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QUESTION OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED

United Nations activities in the field of aging

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/37/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By paragraph 6 of its resolution 36/20, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-seventh session on the status of the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging and to include in his report an account of project activities financed by the Fund. In paragraph 7 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to strengthen, within the limits of existing resources and voluntary contributions, activities in the field of aging in co-operation with the organizations concerned, and in particular, to assist Governments, at their request, in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for the elderly; to continue to monitor and research the implication of aging populations, especially in the developing countries; and to promote technical co-operation among developing countries in the exchange of information and technology in this field. The Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the implementation of paragraph 7 as well as on any views received from Member States on the problems of the elderly and the aged.

2. The present report has been prepared in response to these requests. The first section deals with the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging, the second, with relevant activities carried out by the United Nations in the field of aging, and the third presents the views of Member States on the problems of the elderly and the aged.

II. TRUST FUND FOR THE WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING

3. In its resolution 35/129 of 11 December 1980, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to establish a voluntary fund for the World Assembly on Aging and to inform Member States of the existence of the fund. By the same resolution, the General Assembly appealed to Member States to make generous voluntary contributions to the fund. In response to the resolution, the Secretary-General established the United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging and, through an aide-memoire issued on 7 January 1981, informed Member States of its existence. The terms of reference of the Trust Fund indicated that its resources would be used to supplement the funds appropriated under the regular budget for the preparatory work and the follow-up of the World Assembly on Aging. At its thirty-sixth session, in its resolution 36/20, the General Assembly noted that the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging had been established and requested the Secretary-General to use its resources to encourage further interest in the field of aging among developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, within the context of the World Assembly on Aging.

4. The resources of the Trust Fund have been used to finance activities in three areas, namely: (a) secretariat support for the preparatory work of the World Assembly on Aging (consisting of the costs associated with the position of Secretary-General of the World Assembly on Aging); (b) participation of the least developed countries in a regional meeting and the World Assembly itself; and (c) public information.

5. In its resolution 35/129 of 11 December 1980, the General Assembly adopted the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council contained in its resolution 1980/26 which, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to designate from outside the United Nations a full-time Secretary-General for the World Assembly on Aging on the understanding that every effort should be made to absorb the costs associated with the new position through existing resources and/or voluntary contributions. In compliance with that request, the Secretary-General designated a Secretary-General for the World Assembly on Aging and since it was not possible to absorb the costs associated with the position through existing regular budget resources it was decided that they should be met from the resources of the Trust Fund (A/C.5/35/67). During 1981, an amount of \$105,378 was expended for the position from the Trust Fund resources and it is estimated that additional expenditure of approximately \$245,780 will be incurred in 1982.

6. At its second session, the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging recommended that the Trust Fund should be used to finance the participation of representatives of the least developed countries in the regional meetings and in the World Assembly itself (A/CONF.113/11). In response to this recommendation, an amount of \$34,470 was allocated from the resources of the Trust Fund to make provision for the participation of one representative of each of the least developed countries in the African region at the Intergovernmental Meeting for Africa, held in Addis Ababa from 1 to 5 March 1982. In addition, an amount of \$66,670 was allocated from the resources of the Trust Fund for the participation of one representative of each of the least developed countries at the World Assembly. 1/

7. An amount of \$35,700 from the Trust Fund was allocated to supplement the resources made available from the regular budget for public information activities of the World Assembly.

8. Details of the actual expenditure incurred in 1981 against the resources of the Trust Fund, as well as tentative estimates of the expenditures expected to be incurred in 1982 and the balance available in the Trust Fund as at 20 August 1982 are shown below:

<u>Income</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
1981 contributions (see annex)	371,000		
1982 contributions (see annex)	533,425		
1981 interest income (actual)	37,561		
1982 interest income (estimated)	<u>50,000</u>		
			991,986
 <u>Expenditures</u>			
1981 expenditure (actual)			
Secretariat support for the preparatory work of the World Assembly on Aging			
Salaries and common staff costs	70,773		
Official travel	21,664		
Programme support	<u>12,941</u>		
		105,378	
1982 expenditure (estimated) a/			
(a) Secretariat support for the preparatory work of the World Assembly on Aging			
Salaries and common staff costs	168,000		
Official travel	49,500		
Programme support	<u>28,280</u>		
		245,780	
(b) Participation of Least Developed Countries			
Regional meeting for Africa	30,500		
World Assembly on Aging	59,000		
Programme support	<u>11,640</u>		
		101,140	
(c) Public information (including programme support costs)			
		<u>35,700</u>	
			<u>(487,998)</u>
Estimate of balance available as at 20 August 1982			<u><u>503,988</u></u>

a/ Excludes an allocation of \$21,770 made from the Trust Fund for Interest on the contribution of Japan to the United Nations Special Account with the concurrence of the Government of Japan in order to meet the costs of interpretation services for the pre-conference meeting of the World Assembly.

9. Should the General Assembly decide to endorse the recommendations contained in the International Plan of Action on Aging adopted by the World Assembly, it would be the intention of the Secretary-General to use the resources of the Trust Fund to provide financial support for achieving the objectives of the Plan.

III. UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF AGING

10. The General Assembly designated the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs as the Secretariat unit responsible for the preparatory work and follow-up programme of the World Assembly on Aging.

11. Within the framework of this mandate and in co-operation with the specialized agencies, regional commissions and non-governmental organizations concerned, a series of preparatory activities for the World Assembly were carried out. These included, inter alia, the convening of regional technical meetings on aging, co-operating with the regional commissions in the holding of the Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meetings for the World Assembly on Aging, preparing the pre-session documentation, convening a panel of experts to examine the basic documents for the Assembly, providing substantive support to the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging, convening ad hoc interagency meetings to co-ordinate, system-wide, the preparatory activities, and disseminating information on the World Assembly on Aging.

12. Many of the preparatory activities for the World Assembly on Aging responded to the requests of the General Assembly mentioned above. In particular, a number of the pre-session documentation addressed the issues of the implications of the aging of populations, especially in developing countries. The Introductory Document on Demographic Considerations (A/CONF.113/4) for example, presented estimates and projections of the number and proportion of the elderly for every region of the world. It also analysed the trends of the aging of populations and the relative proportion or "weight" of the elderly in various countries and regions as well as the changes over time. The document identified, by country, the aging societies of today and those that will emerge over the next 20 to 30 years.

13. The Introductory Document on the Developmental Issues (A/CONF.113/5) analysed the implications of the aging of populations in both developed and developing countries. In particular, it provided suggestions on how national planning can accentuate the positive aspects and minimize the negative aspects of this phenomenon on development.

14. Another pre-session document which researched the implications of the aging of the population was document A/CONF.113/6 entitled "Aging Populations: Economic Policy Considerations". Specifically this paper addressed the economic implications for societies of changing dependency ratios and labour market mobility. It also reviewed the effect of the aging of the population on investment, consumption and savings. A complementary document to this was A/CONF.113/14 entitled "Social Development and Aging" which focused on the social development implications of the aging of the population. Another document entitled "Migration and Aging" (A/CONF.113/7) addressed the determinants and consequences

for development of migration in both developed and developing countries. Particular attention was given to the effect of this phenomenon on the age structure of society.

15. As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretariat carried out its activities in close collaboration with the specialized agencies concerned. Several of the specialized agencies prepared documents for the World Assembly on Aging and a number of these related directly to the question of the implications of the aging of the population on development.

16. In connexion with the promotion of technical co-operation among developing countries in the exchange of information and technology in this field, a series of regional technical meetings were held prior to the World Assembly with the aim of exchanging information at the regional level on the conditions and needs of the aging. These were followed by a series of regional intergovernmental meetings of policy makers where regional plans of action were formulated and adopted. ^{2/} Furthermore, the World Assembly on Aging promoted the exchange of information and technology as well as technical co-operation among developing countries.

IV. VIEWS OF MEMBER STATES ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED

17. In preparation for the World Assembly on Aging, 70 States submitted national reports on the situation of the aging in their countries. These reports presented demographic trends in the various countries, an analysis of the conditions and needs of the elderly and a summary of national policies and programmes designed to respond to these needs. In these reports particular attention was given to the health, housing, education and social welfare needs of the elderly. In addition, the income maintenance and security aspects of older workers and the elderly were analysed. Furthermore, the role of the family was highlighted. Consistently it was emphasized that the fundamental unit of society was the family and measures to maintain and strengthen the family should be pursued. Many States also reviewed the phenomenon of the aging of their population and presented planned or actual policies instituted to respond to the implications of this phenomenon.

18. Furthermore, at the World Assembly on Aging, 97 States made statements that covered the situation of the elderly in their countries and the programmes and activities they are undertaking in this field. It was consistently emphasized that the question of aging should not be considered in isolation but rather should be viewed within the over-all context of national development planning.

Notes

^{1/} In addition to the funds allocated from the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging, an amount of \$34,800 was provided from the resources of the Trust Fund for interest on the contribution of Japan to the United Nations Special Account with the concurrence of the Government of Japan in order to finance the balance of the costs relating to the participation of representatives of the least developed countries at the World Assembly.

^{2/} For a summary of the regional plans of action, see A/CONF.113/26.

ANNEX

Contributions to the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging

	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
<u>1981 contributions</u>		
Norway	5,000	
Sweden		5,000
United States of America	<u>361,000</u>	
		371,000
<u>1982 contributions a/</u>		
Australia	25,333	
Canada	20,060	
Chile	5,000	
Denmark	10,000	
France	32,520	
Germany, Federal Republic of	86,442	
Indonesia	10,000	
Ireland	1,393	
Jamaica	2,000	
Norway	10,000	
Philippines	5,000	
Sweden	25,000	
Thailand	8,677	
United States of America	289,000	
Public donation	<u>3,000</u>	
		<u>533,425</u>
Total		<u><u>904,425</u></u>

a/ Excluded unpaid pledges: India \$10,000, Italy \$7,605, Pakistan \$5,000, Republic of Korea \$5,000, Spain \$15,000: Total \$42,605.
