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President: Mr. Salim Ahmed SALIM
(United Republic of Tanzania)

AGENDA ITEM 26

International Year of the Child: plans and action to improve the situation of children in the world, particularly in the developing countries (*continued*)

1. Mr. NARAYANAN (India): The declaration of 1979 as the International Year of the Child was one of the most forward-looking decisions of the United Nations [resolution 31/169] as it focused attention, nationally and internationally, on a whole complex of problems affecting not only the welfare of the child but the future of mankind. The child is the most delicate and sensitive barometer of the state of the social order and of the world. If there is confusion of values, disorder and violence in society, it is the child who suffers first and foremost. If there is disease, poverty and deprivation it is the child who is affected first and fatally. If there is no peace and war breaks out, again it is the future of the child that withers in the bud.

2. If we are to build a just and new world order and a New International Economic Order, we must begin with the child "as part of broader efforts to accelerate economic and social progress", to use the words of the General Assembly resolution. That resolution has also affirmed that "the concept of basic services for children is a vital component of social and economic development". I should like to add that it is also a vital component of political development, because if war begins in the minds of men, it is in the environment and the education of the child that its dragon seeds are sown first.

3. Realizing the importance of the child, not only for the economic and social progress of our country but for the happiness of our people, India has, right from the beginning of independence, applied its mind to the question of children's welfare. Some of the basic rights of the child, such as the right to free and compulsory

education up to the age of 14, the prohibition of the employment of children in factories, and the prevention of the abuse of children of tender age, were written into India's Constitution. Our five-year plans, the first of which was launched in 1951-52, took an integrated view of child welfare and considered the care and development of children as the most fundamental means of developing the human resources of the country. India has a child population of 230 million, which is almost 42 per cent of our total population; it is the most vulnerable section of our society, but it also embodies the main potential of our future strength and well-being.

4. As a symbol of the importance we attach to children and as a method of making that perceptible to the children themselves, we have been celebrating 14 November as Children's Day since the early 1950s. That day is also the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. A remarkable voluntary effort to encourage the creative instincts of the child was launched in India in the early 1950s in the form of the Shankar's International Children's Competition and children from all parts of the world have been participating in it every year. India has also a Children's Film Society and a Children's Book Trust both of which are non-governmental organizations, catering for the creative side of the child's evolving personality. I mention this because the Executive Director of UNICEF has, in his report [A/34/452 and Add.1], dealt not only with "survival issues" concerning the child but with creativity, creative arts, play and recreation. In this fast-changing world it is necessary that, while we grapple desperately with problems of survival, we not ignore the cultural and creative needs of the child if he is to grow up not merely as a modern economic animal, but as a sound and sensitive individual.

5. Although we launched rather early a wide range of programmes for the welfare of children at the central and state levels, those programmes were confined to certain sectoral groups and lacked co-ordination and comprehensiveness. Therefore in 1967, the Government of India set up a high-powered committee to assess the needs of the child during various stages of development, to formulate programmes to meet those needs and to prepare an approach strategy for the welfare of children. Following the recommendations of that committee, a national policy for children was worked out and adopted by the Government of India on 22 August 1974. The national policy declared children to be a supremely important asset of the nation and "their nurture and solicitude" for them the responsibility of the nation. It outlined a 15-point programme with a system of priorities aimed at progressively increasing the scope of services directed towards child welfare until they embraced all children in the country within a reasonable period.

6. A high-level National Children's Board was established to provide a focus and a forum in which to review, plan and co-ordinate the multiplicity of services being provided to meet the needs of children. The composition of the Board showed the unified concept of child welfare adopted by India. The Board is presided over by the Prime Minister, with the Minister of Social Welfare as its working Chairman and with the Ministers of Health and Family Welfare, Finance and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission as its members.

7. Following the formulation of a national policy for children, programmes which provide integrated services such as health, nutrition, education, recreation and other services, both to children and to nursing mothers, have been introduced in India. In order to provide all these services in a composite form, a scheme known as Integrated Child Development Services was put into operation. This scheme already covers 150 development blocks in the country and is intended gradually to cover the whole country. There exist in the country 354 pediatric hospitals in district headquarters, leaving only 54 more districts to be covered.

