechanized work.

66. The experience of the Byelorussian SSR bore witness to the interest of the socialist State in establishing genuine equality for women and fully guaranteeing their rights. Thus it was reaffirmed that women were an important social force and that their participation in economic, political and public life contributed much to the progressive development of society. The Byelorussian SSR would spare no effort to implement decisions aimed at achieving the objectives of the Decade: equality, development and peace.

67. Mr. VERKERCKE (Belgium) said that the idea of genuine equality for men and women in all spheres was at the heart of the United Nations Decade for Women. It was an objective which everyone supported and which must be achieved, in the interests both of justice and human dignity and of ensuring the comprehensive and balanced development of society.

68. The prevailing circumstances were not very favourable; the United Nations Decade for Women was coinciding thus far with a world economic crisis, the brunt of which fell on women in both developed and developing countries. Nevertheless, the idea of equality between men and women had continued to gain ground in all spheres of social life. A number of organs and agencies of the United Nations system had helped to promote that process. In that connexion it was important to increase the number of "focal points" in the various organizations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/136.

69. The advancement of women towards genuine equality should be an integral part of the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Activities in that sphere must not be allowed to suffer unduly from the austerity measures imposed by current financial difficulties.

70. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was participating in efforts to integrate women in the development process. Despite its modest resources, initial efforts had been admirable, particularly its small-scale but highly beneficial

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(Mr. Verkercke, Belgium)

rural projects. The existing terms of reference of the Fund did not extend beyond the end of the Decade. However, the Fund had amply demonstrated its value and should therefore continue its activities beyond that time. His delegation was prepared to study the question of the form in which its activities might be continued. Whatever that might be, it should take into account the increasingly close co-operation between the Fund and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which already administered a substantial part of the Fund's expenditure. The Fund could then combine a maximum of information and speed with its own flexible administrative structure.

71. Those advantages would be diminished if the administration of the Fund moved from New York. The Government of Belgium considered that the reason for the decision by the General Assembly two years previously that the Fund should be set up at Headquarters was still valid and that the decision should be ratified during the current session.

72. Another scheme started some years earlier in the framework of the Decade, which had not really become operative because of enormous practical difficulties, was the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. The next meeting of the Institute's Board of Trustees would give a strong impetus to the many activities which the Institute could carry out.

73. The Commission on the Status of Women would soon be holding its twenty-ninth session, at which it would conduct a preliminary review of the efforts made to implement the broad Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/39, the Commission should consider procedures for handling communications concerning the status of women and should submit its views to the Economic and Social Council in the spring of 1982.

74. The Commission on the Status of Women had on a number of occasions considered the idea of a declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, apartheid, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, foreign aggression, occupation and all forms of colonial domination. It had been clear that the majority of members of the Commission did not consider that such a declaration would serve any useful purpose. His delegation was also not in favour of such a declaration, since it shared the view that it would not help to advance women or strengthen peace, although it wished to reaffirm the importance that its Government attached to the provisions of the Copenhagen Programme of Action in respect of national activities. Those provisions served as a guide for national action in his country.

75. In recent years there had been particularly intensive activity in the legislative field to promote de jure and de facto equality of men and women. Part of that important legislative action was directly linked with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which Belgium had signed in July 1980 at Copenhagen. The Government was planning to introduce a number of modifications in domestic legislation with a view to ratifying the Convention without, or with a minimum of, reservations.

76. Mr. O'Donovan (Ireland) resumed the chair.

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77. Mrs. HAILU (Ethiopia) said that she was gratified to note that all the organs and bodies of the United Nations system had contributed considerable financial and technical support to programmes for women designed to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action, in response to the appeal contained in General Assembly resolution 35/136. For its part, her Government, in spite of its limited resources and the fact that there were 2.4 million displaced persons in her country as a result of external aggression, had given top priority to the advancement of women. For example, the new labour policies provided equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers. At all levels it was a requirement that a certain percentage of vacant posts should be reserved for qualified women seeking employment. Thus, women in her country were fully engaged in the nation-building process.

