



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/348 and Add.1 and 2, A/37/237, A/37/551; A/C.3/37/L.16)

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1. Mrs. LAOHAPHAN (Thailand) said that since many delegations had spoken on the International Youth Year, which her delegation fully supported, she would confine her remarks to agenda items 81 and 83. In the twentieth century, the increasingly effective control of prenatal and infant mortality and of infectious diseases, a decline in birth rates and improvements in nutrition and basic health care had resulted in an increase in the number and proportion of the elderly and the aged in every part of the world. Since that important demographic trend was bound to have an impact on the well-being and progress of every society, it was heartening to note that a large number of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations had actively participated in the World Assembly on Aging. The International Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly was a comprehensive document aimed at guaranteeing economic and social security to older persons and providing them with opportunities to contribute to national development.

2. The preparations for and the convocation of the World Assembly on Aging had set in motion a number of activities in Thailand, including the organizing of the first national seminar on health care for the elderly, to be held at Bangkok in collaboration with the World Health Organization, an exhibition on health and social welfare for the elderly, a health contest among elderly people, the presentation of awards to the most distinguished elderly persons in Thailand and the formulation of a five-year national health care plan for the aging, to be implemented during the period 1982-1986.

3. The number of persons over 60 years of age in Thailand would increase from its 1980 value of 2.31 million, or 4.5 per cent of the total population, to 4.5 million, or 7 per cent of the total population, in the year 2000. That figure might seem insignificant in comparison to the figure of 15 or 20 per cent or more in developed countries. Nevertheless, the question of the elderly and the aged could not be regarded as separate from overall socio-economic development problems, particularly in developing countries. In Thailand, three quarters of the older

(Mrs. Laohaphan, Thailand)

population lived in rural areas, which had low standards of living and nutrition. A major concern of her Government was therefore to upgrade the quality of life among the rural population, including the aging. In the spheres of social welfare and medical and health care, necessary and appropriate preventive and protective measures, including rehabilitation services for the aging, would continue to be provided and expanded. Moreover, the Government had launched a national primary health care programme, a major part of which was designed to assist the aging in rural areas.

4. The success of the World Assembly on Aging should not be considered an end in itself. The International Plan of Action adopted by the Assembly called for new and concrete measures, whose success would depend not only on follow-up action in each country but also on concerted international efforts. The best way to improve the situation of the elderly and the aged was to raise the general standard of living of the population, to foster the exchange of information and experiences, and to promote education and training in the specialized fields of gerontology and geriatrics. At the same time, the Vienna Centre should be strengthened, so that it could operate effectively as the United Nations centre responsible for activities concerning the aging.

5. Although Thailand had not yet officially designated a national Day for the Aging, in Thailand older people were traditionally revered and taken care of. Such reverence was expressed on New Year's Day or Songkran, celebrated on 13 April. The Thais looked to the elderly and the aged, who embodied wisdom and experience, for moral and spiritual guidance.

6. Miss DIAZ AVALOS (Paraguay) said that the slogan of the International Youth Year - Participation, Development, Peace - reflected the goals which must be pursued if young people were to gain their proper place in society. In Paraguay and in many other developing countries, young people constituted a majority of the population. National policies must be designed to allow young people the full enjoyment of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights on an equal footing with the rest of the population. The vocational training of young people and the creation of jobs should be a high priority for Governments. Young people must be able to participate in the preparation and application of national development plans and in the shaping of the society in which they lived and would live. To participate fully, they should be free to choose their schooling, their work and their place of work and residence. Young people must also be given access to national and international decision-making forums on development.

7. Unfortunately, many young people had been exposed to the horrors of war. In order to create a generation of peace, it was necessary to create just economic and social conditions. Young people represented the future of each nation, and therefore that of mankind. Nevertheless, they did not play an active role in fundamental decision-making for the future. For example, if they had been in a position of responsibility, there would be no arms race as it now existed.

8. National and regional youth organizations could play an important role in disseminating information about United Nations activities, in particular those

(Miss Diaz Avalos, Paraguay)

concerning development, peace and disarmament. There existed a large number of youth organizations, some of which were, unfortunately, manipulated and exploited by selfish interests. The success of the International Youth Year would depend to a large extent on the co-ordination of the efforts of all existing organizations.

9. Her delegation supported the decisions taken by the World Assembly on Aging held at Vienna. A possible solution to the problem of the elderly and the aged lay in the efforts made by each Government to implement the Plan of Action and recommendations of the World Assembly. In addition to providing older people with means of subsistence, health care, a proper home, a place in society and leisure activities, it was important to create better overall living conditions for them. In Paraguay there was legislation in favour of the elderly and the aged, providing for retirement, pensions and other economic assistance, such as homes for older citizens without families. However, it must be recognized that, as a developing country, Paraguay lacked many of the resources needed to implement fully the recommendations of the World Assembly. Consequently, the success of the recommendations concerning the role to be played by Governments would depend to a large extent on co-ordination at the national and international levels. The assistance and experience of others would have to be utilized through international co-operation, the exchange of information, seminars, meetings, practical experience and financial assistance.

10. The question of aging should not be considered in isolation but rather in the general context of national development. It was not possible to be aware of all future implications of aging as an increasingly larger older population became more conscious of their rights. As life expectancy increased throughout the world, there would be a need to reformulate the traditional values of old age; aging would have to be regarded an opportunity to fulfil new hopes and aspirations. Because of demographic changes, the international community would have to be prepared to modify guidelines at the national and international levels so as not to damage in any way the rights and dignity of the elderly and the aged.

11. With respect to item 89, she said that many countries had adopted concrete measures to achieve the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, it was important for national committees or similar bodies set up for the International Year to continue to act as governmental and co-ordinators in order to consolidate the results of the Year and thus ensure the prevention of disabilities and the rehabilitation of the disabled.

