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**held on**  
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**at 10 a.m.**  
**New York**

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING**

**Chairman:** Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN  
(continued) (A/43/3, A/43/38, A/43/273-S/19720, A/43/354 and Corr.1, A/43/370,  
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AGENDA ITEM 95: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE  
YEAR 2000 (continued) (A/43/3, A/43/370, A/43/638, A/43/643)

1. Mrs. SKOWRON-OLSZOWSKA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), referring to agenda item 94, recalled that UNESCO participated regularly in the deliberations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and reported to the Committee on the application, within its field of competence, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Currently, UNESCO's activities in that area could be summarized as follows: elaboration of a questionnaire and national surveys in order to identify obstacles to the effective application of the provisions of the Convention; contribution to international expertise concerning the idea of equal rights between men and women; organization of seminars aimed at the dissemination of the Convention; and publication of textbooks and studies for specialized recipients.

2. Referring to agenda item 95, she recalled that UNESCO contributed to the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. At its twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions, the General Conference had adopted two relevant resolutions. In addition, Major Programme XIV had been incorporated into the Second UNESCO Medium-term Plan for 1984-1989. Under that Programme, a co-ordination unit had been set up in the secretariat to monitor and expedite the implementation of projects related to women and to ensure that the female dimension was integrated into all other programmes of the Organization. The Major Programme had as its prime objectives the promotion of equal rights for men and women and the elimination of discrimination in which women were the victims. As a multidisciplinary programme, it covered the fields of education, science, social and human sciences, culture and communication and gave priority to literacy and education, the eradication of stereotypes and the access of women to decision-making posts.

3. UNESCO had a twofold strategy. It was carrying out specific programmes intended to ameliorate the status of women. It was also conducting action to ensure that women were, to the greatest possible degree, both agents and beneficiaries of all programmes and activities. Documents, including statistical studies on the participation of men and women in the Organization's activities, had been issued and circulated to all members of the UNESCO secretariat, in order to spotlight the existence of inequalities and to urge members of the secretariat to prevent such situations.

4. Evidence of UNESCO's contribution to the general improvement of the status of women was the fact that budget allocations to the programmes devised for women had

(Mrs. Skowron-Olszowska)

been increased in recent years. They had grown from 2.3 per cent of the total programme budget for the period 1984-1985 to 3.6 per cent for the 1986-1987 biennium and a further increase was expected for the current biennium. The Third UNESCO Medium-term Plan (1990-1995) would continue to accord priority to the improvement of the status of women. UNESCO would ensure the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for Action, the Advancement of Women, particularly in the field of literacy, training and education, with priority being given to women living in particularly vulnerable conditions. The programmes in preparation would be aimed at eliminating all forms of existing discrimination and ensuring greater accessibility for women to decision-making posts in various areas - social, economic, political, cultural, scientific and technical - of public life.

5. In conclusion, she recalled that UNESCO, in its desire to enlarge the participation of women at the international level and within the Secretariat, had set itself the goal of increasing the number of organic posts in the Organization to be occupied by women by 30 per cent by 1995.

6. Mrs. GJIKI (Albania) said that her delegation noted with some disappointment that the programmes initiated thus far for the advancement of women had not achieved the desired effects and that the strategies devised had in many cases not been translated into practice.

7. Women continued to be victims of discrimination of every kind. In some countries they had second-class citizen status, and in others discrimination against them was quite open. Albania supported unreservedly the struggle and efforts of the women in those countries against regressive forces and regarded the struggle for the emancipation of women as part of the struggle of the working classes for the emancipation of society as a whole, and, in general, as an integral part of the political and social struggles of peoples.

8. The struggle for the emancipation of women was closely linked to the liberation struggles of peoples against imperialist aggression and intervention, neo-colonialist oppression, racial discrimination and apartheid. There could be no doubt that the situation prevailing in many countries and regions of the world which were victims of those evils - Palestine, Afghanistan and Central America - had a negative impact on women and impeded their development and advancement. That was why women were fighting side by side with their husbands, brothers and sons in the Gaza Strip, on the West Bank and in all areas of the world where people were fighting to exercise their democratic rights and freedoms.

9. In Albania, the emancipation of women was the result of their unremitting struggle and work, from the war of national liberation to the current construction of socialism. The tenth Congress of the Union of Albanian Women, held in June 1988, had pointed out that Albanian women enjoyed a social position that made them truly equal in society. It had been noted that there could be no emancipation of women without the establishment of appropriate economic and social conditions and that such emancipation could be brought about only by an unrelenting fight against old attitudes and practices. The emancipation of Albanian women had been

(Mrs. Gjika, Albania)

brought about not by the issuing of decrees or by slogans, but by taking one step at a time towards well-defined goals. The results of that long struggle were now obvious: in the production sector, women currently represented 46 per cent of the total work force and their participation in the country's political and social life was constantly increasing. Women represented 40.3 per cent of university graduates and 41 per cent of the personnel working in Party and State organs. More than 30 per cent of the seats in the People's Assembly and 30 per cent of the seats on the Supreme Court were held by women.