8. We have given particular attention to the question of child nutrition. A supplementary nutrition programme has been introduced for children below the age of six and for expectant and nursing mothers. This programme already covers more than 7 million people and represents a modest but significant beginning.

9. One important feature of child welfare schemes in India is the emphasis placed on the need for special treatment for handicapped children and children belonging to socially and economically weaker sections of society. I should like to add here that family planning and family welfare is one of the central concepts designed to protect not only the mother but the child as well from that ceaseless torrent of babies which is called the population explosion.

10. The International Year of the Child has given a new impetus to these ongoing programmes of child welfare in India. The theme of the national plan of action for the International Year of the Child in India is "Reaching the Deprived Child". This theme has been deliberately chosen in order to arouse the consciousness of the nation and to drive home to the people the fact that if we are to tackle the problems of children fundamentally and comprehensively in a developing country with an immense population like India, we should focus action on children in the underprivileged and deprived sections of our society. The national plan of action has also spelled out specific targets and goals for 1979 and beyond.

11. The objectives of the International Year of the Child have been to reduce significantly child and maternal mortality and morbidity; to promote community awareness and education about child development; to facilitate the psycho-social development of the child; to strive for the realization of universal elementary education and the reduction of school drop-outs; to provide nutrition together with environmental sanitation and safe drinking water; to secure the basic rights of children and protect them against neglect, cruelty, exploitation and so on.

12. The International Year of the Child will soon be coming to a close. But every year ought to be a year of the child. We in India have looked upon this Year as a spring-board for continued and vigorous action during the rest of the century. The National Children's Board, which met on 22 September 1979, resolved that the national plan of action for the International Year of the Child should continue to be the basis of programmes during the remaining two decades of the century and that a perspective plan for child development should be prepared for the period 1979-1999 as an integral part of our national development plan. The draft sixth five-year plan of India envisages as one of its principal objectives for the next years:

"Provision by the State of some of the basic needs of the people of the poor income groups, like clean drinking water, adult literacy, elementary education, health care, rural roads, rural housing for the landless and minimum services for the urban slums".

It is expected that this down-to-earth approach to planning, which has been integrated into the general growth strategy, will bring to children and mothers the concrete benefits of socio-economic development.

13. One of the long-term programmes affecting children is education. Though we have not been able to realize the constitutional provision in respect of free and compulsory education for children, we have at present in India 70 million children going to nursery, primary and middle schools. It is proposed that during the period of the sixth plan there will be an additional enrolment of 32 million children in the age group 6 to 14. Universal literacy in India is planned to be achieved within a definite time-frame of not more than 10 years.

14. We have also been reviewing legislation that directly and indirectly affects children, with a view to identifying gaps and inadequacies in laws in the light of the requirements of the national policy for children. It is essential that children are provided not only social and economic rights but also legal protection by the State so that no legal loop-holes are left for the abuse and exploitation of children. The child has to be protected not only from old-style exploitation but also from the impact of many modern developments hazardous to his health and survival. As one example, I may mention the dangers posed to children and to the future of mankind from some of the weird and uncontrolled experiments in genetic engineering now going on in the world. Perhaps the time is ripe for the United Nations to consider the formulation of a convention on the rights of children covering the whole international community.

15. The Executive Director of UNICEF, in his report in document A/34/452 of 5 October 1979, has summed up concisely and eloquently the fundamental aims inspiring national and international efforts with regard to children. These fundamental aims are:

"...for every child to be healthy, well nourished and decently clothed and sheltered; to grow up in a family that provides love, affection and protection, and the basis for developing ethical values and, very importantly, respect for other people in a world that is continually shrinking and coming closer together;

to be able to complete an appropriate number of years of schooling; to be set on a path of continued learning and growth so as to realize, to the maximum extent possible, his or her full potential; and to acquire the functional skills necessary for earning a living, raising a family and participating productively in community and national development". [See A/34/452, annex, para. 9.]