12. Paraguay had prepared long-term plans. Its most significant achievements in the area of helping disabled persons were: the establishment of a National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons; the establishment of a Department of Special Education in the Ministry of Education and Worship designed to formalize special education and to formulate a national development plan for special education aimed at expanding existing educational services, ranging from early childhood education to job placement; the establishment of the Institute for the Protection of Exceptional Persons; the organization and development of special

(Miss Diaz Avalos, Paraguay)

programmes for exceptional children and young people among them, the first South American Special Olympics, in which 200 Paraguayan and foreign athletes had taken part; and the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for the physically and mentally disabled. Her delegation hoped that the General Assembly would proclaim the period 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons.

13. In spite of the difficulties, her delegation was confident that any activity in behalf of young people, the elderly and the aged, and the disabled would contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations: a better, more just and more humane world.

14. Ms. DANIELSEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway, said that she concurred with the Secretary-General of the World Assembly on Aging that work within the United Nations system on matters related to the elderly and the aged had hardly begun.

15. In the year 2025, the total world population over 60 years of age would be 1 billion persons, a 225 per cent increase over 1975. While that increase reflected improved health standards, it also created problems such as increased pension costs, heavier burdens on families to provide care and increased outlays for health and hospital services and for long-term care. The problems might to some extent be said to be self-inflicted, since modified family, occupational and housing patterns had made older persons increasingly dependent on support from others. However, the older generation should not be viewed solely as persons to be taken care of, to be looked after, nursed and supported. Their increasing degree of dependence due not primarily to the deterioration of their physical health but to the fact that industrialized societies had deprived them of their social functions and consequently of their sense of self and opportunities for social contact.

16. A coherent policy for the elderly and the aged must fulfil three main requirements: firstly, individuals must be able to exploit their own resources as much as possible; secondly, they must be able to participate as fully as possible in the decisions influencing their own lives; and, thirdly, there must be a high degree of continuity in their lives, so that any changes resulting from old age were not experienced as a violent break. If a policy for the aging did not fulfil those three basic requirements, their needs would increase.

17. The Nordic countries supported the Vienna Plan of Action, which reflected the aforementioned considerations. It was particularly important to keep older people fully integrated into society and not to separate them from other age groups. Social planning must play an important role, and social and welfare services must be flexible and mobile, so that possibilities for contact, activities and services could be provided in the older person's home environment. Whenever possible, such activities and services should involve other age groups. It was also important not to forget the special needs of older women.

18. Obviously, not every recommendation contained in the Vienna Plan of Action could be carried out by all Governments immediately. Action in different countries

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(Ms. Danielsen, Norway)

would vary, depending on each country's cultural traditions and its economic and social responsibilities.

19. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be the focal point of the implementation of the Vienna Plan of Action. Since the Centre would be co-operating with several organizations within the United Nations family dealing with technical co-operation, there seemed to be no need for a special fund for technical co-operation with respect to the aging. Regardless of different national conditions, the basic principles of a policy for the aging should be the same, and in that respect, the Vienna Plan of Action would constitute a corner-stone of future United Nations activities.

20. Miss ABU LUGHOD (Palestine Liberation Organization) expressed the hope that stronger emphasis would be placed on international youth activities, since national activities were not feasible for those nations whose people lived in exile or under military occupation.

21. The Palestine Liberation Organization attached special importance to young people and their needs and recognized the contributions made by youth to the development of their people and to the Palestinian struggle towards attaining justice and peace.

22. Under the umbrella of the PLO, which united all Palestinians, there was a special ministry called the Council of Youth and Sport which planned for scouting, cultural and sporting activities for youth, at the community and international levels. Large youth groups were also affiliated with the resistance organizations.

23. The General Union of Palestinian Students, with branches throughout the world, was one of the 55 organizations represented in the Palestine National Council. The strength of that union attested to the high priority which Palestinian youth attached to education. There was no branch of that important Council in Palestine owing to Israeli repression. It was hoped that through the United Nations, and especially the International Youth Year, the contact established between Palestinian students and students throughout the world would contribute to increasing international pressure to provide Palestinian students with access to an education, especially in occupied Palestine. Of the 600,000 Palestinians living in Palestine within the pre-1967 borders, barely 3,000 were university students. The reasons for that disproportionately low number were that entrance exams were given in Hebrew, that matriculation fees were too high for Palestinians, who had been deprived of their main source of livelihood, the land, and that a low factory wage was not sufficient both to sustain a family and to pay for a child's education.

24. The PLO sought international support to assist Palestinian students aspiring to higher education in the territories occupied since 1967. A number of privately owned Arab universities in the occupied territories could not operate properly because of Israeli rule. Free access to books must be obtained. According to Israeli professors, the official list of books banned from the West Bank and Gaza contained 648 titles, although those titles had never been made public. Military

(Miss Abu Lughod, PLO)

Order 854 gave Israeli authorities the right to deny permits arbitrarily to students and professors who wished to study or teach in private Arab universities.

25. She read out a document which professors had been coerced into signing, in which they formally repudiated the PLO. Refusal to sign the document had resulted in the denial of a permit to teach and in deportation. Since September 1982, the President of Al-Najah University and 15 professors had been deported from the West Bank for refusing to be intimidated by the Israelis and 28 others had been threatened with deportation. Those actions were in clear violation of academic freedom and the right of young people to an education. Since the Israelis had not been able to install their village-league scheme, they hoped to impose village-league authority by making students request permits from the head of the village league.

26. The Palestinians in exile defended academic rights through their youth groups. They also organized literacy classes in the camps and volunteered their valuable time for the collective good. Some of their major activities were exclusively educational, such as the assignment of readings in poetry, literature and history for weekly meetings and the discussion of political and cultural issues in Palestinian magazines and wall journals.

27. The youth organizations helped to solve the problems of refugees and were involved in social work, such as the rehabilitation of the wounded, the clearing of rubble resulting from Israeli air raids, civil defence, sanitation and security. Palestinian youth were proud to be represented in the international democratic youth organization and to have been able to invite foreign delegations to view the conditions under which they lived. It was their hope that one day they would be able to invite those delegations to Palestine.