78. July 1980 had seen the establishment of the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association, encompassing 17,000 basic associations, with 4 million members in 23,000 women's neighbourhood associations in rural areas and 14,000 women's neighbourhood associations in urban areas. The Association had offered women the opportunity to break with the stagnant tradition of the past and to take an active part in the life of society. In addition, a national literacy campaign had been launched in 1978, with very positive results for the female population. Of the 9 million persons who had become literate, 75 per cent were women. To back up that campaign, the Association organized lectures, workshops and seminars aimed at raising women's standard of education and their level of political consciousness.

79. Since the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women at Copenhagen, the Economic Commission for Africa had organized several programmes on a subregional basis. Notable among them was a three-month training programme for women in the optimal use of food donated as relief, which had included agricultural training for women. In that connexion, her delegation wished to express its appreciation to the Economic Commission for Africa for its work in the region to promote the advancement of women.

80. As the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had said, the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women should continue to operate after the Decade had come to an end. It was to be hoped, therefore, that all Governments would be prepared to continue to contribute the necessary resources to the Fund; the greater part of those resources had been used to support the activities of women in rural and urban areas in developing countries. Her country would continue to allocate what resources it could in the coming years. The question of the Fund's change of location was one which needed careful examination, for such a move required stronger justification than had so far been presented.

81. Her delegation had been very happy to learn of the entry into force, in September 1981, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which her country had been one of the first signatories. Further, her delegation supported the Draft Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle for the Strengthening of International Peace and Security and against Colonialism, Apartheid, All Forms of Racism and Racial Discrimination, Foreign Aggression, Occupation and All Forms of Foreign Domination, because it was convinced that equal rights and development for women could be assured only in a world free from oppression and war. As one of the sponsors of that Draft Declaration (A/36/476), her

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(Mrs. Hailu, Ethiopia)

delegation believed that by adopting it, the United Nations could make an effective contribution to the advancement of the role of women in the struggle for peace and against colonialism, racism and apartheid.

82. In conclusion, her delegation welcomed the establishment, in the Dominican Republic, of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and hoped that it would do a very useful job, under the experienced direction of Mrs. Pastizzi-Ferencic, in providing much-needed data for the effective implementation of measures designed to ensure the integration of women into development.

83. Mrs. BELLORINI (Nicaragua) said that her country had signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In connexion with the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, she pointed out that her country already had one programme in the field of information and communications, and another relating to employment and the raising of income levels. She emphasized her delegation's appreciation to the Fund for financing those projects, which were working to the benefit of the women in her country.

84. In countries such as her own, it was the duty of people in all sectors of society to participate directly and actively in the tasks demanded of them by social necessities. In her country, women and young people provided an example of such participation. Evidence of that was the country-wide campaign to combat malaria, in which 250,000 activists of both sexes and all ages were taking part. Furthermore, women in her country were engaged in work in the most vital areas of the revolutionary process, namely, education, health, rural development and the uniting of political and military efforts in the interests of national defence. In all those activities, men and women shared responsibilities equally.

85. Notable among popular organizations was the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Women's Association of Nicaragua, which had played an active part in bringing about the final downfall of the dictatorship and was involved in all aspects of the work of building the new nation. That organization was represented in the Council of State, the supreme national legislative body, and was pressing for the adoption of a law embodying a Family Code; if adopted, that law would give mothers equal rights with fathers over their children. The successes of women's organizations in her country, of all the activities organized in observance of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, deserved to be regarded internationally as among the most positive achieved in a developing country.

86. Mrs. da LUZ (Cape Verde) said that her country was one of the least developed countries and one of the most drought-stricken countries of the Sahel region. Since the improvement of the condition of women, in other words, the guaranteed enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, could be brought about only through economic development, the majority of women in Cape Verde were disadvantaged in spite of the commitment of the Government to equality of women.

87. The Constitution of Cape Verde provided equal rights for men and women with regard to marriage, the education of children, and parity of duties and responsibilities within the family. In the public sector, the principle of equal pay for equal work

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(Mrs. da Luz, Cape Verde)

was observed. Equal opportunities for education had been provided for boys and girls. Laws and principles were valuable references, but they could not transform traditions and stereotypes overnight. The patient work of education and information carried out by the national women's organization had been of great importance in shaping a consciousness of women's rights. Nevertheless, in rural areas women did not respond as quickly as was hoped to the efforts to ease their burden of discrimination. Several projects were being undertaken in order to improve that situation.