10. It should be noted, however, that the emancipation of Albanian women was an integral part of the emancipation of society as a whole and had absolutely nothing in common with the feminist movements. The advancement of the status of women did not pit women against men, since the aim was that women should enjoy respect and an equal position in the family and in society.

11. Albanian women did not view their struggle for further emancipation as isolated from other struggles being waged in the world by freedom-loving peoples and women against oppression and exploitation. Albanian women would always be on the side of women fighting for freedom and democracy, for genuine peace and security, for a better life and for all-round emancipation.

12. Mrs. NOSE (Japan) said that the Japanese Government had in 1985 ratified, without reservations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and hoped that a large number of countries would do the same in the near future so that that instrument could become virtually universal.

13. At its seventh session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had examined Japan's initial report on the implementation of the Convention. In that connection, she wished to emphasize an important point: equality of men and women must be ensured not only de jure but also de facto. With respect to the first, Japan had put in place, since the end of the Second World War, a legal framework ensuring the equality of men and women in a wide range of areas and had adopted a new constitution which, inter alia, gave women the right to vote.

14. In 1987 Japan had established the New National Plan of Action towards the Year 2000, which had been formulated by the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies relating to Women and whose objective was the creation of a society of joint participation by both men and women. The Japanese Government was aware that there was still more to be done to achieve total and effective equality between men and women.

15. Japan recognized the important role of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as the central organ for monitoring the implementation of the Convention and hoped that the Committee's current difficulties - organizational problems, limited human and financial resources, delays in the

(Mrs. Nose, Japan)

examination of country reports - would be the subject of a thorough examination by the Third Committee so that the Committee would be better able to carry out its mandate.

16. There was still much to be done to achieve the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, the culmination of the Decade for Women.

17. Japan had constantly endeavoured to strengthen its national machinery, the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies relating to Women, whose membership had been increased from 10 to 22 and included representatives from all ministries. The purpose of that reorganization was to strengthen the effectiveness of the Headquarters by helping it to implement the Nairobi Strategies.

18. At the international level, her delegation supported the efforts of the Commission on the Status of Women to integrate the Strategies into all economic and social development programmes of the United Nations system. The problems of concern to women could not be solved in isolation, because they were linked to other economic and social factors. It was therefore to be hoped that the Commission would continue its efforts.

19. In view of the need to integrate questions concerning the advancement of women into the future activities of the United Nations, it was necessary to solve the problem of extending the mandate of the Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat for the biennium 1988-1989. She hoped that the General Assembly would take up that question.

20. Japan was also concerned about the fact that activities in behalf of women in various United Nations bodies often involved duplication. She proposed the putting into place of a comprehensive reporting system to monitor, review and appraise the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies in order to streamline the reporting obligations of countries, regional commissions, the United Nations and other concerned bodies. It was important to promote co-ordination in that field and her delegation hoped that the Third Committee would also take up that issue.

21. The Japanese Government welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. During fiscal year 1988, Japan intended to continue its contributions to those two bodies. It would also continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries in organizing courses and seminars under the various projects on women in those countries.

22. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that his country had been one of the most ardent supporters of the United Nations decision to declare 1975 International Women's Year and the period 1976-1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women. The Thai Government had subsequently established within the Office of the Prime Minister, a national executive committee to oversee implementation of the objectives of International Women's Year.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

23. At the international level, Thailand had participated actively in the 1975 Mexico City Conference and those held in Denmark in 1980 and at Nairobi in 1985. In that connection, Thailand paid a tribute to the United Nations bodies for the systematic efforts they were currently making with a view to integrating women into the economic and social development programmes identified in the Nairobi Strategies, and welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 42/162 designating the advancement of women as one of the priorities for the biennium 1988-1989.

24. As a member of the Commission on the Status of Women beginning in January 1989, Thailand would pay special attention to the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan concerning women and development for the period 1990-1995, the cross-organizational programme analysis and the achievement of the objectives regarded as priority by the Commission at its thirty-second session, namely, equality, development and peace. With respect to the first theme of equality, women must, in order to develop themselves fully as individuals, become both contributors to and beneficiaries of development on an equal footing with men. In that connection, one of the most significant achievements of the Decade had been the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Thailand had acceded in 1985.