28. Young Palestinians supported the slogan of the International Youth Year - Participation, Development, Peace - but inserted one additional word between "development" and "peace", the word "justice", which implied recognition of their rights: the right to return to their land, the right to self-determination and to a Palestinian State. They would struggle for justice, for the end of Israeli aggression, for an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people and for the freedom of Palestinian prisoners. One of those prisoners, an innocent Palestinian youth named Ziad Abu Ain, had been illegally imprisoned in the United States and subsequently extradited to Israel, where he had been given a life sentence for a crime he had not committed.

29. Palestinian youth were eager to increase their familiarity with the conditions of youth in other parts of the world and to share experiences with them. They would like to have the opportunity to express their views during the IYY.

30. Commenting on the abhorrent and cynical statement made by the representative of the Zionist entity, she asked how that entity was able to reconcile its Jewish humanitarian ethics with the bombing of Lebanon and how it could state that it had rehabilitated its soldiers while it disabled scores and scores of Palestinians and

(Miss Abu Lughod, PLO)

more than 1,000 amputations were performed each day on the Palestinian wounded. She also asked how the Zionist entity could claim to be concerned about the mentally disabled when it had bombed a hospital which cared for mentally disabled children, and whether when it said that it would share information with others, it was referring to information about the effectiveness of cluster and vacuum bombs against civilian populations.

31. Mrs. AGWA (Kenya), reporting on the steps that her Government had taken and planned to take regarding youth, the elderly and the aged, and the disabled, said that the Ministry of Culture and Social Services was the governmental agency responsible for the co-ordination of all youth activities and programmes in Kenya. Its special section on youth co-ordinated the work of voluntary organizations and the work of other governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. It had set up youth committees at the district, provincial and national levels composed of representatives from both governmental agencies and voluntary organizations. The purpose of the committees was to plan and implement youth programmes and activities.

32. All young people in Kenya received free primary education up to the seventh grade. Scholarships and loans were available for university bound youth and, because of the increasing number of persons aspiring to higher education, the Government had completed plans for the establishment of a second university.

33. The Government had encouraged the establishment of village polytechnical schools aimed at enabling young people whose formal education had ended at the seventh grade to develop marketable practical skills. The schools were run on a self-help basis, with governmental assistance in the form of instructors, materials and occasional financial contributions. Some graduates of the schools became self-employed while others went on to pursue further training.

34. Kenya's well-earned international reputation in competitive sporting events was no accident, since sports constituted another area of governmental involvement. Sports events were organized to provide opportunities for both physical development and leisure activities. Young Kenyans were also encouraged to preserve their culture through traditional art forms while working at the same time to foster an appreciation of the world's other cultures. Voluntary organizations were working to inculcate civic responsibility and leadership qualities in Kenyan youth, and an increasing number of young people were helping to teach adult literacy classes. Her Government had declared the last week in June to be National Youth Week, during which, various events and recreational activities were organized to inform the nation of the role of youth in the process of national development.

35. Referring to the activities of the various regional commissions pertaining to youth policies and programmes, she urged the Economic Commission for Africa to take note of some of the programmes planned by other regions and determine whether they might be adapted for use in Africa. She expressed support for WHO primary health care and family life programmes and appealed to the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to continue their research on such problems as drugs, alcohol and smoking and to advise States on how to deal with them.

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(Mrs. Agwa, Kenya)

36. Her Government focused attention on young people in the hope that they would eventually assume responsibility for the care of older citizens, traditionally a responsibility of the younger members of extended families. That traditional pattern was considered a moral obligation and constituted, in her delegation's opinion, the best solution to the problem. However, rapid socio-economic changes were undermining traditional values and customs. Steps should therefore be taken to prevent the polarization of society into older rural and young urban populations. Her delegation supported the promotion of development in rural areas, which would improve the overall standard of living and create an incentive for the young to seek their livelihood there, rather than emigrate to the towns. She also expressed support for the recommendations of the World Assembly on Aging and the recommendation by FAO that programmes for the elderly and the aged should be carried out in conjunction with programmes for other sectors of the population. Kenya would attempt to incorporate those views into its national plans.

37. The IYDP had been preceded in Kenya by a National Year for Disabled Persons, held in 1980, during which a trust fund for the disabled had been established. Since then, her country had continued to work in behalf of the disabled, believing that the surest way to improve their condition was to accelerate the general tempo of national development, especially in rural areas. She commended the work of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and urged that it should be maintained as the focal point for the monitoring and implementation of the World Programme of Action.

38. Mr. COORAY (Sri Lanka) expressed his delegation's support for the Advisory Committee's recommendations contained in document A/37/348, stressing that measures and activities for the International Youth Year should emphasize the promotion of youth employment and welfare. His Government had established a separate Ministry of Youth Affairs and a National Youth Services Council to promote policies and programmes relating to youth as an integral part of economic and social development. One of the priorities of those programmes was the provision of regular employment opportunities for youth, since unemployment was one of the most urgent contemporary problems.

39. He suggested that if young people were made sufficiently aware of the principles and work of the United Nations, they might be able to help further the purposes of the Charter, and he recommended that their unquestioned concern for justice and peace should be harnessed to help establish a new world order based on freedom, justice and peace everywhere.

40. Addressing the question of the elderly and the aged, he observed that in countries like Sri Lanka the extended family system had traditionally been the source of care for older people. The forces of modern life, however, had tended to weaken that system and the social obligations which it imposed. His delegation therefore believed that respect for and active participation of the older generation in society should be promoted. The mass media should also foster an awareness of the issues of aging in the context of traditional values.

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(Mr. Cooray, Sri Lanka)

41. Despite the fact that the family was recognized by the Sri Lankan Constitution as the basic unit of society, increasing numbers of older people in Sri Lanka were seeking admission to the inadequate number of old-age homes. A National Committee had been set up by the Minister of Social Services to consider the problems of the aging and adopt remedial measures that would enable the elderly and the aged to participate in national development and be fully integrated into society, while preserving cultural values.