88. Cape Verde was one of the States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and pledged to implement all the provisions of the Convention and the Plan of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

89. Mr. ABAWI (Afghanistan) said that in his country the revolution of April 1978, which had entered a new phase in December 1979, had brought about a new type of government reflecting the aspirations and interests of workers, the men and women of the Afghan people. The revolution had made the lives of the people easier, particularly the lives of women, who had formed the most disadvantaged sector of society. A number of decrees had been issued in the interest of all the people, including a decree on equality of the rights of men and women before the law.

90. The Government and mass organizations had launched a campaign to eradicate illiteracy among rural women. The Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan provided for all necessary measures for implementing the rights of women to education, employment and health care and their full participation in the development process of the country.

91. Afghan women were not only struggling for their local and national interests but also were taking part in the struggle to strengthen international peace and security. The Democratic Organization of Afghan Women, which for 15 years had been the vanguard of Afghan women, had acquired international prestige because of its valiant struggle on the national and international front for peace, equality and the participation of women.

92. The contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security was a matter of great importance to his delegation, which would support all initiatives which were in keeping with the 1975 Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace and with the Plan of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

93. The CHAIRMAN said that after the Bureau and the General Assembly had considered the request made by the Commission on Human Rights in resolution 32 (XXVII), the note by the Secretary-General (A/36/608), to which an interim report on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in El Salvador had been appended, had been submitted to the Committee in connexion with agenda item 12. That report had been prepared by Mr. Pastor Ridruejo, the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights.

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(The Chairman)

94. The Chair had conducted informal consultations with different delegations in order to determine whether the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights could personally introduce to the Committee the provisional report which he had prepared and which was to be considered by the Committee.

95. Mr. ROSALES (El Salvador) pointed out, in connexion with the statement just made by the Chairman, that approximately one year earlier the Committee, in an irregular and unprecedented step which encroached on the competence of the Commission on Human Rights, had adopted a resolution entitled "Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in El Salvador". His Government had objected to that resolution on the ground that it was lacking in balance, biased and tendentious; its contents, therefore, were devoid of any moral force, and all actions and decisions taken on the basis of that resolution had no more value for his country than the paper on which they were written.

96. Today, a year later, an attempt was being made to decide the matter through a further infringement of the legal system. The delegations had been informed that the Chairman had been requested to permit the Special Representative to introduce the interim report he had already submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session through its President.

97. In his delegation's view neither the letter nor the spirit of the resolution envisaged that the Special Representative would personally introduce his report to the Third Committee. That was evident both from the text of the resolution and from a comparison of that resolution with other recent resolutions on the subject and its relationship with the financial provisions which allowed for travel expenses and allowances to enable the person appointed to carry out his task. It had never been said in the Commission on Human Rights that the Special Representative would appear before the Third Committee, and therefore it could not be assumed that that had been the Commission's intention. The proof lay in the fact that no funds had been allocated for that purpose. In contrast, Mr. Pastor Ridruejo's trip to El Salvador had been provided for in advance in the financial arrangements for that purpose. The Government of El Salvador had permitted his visit on the understanding that his presence did not imply acceptance of his status as Special Representative, since El Salvador did not recognize the validity of the resolution in question, which, moreover, was interventionist in its purpose; but, rather, it had regarded such permission as a courtesy accorded to a Spanish citizen. That had been made quite clear to Mr. Pastor Ridruejo.

98. If the basis of the report was resolution 32 (XXXVII) of the Commission on Human Rights, then in so far as those who attributed any value to it were concerned, the resolution should be fulfilled in all respects. It laid down the extent, and by the same token the limits, of the Special Representative's activities. Trying to give his mandate an ultra vires interpretation obviously violated the resolution. Arguing that the matter was political in order to justify the presence of Mr. Pastor Ridruejo was tantamount to sidestepping and slighting the law precisely for political purposes. Nevertheless, El Salvador, in order to forestall any allegation that it was seeking to put legal obstacles in the way, made no objection to Mr. Pastor Ridruejo's appearing before the Committee. However, any invitation that the Chairman might extend with the Committee's consent would be no responsibility of the Government of El Salvador.