16. I would stress at this point the importance of creating a total environment which would provide every child equality of opportunity at birth with every other child in the possibilities available to him for physical, mental, emotional and cultural development. This is a basic and continuing task which must be carried on nationally and internationally beyond the International Year of the Child. At the international level, UNICEF has done dedicated work in the service of the children of the world, and we are of the view that that body should continue to function as lead agency for child-related issues in the United Nations system.

17. It is absolutely essential that the nations of the world, particularly the developed and affluent nations, contribute more significantly for programmes related to the welfare of children. To do so would not be just a sentimental gesture to the child but the fulfilment of a duty to the human race. "The cry of the child by the roadside", so sang a poet, "mars the harmony of heaven". The cry of the child by the roadside, if unheeded for too long, may mar all our dreams of peace and justice on earth.

18. **The PRESIDENT:** The next speaker is the First Lady of the Dominican Republic and Special Representative of the President of the Dominican Republic, Her Excellency Mrs. Renée Klang de Guzmán.

19. Mrs. KLANG de GUZMÁN (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For me, as the First Lady of the Dominican Republic, it is a high honour and a reason for deep satisfaction to have been invited to appear before the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations at a time when this high forum is evaluating what is being done in the world during the International Year of the Child.

20. Unquestionably, the developing countries in particular have the duty to exert special efforts to achieve greater social well-being, which, doubtless, will promote the hoped-for progress of those countries which seek to ensure for all their citizens a more just and more humane society.

21. In achieving this beautiful objective it is necessary to strengthen democracy and to bring about a climate of peace, concord and harmony and respect for the rights inherent in the human person as a fundamental basis for the over-all development of our countries.

22. We must place these aspirations squarely within the framework of mutual respect among all nations, international co-operation and the absolute guarantee of the free determination of peoples.

23. We all know that today's child is tomorrow's man. I venture to say that we have all often paused to think

about this reality. However, let me put to the meeting a disquieting question: how many Governments have earnestly applied this undeniable principle in their policies and programmes? This is why the United Nations resolution to declare the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child was so important and transcendental.

24. This positive step has succeeded in focusing the world's attention on the problem of childhood and has awakened greater concern for our children. This, in turn, has prompted more thorough studies of the situation of those beings who have so great a need for the protection of adults, for the purpose of conceiving new forms of services and new institutional responses—in short, to create a new world-wide mystique around our men of the future.

25. The problem of the child population in the Dominican Republic presents itself within the context of a process of accelerated progress which manifests itself, *inter alia*, in social insecurity, inequality of educational opportunities, malnutrition, deficient nutrition, inadequate housing, family disintegration, incidence of infectious-contagious diseases, high rates of child mortality and low family incomes. As a result, a high percentage of the population is unable to obtain those resources which would guarantee the physical, mental and social development that would be in keeping with the signs of the times.

26. The picture of childhood in many countries presents a number of common characteristics. First, there is the lack of a national policy for this sector to integrate and co-ordinate assistance programmes. Assistance projects are generally carried out separately and without over-all co-ordination, thus hindering their evaluation and productivity. Secondly, there is a lack of specialized services adapted to the biological, psychological and social characteristics of this evolutionary stage. The child fails to receive in an adequate form the services of health, sports, education, recreation and legal protection because these services are basically oriented to meet the needs of adults. Thirdly, there are insufficient economic and cultural resources in many family units to assure the guidance, training and orientation of children, in addition to an insufficient number of institutions to complement the action of the family.

27. According to the latest census the Dominican Republic has 5,124,394 inhabitants; 49.8 per cent are under 15 years of age, and of these, 26 per cent are under 7. This fact makes it necessary to consider social programmes oriented towards children as an investment for the formation of the human infrastructure which is the basis of the social and economic development of the country.

28. In my country, located in so strategic an area as the Caribbean region, which one could call the heart of America, the panorama of children presents very peculiar characteristics, derived from our political and social history, our culture, traditions and customs. I shall not presume to analyse each and every one of these important aspects, but I wish to quote some statistical data which would give an overview of the present situation, which we intend to tackle with decisiveness and

courage. Thus, we shall continue to take those steps that will serve as a sound foundation to a long-term solution of the most pressing childhood problems.