42. His delegation was pleased by the measures contained in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. His Government had established a National Committee on the IYDP, which was composed in part of non-governmental organizations working with the disabled. Following the guidelines contained in the World Programme of Action, that Committee had prepared a plan of action which stressed the creation of an awareness of disability and the rights of the disabled among the population and the development of income-generating skills among the disabled. The National Committee had also given encouragement and assistance to non-governmental and service organizations, particularly for their disability-prevention and rehabilitation programmes. He reminded members of the Third Committee that in the developing countries alone there were 400 million disabled persons whose rights should be protected and whose welfare and rehabilitation should be ensured.

43. Mr. BENKELAY (Algeria) said that his country's special concern for youth and for the elderly and the aged derived from its Arab-Islamic heritage and commitment to use the resources of a modern State to promote the development of its society. Youth and the older generation were basic components of the social structure represented by the family. Differences in the demographic make-up of the industrialized and the developing countries meant that there were differences in the way the two groups approached the problems of young and older citizens. While youth often constituted the largest sector of the population in the developing countries, those countries, were nevertheless experiencing a marked increase in the number of older citizens as a result of improved health conditions. The elderly and the aged had become a source of concern to the State, which was consequently working to ensure that aging was viewed as a normal part of the life cycle and not as a handicap. In that respect, the spirit that had motivated the discussions at the World Assembly on Aging and its Programme of Action gave cause for hope.

44. Since achieving independence, his country had made sweeping social changes aimed at promoting the harmonious development of the country and its people. The extended family was considered the basic unit of society, marked by close affective ties that implied, inter alia, respect for its older members. Algerian family policy was aimed at ensuring the physical well-being of the family, adaptation of the family unit to the requirements of development, the elaboration of a population policy focusing on demographic composition and movements, and a policy of social security. With respect to the elderly and the aged, action had been taken to increase retirement pensions, to provide for specific health needs through a health-card system currently in preparation, to take measures aimed at encouraging the family to deal with most problems related to aging, and to sensitize public opinion through the observance of a National Day on Aging.

(Mr. Benkelay, Algeria)

45. His delegation believed that the disabled could become fully integrated into their societies only through the effective implementation by all States of the World Plan of Action.

46. He observed that preparations for the International Youth Year had entered their final phase and commended the efforts of the United Nations, other organizations and States in working towards the objectives of the Year. The IYY would coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples and the holding of a conference on the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. The IYY theme of participation, development and peace showed the international community's concern for involving youth in the achievement of social progress and the solution of major contemporary problems.

47. In view of its participation in the struggle for national independence, Algerian youth constituted a revolutionary social force that was actively involved in national life. Young people spent much of their period of military service working on national construction projects such as the highway linking Algeria with sub-Saharan Africa, anti-desertification works and the construction of socialist villages in the context of the agrarian revolution. Young people, and students in particular, volunteered their services to the rural population. The National Union of Algerian Youth was also active at many levels. More than 20 per cent of the national budget was regularly earmarked for activities relating to youth, and legislative measures had been adopted to guarantee the rights of young people, particularly the right to education and the right to work. Medical care was provided for youth, as for the rest of the population, free of charge.

48. Algeria had participated in many cultural and sports exchange programmes, through which it reiterated its attachment to respect for the ideals of justice, peace, development, co-operation and the struggle to protect human rights and established a new international economic order.

49. He deplored the policies in southern Africa, Palestine and elsewhere which denied not only young people but also women, children and the older generation their legitimate aspirations. There must be a collective effort to provide those groups with hope.

50. Mr. AL-QUTAISH (Democratic Yemen) said that youth constituted a dynamic resource and that its upbringing would determine the trends of the future. That upbringing should be conducted in a peaceful atmosphere in order to promote peace. The arms race consumed human potential that could be better used in other areas. It had been his country's experience that its social system provided youth with the potential for participation in various aspects of life. His country's Constitution affirmed the national commitment to youth; the Youth Law of 1980 provided educational and cultural opportunities for young people and encouraged youth initiatives. Young people in his country were guaranteed employment and social security.

(Mr. Al-Qutaish, Democratic Yemen)

51. Youth participated in the political life of Democratic Yemen through youth representatives in the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Society, in the People's Council and in local councils. The Youth Federation of Democratic Yemen was a grass-roots organization found in all work units; it enabled youth to participate in discussions of production and employment plans and in projects geared especially to youth in both rural and urban areas. Young people were represented on the boards of schools and universities and had organized summer camps for young people. Another organization, the Young Pioneers, had been established to instill patriotism in young people and develop their personalities.

52. The Youth Federation of Democratic Yemen, which would celebrate its tenth anniversary in 1983, organized a Youth Week each year and actively supported the liberation movements in Palestine, Namibia and other areas under imperialist domination. The Federation participated in a number of international exchanges, including international summer camps organized in other countries. His delegation, which had served as a member of the International Youth Year Advisory Committee, fully supported the IYY and hoped that all IYY programmes would pay particular attention to the just struggle of millions of young people in Palestine, Namibia and other oppressed areas.

53. Ms. MANGANARA (Greece) speaking on agenda item 77, said that, although young people lacked the experience that came with age and their situation varied from country to country, they could help to bring a fresh approach to the world vision of their elders. They should be given the opportunity of organizing the International Youth Year in their own way, free from the prejudices of older generations.

54. Although international problems had an impact on the situation of young people everywhere, young people were often given no real opportunity to help solve them. Therefore, the International Youth Year should mobilize efforts to give young people a chance to express their views on matters of concern to them. On the other hand, since the problems of the young were a projection of the problems of society as a whole, the International Youth Year should also offer support at the international level to national and local efforts.