25. At the regional level, Thailand, like other members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, believed that the political will to change social values, sources of inequality between men and women, must come from the countries themselves. It was only when countries had put into place national machinery to improve the status of women, especially rural women, that supplementary action could be undertaken at the regional and international levels. An effort in that regard was currently taking place in the countries of the Asia and Pacific region and his delegation welcomed it.

26. In view of the important contribution made by women to national development by meeting the needs of their families, their communities and their countries in many areas, it was important that Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should increase their financial and technical support of programmes for the integration of women in all development activities, in particular the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which, by its catalytic role and its innovative activities, contributed to achieving that objective at the national and regional levels.

27. Women played an important role in the promotion of peace, as indispensable partners in the creation of an equitable social and political environment for themselves and their families. It was sad to note, however, that women were still victims of violence within the family. That question required the urgent attention of the international community.

28. Mrs. CHIZICK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that in the Soviet Union, there was a new approach to women's issues in accordance with the effort at restructuring (perestroika) and democratization taking place in the country.

(Mrs. Chizick, USSR)

Mr. Gorbachev had recently stated that while one could not deny the basic fact that, in the USSR, there was de facto equality of men and women with respect to work and wages, it should nevertheless be recognized that certain deficiencies - poor organization of daily life, lack of kindergartens, insufficient social services - seriously complicated women's lives. Perestroika had brought a new awareness of those problems and a revival of the women's movement, which had progressively declined following the October Revolution. But what was necessary above all, Mr. Gorbachev had added, was to increase the representation of women in decision-making bodies so that they could make themselves heard in matters directly affecting them and participate more in the transformation of the country.

29. In that connection, it was gratifying to see a revival in factories and enterprises, from one end of the country to the other, of women's affairs councils which permitted women to deal directly with questions of interest to them and which concerned, in particular, the building of schools, hospitals and kindergartens, the preservation of the environment, housing, maternity services and family care and the development of social services. Recently, at a meeting of the All-Union Committee of Soviet Women, serious criticisms had been made regarding the status of women working in light industry and various measures had been taken to improve their situation. Soviet legislation was also being reviewed with the aim of strengthening the role of women in society. As a result, increased importance had been given to legal guarantees and to the role of the courts in redressing the grievances of women whose rights were not being respected.

30. Like all women throughout the world, Soviet women placed their hopes in a nuclear-free world, a world in which they would finally be able to make themselves heard. That was why they looked to the United Nations which had recognized, in proclaiming the United Nations Decade for Women, the role and responsibility of women in today's world. In that connection, the Nairobi Conference had marked an important stage and the Forward-looking Strategies it had adopted should be followed by concrete measures. It fell to the Commission on the Status of Women to ensure the necessary co-ordination. Her delegation was gratified, that the role of the Commission within the United Nations system had been strengthened and that in 1990 it intended to consider the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

31. One of the keys events of the Decade had been the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which 94 States, had thus far acceded and which more countries should ratify. The activities of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should also be commended bearing in mind that it should not exceed its mandate and that those activities should be aimed exclusively at strengthening the Convention.

32. She concluded by citing an old Russian saying that there were three precious things in the world: bread which gave health and strength, wisdom contained in books and women who kept the chain of life from being broken. She hoped that the decisions of the Third Committee would help to improve the status of women and to strengthen their role as mothers, workers and educators of the young.

33. Mrs. RAJBHANDARI (Nepal) said that the proclamation of International Women's Year and the United Nations Decade for Women had created a momentum and a consensus in favour of the advancement of women which had to be sustained. It fell to Member States to translate the recommendations contained in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies into programmes shaped by their own needs.

34. Following International Women's Year, the Nepalese Government had established, in 1977, a co-ordination committee for services for women with the task of co-ordinating governmental and non-governmental measures for the integration of women into development. In 1981, a section for the advancement of women had been established to ensure, among other things, that the interests of women were taken into account in development programmes. At the legislative level, an amendment to the Civil Code had been adopted in 1975 in order to guarantee equal property rights for women and equality with respect to, inter alia, the choice of the family home, and to protect women against polygamy.

35. The role of women in development had been taken into consideration in the sixth Five-year National Development Plan (1980-1985). A women in development division had been established in 1987 in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare whose function was to initiate, co-ordinate and evaluate activities that fell within the framework of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The seventh Five-year Plan placed even greater emphasis on the integration of women into major programmes in agriculture, education, industry, health, drinking water, family planning and income-generating activities.

36. At the regional level, the question of the participation of women in development had been thoroughly studied and was dealt with by co-operation among the seven countries of South Asia. A guidebook for planners on the participation of women in development was currently being prepared. It was also expected that a documentation service on the question would be established for researchers, planners and administrative staff.