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(Mr. Rosales, El Salvador)

99. It was, furthermore, his delegation's duty to point out that there seemed to be an intention in some circles, in so far as Mr. Pastor Ridruejo's appearance was concerned, to put on some sort of "show" accompanied by propaganda blasts, an intention which demonstrated what bad faith there was in the handling of the matter. The whole purpose of hearing Mr. Pastor Ridruejo was dubious and not at all in keeping with the efforts to put an end to the violence in El Salvador, which was his Government's most fervent wish.

100. It was appropriate, therefore, that he should draw the Committee's attention to the general perception among Member States that to be the target of the "show" that human-rights matters in United Nations bodies were turning into, two conditions were necessary: first, that the State concerned was a Latin American country, and second, that the Government subjected to harassment did not profess a Marxist-Leninist policy. Thus, the non-discriminatory nature of human rights was mere theory. Practical experience in the United Nations showed a selectivity which would ultimately pervert the praiseworthy aim of universal respect for human rights. An attempt was being made to give the impression that some Latin American countries were blots upon an ocean of calm where law and social justice reigned, that everything outside those countries was a political earthly paradise. In his delegation's opinion, that was the height of hypocrisy.

101. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) was not in favour of inviting the Special Representative to appear before the Committee. Her delegation would like to know who had requested or proposed such an invitation. If the Commission on Human Rights had requested it, there was no more to say, and in that case the financial implications and related provisions would have been taken care of. If, on the other hand, the Committee was once again being obliged to witness an attempt, of the kind made some years earlier, to have certain members of the Secretariat address the Committee, her delegation was opposed. If no financial arrangements had been made and there was no decision by the Commission on Human Rights in the matter, she did not see why the Special Representative should appear personally.

102. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been asked by the Special Representative to consult the Committee to ascertain whether or not the Special Representative should present the report in person. If the Committee had any objection, it could take the appropriate decision.

103. Mr. GONZÁLEZ de LEÓN (Mexico) said that his delegation had looked again at the terms of resolution 32 (XXXVII) of the Commission on Human Rights and had found that it requested the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly. There was, in fact, no reference to allocating the cost of the personal appearance of the Special Representative before the General Assembly. However, he believed that, in connexion with many resolutions in which provision was made for the submission of reports of that kind, it was customary for the Special Rapporteur to appear before the Committee from which the request to prepare the report had come. There appeared to be nothing unusual, therefore, in the Special Representative's asking whether or not he should present his report in person. Since the representative of El Salvador, even though he was not in agreement with the substance of the matter or with the way in which it had been treated, did not object to the Special

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(Mr. González de León, Mexico)

Representative's presence, the Mexican delegation felt that there was even less reason to raise any objection, and Mexico would therefore support a proposal to follow the established practice for submitting reports.

104. Regarding the statement by El Salvador, his delegation regretted the lack of respect that was implicit in the way in which that country's representative had referred to the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

105. Ms. GUEVARA ACHAVAL (Argentina), speaking on a point of order, said her delegation regretted that, although it had asked for the floor at the same time as the Moroccan delegation, the Chairman had called on two other speakers before it, and she wished to be given an assurance that the Chairman would not adjourn the meeting or take any decision on the item until all delegations which wished to intervene had had an opportunity to do so. Consequently, if the hour was so late that the meeting should rise, she requested that no decision should be taken until the next meeting.

106. The CHAIRMAN said that he had called on the speakers in the order in which the Secretary of the Committee had written them down. Obviously, if there was no agreement, the decision would be postponed until the Committee wished to take it up again. If there was a consensus on the matter, he would leave the decision to the delegations.

107. Mr. MASSOT (Brazil) said that paragraph 10 of the operative part of resolution 32 (XXXVII) of the Commission on Human Rights had not been intended to invite the Special Representative to present the report to the Committee in person. Furthermore, the report had already been distributed as a document. When the Commission had determined all the resolution's financial implications in detail, there had been no estimate for any travel to New York, as could be seen from pages 279 and 280 of the report of the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-seventh session. His delegation would not be in favour of inviting the Special Representative to introduce the report in person.

108. The CHAIRMAN reminded delegations that the list of speakers on agenda item 83 would be closed on Friday, 13 November, at 6 p.m., and that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions on that item would be Tuesday, 17 November, at 6 p.m. He also reminded the Committee that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions on agenda items 12, 129 and 138 would be Friday, 20 November, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.