55. Her Government had recently established a ministry to deal with the problems of young people, particularly those relating to education, employment, health, leisure, culture, information, social and political participation, social welfare and training and the social and economic conditions in which they lived. In particular, further research would be carried out on the form and content of school programmes. The Ministry would encourage cultural initiatives taken by students and youth organizations, and young professionals would be sent abroad to learn about methods and programmes dealing with youth problems. A commission was to be created to inform young people of opportunities for post-graduate education abroad as well as the job opportunities available on their return. In collaboration with local governments, the Ministry would initiate programmes for summer work in rural areas for students and young people in general. Research was to be undertaken into the social mechanisms by which young people were integrated into society and the

(Ms. Manganara, Greece)

reasons for the passivity and marginalization of some young people, with particular focus on young drug addicts. Young people would also be encouraged to become involved in environmental issues and environmental education programmes would be established. Finally, a national youth forum was to be organized to discuss issues such as alternative development models, the quality of life, the environment, and the participation of youth in the formulation of new models for living.

56. Her delegation felt that the Year should not simply be a special series of events but rather part of a long-term effort to increase knowledge and understanding of the challenges confronting youth. The Year should also provide an opportunity to promote physical education and sports exchanges, with priority being given to programmes designed to implement a policy of sports for all.

57. Her delegation felt that the proposals contained in the report of the Advisory Committee were useful and constructive, and it particularly supported those concerning migrant workers, the children of migrant workers and young women, because it held that international community should take more interest of the problems of the most disadvantaged groups.

58. Commenting on the report contained in document A/37/401, she said that it was encouraging to note that United Nations agencies and bodies had in recent years developed a wide range of activities directed towards young people and that there was increased recognition of the contribution of young people to the solution of important world issues. However, much work remained to be done, especially in making young people more aware of the United Nations. Her delegation would consider positively activities which would facilitate an exchange of views between young people in developed countries and in developing countries.

59. Mr. SOERIAATIMADJA (Indonesia), speaking on agenda items 82, 83 and 89, said that the issue of aging was considered to be an important part of his country's national development. Improvements in social welfare, medical care and living conditions had contributed to the increase in life expectancy of the people of Indonesia. His Government believed that the most realistic policy regarding the elderly and the aged should be based on the cultural patterns, value systems and beliefs prevailing in the society. In his country, the elderly had always been respected as senior and honourable members of the society, and younger people were obligated to be responsible for and to take good care of them. However, it was their own families and relatives that had borne the greatest responsibility, a responsibility which they willingly assumed. While taking account of that reality and the strong tendency to maintain that age-old tradition, his Government has also taken steps for ensuring special treatment for those who did not have family or relatives to take care of them or whose family or relatives were not in a position to do so. The additional social security facilities which had been established for all people included the aging. To enable the elderly to play a more meaningful role in society, provision had been made to satisfy their basic needs - from housing facilities, medical care, education and training to the granting of soft loans to increase their participation in the development process. Noting the importance of the role played by social organizations and foundations in providing

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(Mr. Soeriaatimadja, Indonesia)

services to the aging, he said that some of those organizations had long established relations with international foundations and organizations working in social affairs, and the Government granted them subsidies to help them continue functioning as non-profit organizations in the service of those who needed their assistance.

60. His delegation fully endorsed the idea that the primary aim of International Plan of Action on Aging should be to strengthen the capacities of countries to deal effectively with the aging, their special concerns and needs and to promote an international response to those needs made by improving international technical co-operation. It supported United Nations programmes of action which could provide supplementary assistance for implementing his country's national programmes. He was convinced that the United Nations, together with individual Member States could accommodate the traditional way of treating the elderly in various countries and, in doing so, could strengthen multilateral as well as bilateral co-operation.

61. Turning to agenda item 89, he said that his country's Constitution explicitly stipulated that the disabled had equal rights with other groups of the population for opportunities to lead a useful and satisfying life in society. In order to achieve those equal opportunities, they should first be given assistance in overcoming obstacles to their integration into society, the basic condition for the success of rehabilitation efforts. Their integration should therefore enjoy the full moral support and understanding of the entire community. For that purpose, training institutes and rehabilitation centres with adequate equipment had to be established, and there should be effective co-operation between developed and developing countries in the field of training and medical treatment.

62. In his country, disabled persons accounted for about 3.5 million out of a total population of 145.7 million. Most of those people came from poor families but had access to rehabilitation programmes. However, it had not yet been possible to overcome effectively the complex problems of the disabled. Like many other developing countries, Indonesia still had to intensify its effort to improve the social position of the disabled by improving vocational rehabilitation and employment conditions, changing social attitudes, creating public awareness, and ensuring the right of the disabled to normal life, equality and full social participation. ILO, UNDP, WHO and other specialized agencies provided valuable assistance in providing welfare services and other aids, particularly in building workshops for the disabled.

63. In conclusion, he said, if the World Programme of Action was to be successful, it had to be realistic and easy to implement. Technical assistance should be suitably designed to help the developing countries carry out their programmes in accordance with their specific requirements.

64. Mr. PHEDONOS-VADET (Cyprus), speaking on agenda item 89, welcomed the constructive work of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons and expressed satisfaction with the Draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons contained in its report (A/37/351/Add.1).

(Mr. Phedonos-Vadet, Cyprus)

65. The International Year of Disabled Persons had aroused unprecedented enthusiasm for understanding the problems of the disabled and for national and international activities to improve their lot. His delegation hoped that the interest shown by the international community would be maintained in the future. Although his country was a small one - and partially occupied by its northern neighbour - its National Committee for the Year had been able to implement a large number of measures on behalf of disabled people, with co-operation and assistance from the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth, UNESCO, WHO and other international organizations and specialized local associations. In Cyprus, the International Year marked the beginning of a long-term endeavour. The activities of the National Committee were reflected in its report submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General.

66. He congratulated UNESCO on its activities during the Year and, particularly, on the convening of the World Conference on Actions and Strategies for Education, Prevention and Integration, held at Torremolinos in co-operation with the Spanish Government.

67. It was, unfortunately, necessary to mention the Cypriot casualties, for the most part civilian, caused during the brutal attack of Turkey against Cyprus, a premeditated action which the Turks cynically called a "peaceful operation". It was sad to have to rehabilitate and retrain young people whose sole crime was to have had the courage to confront a NATO Power many times stronger than Cyprus. Those war casualties demonstrated the sufferings, the misfortune and the humiliation of a country which was too small to be of concern to the world's great Powers.

