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Thirty-fourth session  
Item 26 of the preliminary list\*

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD: PLANS AND ACTION  
TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN THE WORLD,  
PARTICULARLY IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Letter dated 13 June 1979 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of  
the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit a letter addressed to Your Excellency by Professor Jerzy Bafia, Minister of Justice of the Polish People's Republic and Chairman of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, and Mr. Janusz Wiczorek, Deputy Chairman of Poland's National Commission for the International Year of the Child and Chairman of the Council for the Protection of Monuments to Struggle and Martyrdom, along with the appeal of the International Scientific Session on "The Child in the Second World War", held at Warsaw from 26 to 28 April 1979.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the annexes circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 26 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Henryk J. SOKALSKI  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

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\* A/34/50.

ANNEX I

Letter dated 28 April 1979 from the Minister of Justice of Poland, Chairman of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, and the Deputy Chairman of the Polish Committee for Observing the International Year of the Child, Chairman of the Council for the Protection of Monuments of Struggle and Martyrdom, addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 31/169, of 21 December 1976, on the matter of observing the International Year of the Child, the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland and the Council for the Protection of Monuments of Struggle and Martyrdom organized an International Scientific Session, under the heading "The child in the period of the Second World War", at Warsaw from 26 to 28 April 1979.

The International Scientific Session was attended by scientists, former leaders of the anti-fascist resistance movement and former inmates of Nazi concentration camps from the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Belgium, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the French Republic, the German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, the Hungarian People's Republic, Israel, the Italian Republic, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Polish People's Republic, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as the International Federation of Resistance Movements and the International Auschwitz Committee. Present at the session, in the capacity of an observer, was the representative of the International Lost Persons Tracing Department of the International Red Cross Committee of Arolsen.

The participants in the International Scientific Session, devoted, in particular, to the plight of the child in the Second World War and its consequences, adopted an "appeal" to the nations of the world to assure a life in peace and security to children (see annex II). The participants request His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to accept and distribute this "appeal" among all the States Members of the United Nations.

The International Scientific Session looked at the crimes committed by fascism against children from the viewpoint of the ensuing experiences and from the aspects of the basic values of human culture, the observance of human rights and the guaranteeing of peace and security to nations.

The International Scientific Session, which was organized within the framework of the International Year of the Child, greatly appreciated the building in Poland of the Child Health Centre as a memorial to the children murdered by fascism in the Second World War, a memorial which will serve children world wide.

The International Scientific Session was an expression of our common, deep concern to provide children and young people with the best conditions for all-round development, to prepare them for an independent life and to display concern for their joy and happiness.

We are deeply convinced that, by taking up the subject of the plight of children during the war the International Scientific Session will be viewed by public opinion in Europe and the world as the forum which was guided by the principle that the well-being and happiness of the child is the supreme right and that, for the sake of this principle, endeavours will be continued at the United Nations to protect humanity from the danger of war, notably in the light of the experiences to which our generation and our century have been subjected.

This will be a lasting contribution both to a proper evaluation of the past and to those qualities common to all mankind which shape a happy future, peace and the security of all the nations of the world.

Janusz WIECZOREK  
Deputy Chairman  
of the Polish Committee  
for Observing the International Year  
of the Child,  
Chairman of the Council  
for the Protection  
of Monuments of Struggle  
and Martyrdom

Jerzy BAFIA  
Minister of Justice  
of the Polish People's Republic,  
Chairman of the Main Commission  
for the Investigation  
of Nazi Crimes in Poland

ANNEX II

Appeal of the International Scientific Session devoted to  
"The child in the Second World War"

The participants from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, the German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yugoslavia, as well as the International Federation of Resistance Movements and the International Auschwitz Committee, who attended the International Scientific Session, held under the heading "The child in the Second World War" at Warsaw, from 26 to 28 April 1979, recalling the millions of children murdered, maimed and deprived of conditions for normal development during the Second World War appeal to the nations of the world to continue efforts aimed at ensuring children a life in peace and preventing them from experiencing the horrors of war. Present at the session, in the capacity of an observer, was the representative of the International Lost Persons Tracing Department of the International Red Cross Committee of Arolsen.

Warsaw, the capital of Poland, one of the European countries most tragically affected by war, which lost over 2 million of its children and young people, is especially entitled to be the place from which the voice is raised to recall the memory of the children murdered and maimed and the children whom war had deprived of a happy childhood in many countries of Europe and the world.

Persons responsible for Nazi crimes against children and young persons, that most brutal type of genocide, should be brought to justice.

The participants in the International Scientific Session state that it is alarming that considerations at play in the Federal Republic of Germany result, in practice, in a situation in which proceedings have not yet been started against many thousands of Nazi criminals and a fair share of those brought to trial are being acquitted. In spite of the many years of efforts to bring Nazi criminals to justice, the results so far in prosecuting and punishing Nazi crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity are highly unsatisfactory.

The planned application in the Federal Republic of Germany, as at 31 December 1979, of statutory limitations to even the gravest Nazi crimes is at variance with the moral feelings and the sense of justice of nations. For this reason, the exclusion of war crimes and crimes against humanity from the statute of limitations, in accordance with the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crime and Crimes against Humanity, a/ adopted by the General Assembly on 26 November 1968, should become a universally binding norm of

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a/ General Assembly resolution 2391 (XXIII).

international law and should be a factor preventing the violation of the elementary rights of the child.

Guided by the concern for the present and the future, one cannot lose sight of the events of the past. This awareness was expressed in the idea of erecting in Warsaw the Child Health Centre memorial, commemorating that period in history in which millions of children in Europe and the world had been deprived of everything, including their lives. The memorial is a symbol of international solidarity and of the idea of respect for basic values, which the life and health of the child constitute.

Aware of the tragedy which befell children during the Second World War, the participants in the International Scientific Session appeal to the nations of the world to work unsparingly to ensure to children that greatest value, which a life in peace constitutes. In adopting the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, b/ the United Nations were and are guided by the desire to ensure to children the basic conditions for development and protection. No task is greater and more significant than to ensure peace in the world. Peace allows conditions to be created in which children will be assured the right to an existence, education, work, medical and social care; conditions in which children will be able to live in freedom and happiness.

Peace is the supreme value which we can offer to children. Ensuring peace is the elementary duty of every State and society towards children. This is because every nation and every human being, irrespective of race, outlook, language and sex, has the inalienable right to life in peace. The observance of that right, as of other human rights, lies in the common interest of all mankind and is the essential condition for the development of all nations in all areas of life.

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b/ General Assembly resolutions 1386 (XIV) and 33/73.