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QUESTION OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED

Day for the Aging

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/37/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 36/20, the General Assembly invited Member States to consider designating, in their respective countries, a "Day for the Aging" devoted to activities by and on behalf of the elderly and the aged. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it, at its thirty-seventh session, the views and comments received from Member States pursuant to this invitation.

2. In accordance with that resolution, the Secretary-General sent, on 5 March 1982, an aide-mémoire to all Member States regarding the designation of a Day for the Aging. As at 15 August 1982, the following 21 Member States had provided their views to the Secretary-General: Austria, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Venezuela and Zaire.

3. A summary of the responses received from States, also taking into account the views expressed by them during the plenary debate of the World Assembly on Aging, 1/ appears below.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

4. Of the 21 Member States replying to the Secretary-General's aide-mémoire, three countries (Austria, Denmark and New Zealand) indicated their hesitation to designate a specific day for the aging, citing, inter alia, that the proliferation of special days tended to undermine their value. Three countries (El Salvador, Senegal and Zaire) acknowledged receipt of the Secretary-General's aide-mémoire and stated that there would be further communications on this subject at a later date. The remaining 15 responding Member States have indicated their support of the idea of celebrating a Day for the Aging. In addition, all the statements made by countries on this subject at the World Assembly on Aging showed similar support for the Day.

5. Several of the Member States that reacted favourably to the concept of a Day for the Aging indicated that they had already been celebrating either a day or a week for the aging for some years. In Japan, for instance, this has been the case since 1966; in the Federal Republic of Germany, since 1969; in Peru, since 1975; and in Chile, since 1976. Brazil, France, Jamaica and Venezuela also indicated that this had been their practice for many years.

6. Many Member States have used the convening of the World Assembly on Aging in 1982 as a stimulus for undertaking special activities at the national level. For example, three Member States (Brazil, Iceland and Israel) declared 1982 as the "National Year for the Aging". In the same spirit, other Member States (Bahrain, Canada, Chile, India, Iraq, Nicaragua and Turkey) decided on a day, week or month for the aging during 1982. Two Member States (Malta and Pakistan) declared 26 July, which marked the opening of the World Assembly on Aging, as their national day for the aging. Cuba has decided on 19 December as its national day for the

aging. One Member State indicated that the Day should be celebrated universally on 14 December, since this was the day on which General Assembly resolution 33/52, which called for the convening of the World Assembly, was adopted. Botswana, Luxembourg and Malawi indicated their support for the concept of celebrating a day for the aging and noted that details on the objectives and implementation of such a day were currently being worked out.

7. Many of the Member States that supported the establishment of a Day for the Aging indicated that the purpose and objectives of this observance should be, inter alia: to promote the active participation of the elderly in society; to create awareness of the issues of aging, particularly through the mass media; to celebrate the contributions which the elderly have made to national life; and to promote respect for the aging themselves.

8. It should be noted that, at its second and third sessions, the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging, recommended that the World Assembly should consider the question of designating a Day for the Aging and to provide the Day, as far as possible, with an international dimension.

9. The World Assembly on Aging, which was held at Vienna from 26 July to 6 August 1982, considered this question as recommended by the Advisory Committee and included in its adopted Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging the following: "All States are invited to consider designating a national 'Day for the Aging' in conformity with General Assembly resolution 36/20 of 9 November 1981" (A/CONF.113/31).

Note

1/ In addition to Israel, Japan, Pakistan and Peru, which replied to the inquiry of the Secretary-General, Botswana, Malawi, Iceland, Iraq, Malta and Turkey made statements on the matter at the World Assembly on Aging.