68. Mr. GBATTI (Togo), speaking on the items concerning youth and the elderly and the aged, said that Togo was convinced that it was the duty of the United Nations to devote attention to those who had made a life-long contribution to the development of their countries and of the world. The elderly had earned the right to respect and protection in the twilight of their lives. In industrialized societies, obsessed by material consumption, the elderly, more often than not, were not given all the care to which they were entitled, and were often treated with almost total indifference by their fellow citizens. In Africa, however, the traditional concept of the family obliged all its members to care for their parents, especially when they were old and needed daily assistance. However, with technological development and the problems accompanying economic and social development, the African family was tending to deal with the elderly in the restrictive manner common in developed societies. The problem of aging was therefore linked to the level of socio-economic development and to the type of society desired by all developing countries. In the belief that the problem of elderly persons could not be neglected, his country had taken part in the World Assembly on Aging, and it hoped that the General Assembly would support the World Assembly's recommendations which, it was confident, would improve the social position of the elderly.

(Mr. Gbatti, Togo)

69. Turning to agenda items 77 and 81, he said that, given the fact that young people made up half the population of his country and that their number would double by the year 2000, Togo attached great importance to young people in society and was gratified that the United Nations was considering special policies to prepare young people for the task of building tomorrow's world. It was important to realize that young people did not constitute a separate entity and that development was impossible without their participation. Therefore, in beginning the national reconstruction of Togo in 1967, the political authorities had realized the need to solve the problems of a youth that was at loose ends. They realized that young people had to participate in solving their own problems. Therefore, the Jeunesse du Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (JRPT) was established in 1971 as a vehicle for self-expression and development of young people leading to their integration as equal partners in society. Under its programme, young people participated in decision-making through political activities encouraged by the authorities and in the development of the country, actively engaging in campaigns for food self-sufficiency and mass literacy and in the community work of building schools and clinics.

70. In support of full rights for young people, the Government sponsored periodic seminars to allow young people to consider how to defend their unity and solidarity. Through student and other exchange programmes, it was hoped that they would form relationships with young people abroad and develop mutual understanding among all young people. Finally, the right to education was recognized through the education reform carried out since 1975, which made education accessible to all and meant that dropouts at all levels could be reabsorbed through vocational training centres. A system of scholarships, which was being continually improved, left young people free to study without pressures.

71. There were, however, many young people in the world whose rights were being violated: in Namibia and South Africa. They were the victims of the inhuman policy of apartheid; in the Middle East young Palestinians, had been condemned for many years to a life of wandering, and the young in other countries still under foreign domination were wholly preoccupied by the struggle for national liberation.

72. Young people in Togo were preparing actively for the International Youth Year by drawing up programmes of activities which could provide a useful basis for co-operation with the youth of neighbouring countries. His delegation hoped that at the end of the Year, all young people would be convinced that they could participate in the economic, social and political development of their countries and be a driving force for peace. It also hoped that the Year would make them aware of the problems of young people in Namibia, South Africa, Palestine and other countries still under foreign domination. The Year should be an ideal occasion to promote international understanding and active brotherhood among young people in all countries.

73. Mr. KAMARA (Sierra Leone) said that in the face of the challenges facing humanity today, the world community was compelled to give special attention to the

(Mr. Kamara, Sierra Leone)

most vulnerable population groups, namely, youth, women, the aging and the elderly. The Government of Sierra Leone was committed to improving the channels of communication between the United Nations, youth and youth organizations. It was in the process of implementing aspects of the International Youth Year programme of measures and activities at the local and national levels and stood ready to co-operate with all countries in support of programmes for improving, extending and strengthening the channels of communication to enhance the full participation of youth in shaping a peaceful future for mankind.

74. Each of the country's 12 administrative districts had a development association, voluntarily organized by youth, for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of rural development programmes within each district through self-help. Those development associations had provided useful channels through which the Government had been able to direct material support for young people and to combat illiteracy, hunger and disease. That principle of interdependence of community groups was even reflected in the composition of the Government, whose average age of 35 was yet another manifestation of the degree and level of participation of youth in national affairs.

75. Questions of the aging and the elderly should also be considered against the background of the interdependence of social groups. Traditionally, the elderly and the aged wielded considerable authority and commanded great respect in the family and in the community as a whole. They allocated farm land and regulated the community's use of natural resources such as the hunting of certain types of animals and fishing in the streams and rivers. In short, they were the custodians of the community's culture and by their experience and wisdom, they epitomized the truth, harmony and values of the community. In Sierra Leone, the future life success of youth was often measured in terms of the amount of assistance, concern, sympathy and respect they demonstrated for the elderly and the aged.

76. Unfortunately, as a result of the rapid changed taking place in the social, economic and cultural life patterns of Sierra Leone's people, with the introduction of new ideas, industrialization and urbanization, the traditional pattern of life was being transformed and the aged were beginning to experience neglect, disrespect and, in some remote areas, loneliness. Accordingly, the Government was beginning to address the future problems of the aged and the elderly and stood ready to co-operate with the United Nations and its specialized agencies as well as with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in dealing with problems of the elderly and the aged.

77. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that despite the fact that Morocco was a country in which more than 50 per cent of the youth were less than 15 years of age, it had not refused to participate in the World Assembly on Aging and, in that regard, wished to see all the studies submitted to the Assembly compiled in a document to be published by the United Nations. In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly, Morocco had established a National Commission which included not only the representatives of different ministries dealing with social matters but also experts in the social field, doctors, leaders from the

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(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

information media, jurists and representatives from such public agencies as the National Social Security Fund. The National Commission had submitted to the Government several recommendations dealing with health, education, social assistance, special programmes within the current five-year plan, retirement, housing, the environment, mobilization of the information media and support of the National Mutual Aid Society.