37. Despite those efforts, women in many developing countries at a very early age, continued to perform the most unrewarding tasks. That situation of inequality was a legacy of the past and resulted from the poverty, illiteracy and backwardness of those countries. The international community must continue to intervene in order to remedy that situation.

38. Nepal welcomed the measures taken by United Nations bodies on behalf of women, particularly the increase, despite the recruitment freeze, in the number of posts subject to geographical distribution which were occupied by women in the Secretariat and the promotion of women to responsible positions. The positive contribution made by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) also deserved recognition.

39. Mr. MASSUCCO (Argentina) was gratified that there was broad international consensus in favour of women's participation, on an equal footing with men, in all spheres of social and cultural life, and particularly to note the progress they had made at the professional and political levels. The same could not be said,



(Mr. Massucco, Argentina)

unfortunately, in the legal, social and economic fields. Efforts must therefore continue to be made in those areas, especially in order to put an end, through education, to cultural obstacles and to ancestral customs which ran counter to equality between men and women.

40. In the legislative field, especially with regard to family and labour law, Argentine legislation did not discriminate between the sexes. In Argentina, men and women enjoyed the same rights, whether in the choice of a home, the exercise of parental authority or the ownership of personal property. Many institutional reforms had recently been introduced in Argentina on the Government's initiative. In 1987, the Minister of Health and Social Action had set up an Under-Secretariat for Women's Affairs and had launched a programme focusing on women, health and development. In 1986, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had established a Directorate-General for Women which was responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and which maintained close contact with the competent parliamentary commissions for that purpose. With regard to the Convention, the Argentine Government had submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women its initial report, in which it provided information on the legal, social and economic measures it had already adopted or planned to adopt in the future with a view to improving the status of women in Argentina.

41. The economic situation of women had deteriorated in many developing countries as a result of the world economic crisis. Those countries bore the full brunt of the crisis, which compounded the debt problem and the resurgence of protectionism in the developed countries. Desirous though they were to continue to improve the economic status of women, those countries did not have the necessary resources to do so.

42. Within the United Nations system, the momentum which had led to the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women must be maintained. The Commission on the Status of Women had a key role to play in that respect, by monitoring, reviewing and appraising the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, and must therefore be strengthened. Argentina was accordingly in favour of the holding of annual meetings until the year 2000 and of the implementation of a long-term work programme focusing on the three basic objectives of equality, development and peace. It was also important to evaluate the activities undertaken to implement the Strategies periodically, at international conferences. Finally, in order to ensure the implementation of the Strategies, it was necessary to establish national or regional mechanisms or strengthen those which already existed, with due regard for the characteristics of each society.

43. In conclusion, he drew attention to the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), which had its headquarters in Latin America and contributed, through its training activities, to the advancement of women.

44. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland), referring to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, said that that important instrument would only achieve its goal if all States accepted it and translated it into national policy and practice.

45. Poland had ratified the Convention and was currently preparing its second report on its implementation. Polish legislation guaranteed equal rights for men and women in all spheres of economic, political and social life, but that de jure equality did not always mean de facto equality, particularly in respect of professional advancement and pay. In Poland, as in other countries, tradition was an obstacle to equality and, in that connection, his delegation wished to stress the importance of the reports submitted by countries on the implementation of the Convention. Those reports were an important source of information, making it possible to identify areas which required concerted action to change the existing situation.

46. Timely consideration of reports by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women was therefore essential. However, some reports awaited consideration for several years, with the result that when they came up for consideration, the information they contained was out of date. Some procedure should be found to remedy that situation.

47. His delegation recalled that the three objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women - equality, development and peace - were interrelated and mutually reinforcing. It was precisely for that reason that the Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-second session, had adopted a draft resolution on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women: equality, development and peace, of which Poland had been a co-sponsor.

48. Poland associated itself with all the statements which underlined the need to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies both at the national and international levels. At the international level, the role of the Commission on the Status of Women, to which Poland had been elected as a member in 1988, needed emphasizing. He pointed out that Poland was the first East European country to have appointed a plenipotentiary for women's affairs. That post had been established in September 1986 pursuant to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. In addition to his numerous activities for the benefit of women at the national level, the plenipotentiary also played an active part in international forums, especially the United Nations.

49. With regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, his delegation attached great importance to the activities of the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna. The Branch must co-operate not only with United Nations bodies, but also with the institutional machinery established in many countries. The seminars organized by the Branch to promote exchanges of experience and information among those national bodies had proved very useful.

(Mr. Zawacki, Poland)

50. In conclusion, he recommended that consideration be given to formulating a system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women: equality, development and peace, for the period 1996-2000. In addition, a world conference should be convened in 1995 to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.