78. While all Governments should seek solutions to the problems of the aged, her delegation fully shared the views expressed by the representative of Cameroon that it was within the family that an aged person could find the peace, affection and warmth essential for the happiness of the human person. It was in strengthening the family unit that practical and long-term solutions to the problems of the aged would be found.

79. The one group in the world which merited the attention of the international community was the disabled. The World Health Organization had estimated the number of disabled persons in the world at 450 million, including 140 million children, suffering, for the most part from infectious diseases, malnutrition, chronic alcoholism and even the effects of traffic accidents. It was therefore clear that all programmes undertaken on behalf of the disabled should include three phases, namely, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

80. In Morocco, the International Year of Disabled Persons had been inaugurated by His Majesty the King, who had stated that Morocco's promptness in responding to the appeal of the United Nations flowed from its attachment to its authentic traditions and its religion. Morocco believed that international and national mobilization on behalf of disabled persons should not be limited to the year 1981 but should be an ongoing objective. It strongly supported the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons prepared by the Advisory Committee for the Year and contained in document A/37/351 and Add.1.

81. One of the approaches in the Programme was for the full participation of disabled persons in national life in all its aspects on an equal footing with other members of society. At its most recent session, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had heard the claims and the complaints of a representative of handicapped persons and they had led to the adoption of a resolution on respect of the human rights of disabled persons. Accordingly, Morocco supported the suggestion for the establishment of a special fund for disabled persons.

82. Her delegation had participated enthusiastically in all United Nations efforts on behalf of youth. However, the international community should weight the claims of that group of young people which desired to disassociate itself from what it called the Establishment, and which wished to live its own life, in its own culture and with its own pop music against the needs of hundred of millions of children who suffered from hunger, and millions that were the victims of military aggression, natural disasters, racism, political persecution and the slave traffic. Furthermore, the international community should not forget the 145 million young

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

people working in the fields and in the plantations and those young farm helpers, sometimes no more than 4 years of age. She wondered what pop music, blue jeans, claims of independence, and the generation gap meant to such children. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had devoted itself in recent years to efforts on behalf of those many young victims that were to be found in both developing and developed countries. It was the marginal situation of those young people that led them into drug trafficking, stealing, prostitution and delinquency. She believed that it was those 145 million disadvantaged young people, ignored or unknown, who should head the list of those to be benefited by the International Youth Year. Where there were problems with respect to youth, there were priorities to be set, and her delegation strongly hoped that privileged youth would reject selfishness and devote themselves to improving the lot of disadvantaged young people.

83. There were also problems with respect to young people, their parents and the political leaders in certain countries or continents that had suffered from the evils of colonization. In that connection, several works had been written on the situation of young people that had lost their cultural identity or had been rejected or removed from the family, particularly in Africa where the educational systems could not cope with the phenomenon. There were also the children of migrant workers who worked between two civilizations, a source of cultural antagonisms, who were the victims of emigration and who had had to sacrifice their future and their dignity. Under the themes, participation, development, peace, her delegation hoped that leaders at the national, regional and international levels would give International Youth Year its true meaning in practical terms and that youth in the developed countries, while defending their ideals would, in accordance with the objectives of IYY, participate in the development and progress of those hundreds of millions of disadvantaged youth in order to ensure peace for all.

84. Mr. ODOCH-JATO (Uganda) said that his delegation was gratified by the considerable work done by the Advisory Committee in reappraising the specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during International Youth Year. It also appreciated the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to implement the programme at the national, regional and international levels.

85. His delegation believed that the objectives of IYY should not circumscribe the role of youth. The problems with which youth was faced today were directly linked with the national and global political, economic and social situation. Above all, youth was painfully aware that the material, technological and human resources now being channelled into the production and stockpiling of weapons of destruction could be used to bring about peaceful development. That diversion of national development resources and the grave effects of wars fully justified the active involvement of youth in the universal campaign for disarmament and peaceful co-existence. It was for that reason that his delegation urged that IYY should provide a framework for the effective participation of youth in the search for and maintenance of international peace and security, particularly through the campaign against the arms race.

(Mr. Odoch-Jato, Uganda)

86. While it was true that the global economic situation had aggravated the problems facing youth everywhere the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries continued to have serious adverse effects on the economies of the latter and, consequently, on their fastest growing population sector, youth. With most of them fully dependent on earnings from agricultural and other primary products, the youth of the developing countries remained exposed to the vagaries of an extremely inequitable world market system. His delegation believed that the youth of the developing world, together with the progressive youth of the developed countries, had a right to participate in the shaping of a new, just and equitable international economic order. It therefore noted with satisfaction that the specific programme of measures and activities contained proposals for the promotion of global technical co-operation for the benefit of youth.

87. His delegation felt compelled to draw attention to the plight of youth who remained victims of racism, racial discrimination and colonialism. The youth population in South Africa and Namibia continued to suffer mental, physical and moral debasement under the oppressive system of apartheid. Palestinian and Arab youth lived a perilous life in the occupied Arab territories and in Lebanon as a result of unceasing Israeli brutalization. His delegation hoped that the United Nations system, governmental and non-governmental institutions and Member States of the Organization would continue to accord the youth of southern Africa and the Middle East the assistance and attention they deserved. In particular, those oppressed youth populations should be made aware of the supreme responsibility they bore to their society, namely to participate in the struggle for freedom, self-determination, justice and equality.

88. It was only through effective involvement in the national endeavour that people could best prepare themselves for their role as future leaders of their countries and for their present and future role in shaping the destiny of the world. Uganda therefore viewed favourably the emphasis placed on national-oriented programmes for the advancement of youth. The Government of Uganda had embarked on a deliberate effort to restore youth consciousness with regard to their rights and their responsibility to society following a decade of youth neglect and persecution. In the two years since the accession to power of a democratically elected Government, three main youth organizations that existed in the 1960s had been reconstituted with substantial Government assistance and had begun playing their role in the promotion of education, agricultural co-operatives and culture.

89. His delegation believed that the proposed Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Youth should not be viewed as creating an exclusive body of rights for youth. The basic purpose of such a declaration was to focus attention on the population groups which, though not necessarily vulnerable, represented a special responsibility of society because of their urgent need for guidance and opportunities. The proposed declaration would help to create an awareness among youth of their rights and responsibilities which they might fail to appreciate if left imbedded in the body of general human rights. His delegation therefore supported the elaboration of the declaration and hoped that adequate progress would be made towards a final text at the next session of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year.

90. Miss CAMARGO-VILLAREAL (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), speaking on agenda item 89, said that UNESCO was approaching the question of disabled persons primarily in the context of the right to education, the right to work and the right to share the benefits of economic, social and cultural development.
91. The unanimous adoption of resolution 7/08 at the twenty-first General Conference of UNESCO reflected the will of member States to participate actively in the International Year of Disabled Persons and, to that end, to prepare a far-reaching, diversified programme covering all the sectors of UNESCO's competence.
92. In the field of education, starting in 1981, UNESCO's Programme for Special Education had been directed towards establishing and expanding relations with other specialized agencies and with non-governmental organizations, undertaking comparative studies at the global level on various subjects relating to disabled persons and co-operating with Member States in providing technical and financial assistance, primarily for planning, vocational training and the provision of teaching materials.
93. In the context of that co-operation, UNESCO had participated in the preparation, activities and follow-up of the World Conference on Actions and Strategies for Education, Prevention and Integration, held at Torremolinos, Spain, in November 1981. She read out certain passages of the Sundberg Declaration, adopted at the end of that Conference, which proclaimed that every disabled person was entitled to exercise his or her fundamental right to free access to education, training and information and which stressed that measures adopted in behalf of such persons should be directed towards enabling them to make maximum use of their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, for their own benefit as well as for the enrichment of the human community as a whole.
94. In addition, UNESCO was co-operating with other agencies, particularly WHO and UNICEF, in such fields as nutrition, biology, chemistry, genetics and the social sciences, including cultural anthropology.
95. In conclusion, she pledged UNESCO'S continued co-operation with all the Organizations of the United Nations system in the general context of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Clearly, such co-operation should focus on the problems of the developing countries and on the need to expand technical co-operation activities directed towards the prevention of disability and towards the overall improvement of the social, economic cultural and intellectual situation of disabled persons.
96. Mr. RUBIN (International Labour Organisation) said that ILO had been a pioneer in activities for the disabled, particularly in the field of vocational rehabilitation, for more than 60 years. Today, its activities were directed towards revising and supplementing existing ILO standards. The discussion resulting from the 1982 International Labour Conference had produced an outline for a new recommendation on vocational rehabilitation, which would be considered further at the 1983 Conference.

(Mr. Rubin, ILO)

97. In addition, ILO was engaged in technical co-operation activities in the field of vocational rehabilitation at both regional and national levels.

98. With regard to agenda item 82, he observed that ILO's contribution to the World Assembly on Aging had demonstrated its recognition of the world-wide problems faced by older people, whether elderly workers or retirees. The number and proportion of the older people were increasing more rapidly in the developing countries, although the bulk of those countries' population would continue to be composed of younger people in the future. In developing countries, elderly workers had no social benefits, outside of the extended family, which was itself being weakened, and they generally worked in the informal sector, where they were the most vulnerable.

99. In the developing countries, the worsening economic situation, new technology, the psychological and physiological pressures of aging, reduced mobility, prejudices and rigid retirement procedures compounded the already difficult problems faced by older workers. Moreover, because of the growing number of retired persons, more people would be receiving benefits for longer periods, a situation that would burden social-security systems. In addition, the growing tendency in many countries to lower the retirement age accentuated the imbalance between the active and inactive populations, further increased the burden on the social-security system and reduced the resource base needed to finance that system, while failing in its primary goal of providing additional employment opportunities for young people.

100. Accordingly, there was no doubt about the usefulness of the experience ILO had gained from the implementation of its recommendations in that field, particularly the Recommendation (No. 162) on Aging Workers. That Recommendation contained three major principles, namely, equal treatment of older workers in all aspects of employment, the need to allow them to continue in employment by facilitating their adaptation to new technology and also by altering conditions of work, and the need to allow some individual freedom of choice in connection with retirement. The technical assistance ILO provided to 120 countries closely followed those principles.

101. Issues relating to youth had recently been foremost among ILO's concerns. In his report to the 1982 International Labour Conference, the Director-General had drawn attention to the fact that unemployment was currently the most serious problem facing young people in virtually every country and had warned that those problems were perhaps only a symptom of a more profound crisis.

102. Although the young labour force in the advanced countries was expected to diminish by the end of the century - thus creating a relative shortage of young workers - the number of active young people in the developing countries was expected to increase by nearly 20 per cent. As a result, the developing countries would have considerable difficulty in absorbing the constantly expanding young labour force into useful and remunerative employment. Throughout the third world, the employment problem was of immeasurable magnitude; moreover, 70 to 80 per cent

(Mr. Rubin, ILO)

of all young people lived in rural areas, in which they were underemployed and which they frequently left in search of better opportunities.

103. Youth joblessness must therefore be viewed as a long-term problem. Programmes to help young people must take into account the wide diversity of situations and must combine short-term, medium-term and long-term measures. Education and training programmes must be systematically adapted to modern realities, and working conditions must be re-examined to ensure that they did not hinder the placement of young people in jobs. While national programmes could create the proper climate and incentives, initiatives must be vigorously encouraged at the local level.

104. For ILO, the most urgent questions related to the strategy to be adopted for promoting the employment of young people, the place that problem should have in national economic and employment policies, the specific measures needed to attain that end, the different roles to be played by Governments, employers and workers, and the means of facilitating young people's transition from school to working life.

105. In conclusion, he pledged ILO's participation in all matters relating to the disabled, to the elderly and the aged and to youth through a re-examination of its relevant activities and expressed the hope that ILO expertise would be all the more meaningful in the context of co-operation with other organizations of the United Nations system.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.