29. Health statistics for 1977 show that the rate of infant mortality as applied to children under one year old was 36.8 per 1,000, and the most frequent causes were malnutrition, gastro-enteritis, and 23 per cent for undetermined reasons. This last figure reveals serious research deficiencies in the past.

30. Our country's situation is no different from that of other developing countries where infectious-contagious and malnutrition diseases are prevalent.

31. The illiteracy rate in my country is running at a figure of 32.2 per cent; the coverage index at the primary level is 62 per cent; and absenteeism or the drop-out level is at a figure of 78.2 per cent, the highest being in the first grade. Another general problem is that more than 60 per cent of the school-age population in the rural areas at the primary level is over age.

32. For these reasons, in an extraordinary effort the Government of President Antonio Guzmán, in scarcely 12 months of constitutional rule, has succeeded in setting up a school breakfast programme which benefits 300,000 children, a school footwear programme for 150,000 and a school text programme for 350,000. These programmes were started in the first school grade and will be gradually expanded.

33. Another achievement has been the new formulation of the curriculum at the primary level to adapt it to today's world population and ecological problems. At the same time schools have been integrated with the rural population centres, thus identifying the school with the community and facilitating their administration and supervision. In addition, two important programmes were begun, one for the massive training of existing teachers, and the other for children handicapped by learning problems.

34. It is very important to mention also the fact that a development plan has already started for the south-western region, with the help of UNICEF. This plan covers seven of the poorest provinces in the country and covers a total of 300,000 children below age 15.

35. The plan will give informal education services to 7,000 pre-school children. Furthermore in health, nutrition and early stimulation, care will be given to 37,000 children of up to 3 years of age. In addition, assistance will be given to 26,780 pregnant and nursing mothers. Moreover, 45 rural clinics and 5 nutritional recovery centres will be provided with the necessary equipment.

36. At present the Dominican Government has invested 45 million pesos for the formation of the economic infrastructure of this promising plan.

37. In the matter of housing, there is a great inequality of physical space in relation to the size of families, giving rise as a natural consequence to problems of overcrowding, promiscuity and interference in family relations. At the same time not all homes in the Dominican Republic have the necessary equipment for the adequate functioning of families.

38. I wish also to mention the problem of the rural migration to the cities, because this causes a series of inconveniences, such as family disruption and the formation of poverty belts in urban centres.

39. The laws on the protection of minors are scattered through the existing legislations, which are oriented towards the protection of adults. There is so far no code protecting the minor or the family so as to ensure their well-being.

40. It is important to point out that, for cultural and social reasons, there exists in the Dominican Republic irresponsible fatherhood, in the form of a lack of commitment by fathers to family security.

41. The governmental and institutional response to all these problems has been the creation of the National Council for Children, with the basic objective of serving as a central planning, co-ordinating and integrating organization for the programs directed to children, which will be channelled through existing institutions, thus continuing a previously established national policy.

42. We do not presume to be an organization which uses public charity to palliate scattered problems and only benefits a limited number of children, thus creating more problems than those we intend to solve. That is why the National Council for Children seeks to co-ordinate all the activities and programmes at the national level which meet the needs of children in the short, medium and long term.

43. I have always felt a deep interest in and enormous concern for the fate of Dominican children. When my husband was elected President of the Republic by a majority vote of Dominicans, fate placed in my hands the opportunity to crystallize a beautiful ideal, namely, that of helping Dominican children.

44. On 23 November 1978, by Decree No. 426, the President of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Antonio Guzmán, established the National Council for Children, attached to the Office of the President of the Republic. Its general terms of reference are: first, to promote preventive and stimulating activities to improve the conditions under which Dominican children develop; secondly, to promote, co-ordinate and support the programmes of public and private institutions designed to provide integral assistance to children; thirdly, to promote and organize the active participation of the community in the programmes of integral assistance to children; fourthly, to programme proposed activities and plans on the basis of systematic studies, framed within the national development policy; fifthly, to ensure equality of opportunities for Dominican children, in order to improve living conditions through the gradual implementation of services which will cover the basic and specific needs of this population; sixthly, to develop and strengthen the operating capacity of assistance programmes for children through a systematic organization of their structure, functions and procedures.

45. The National Council for Children is basically organized at two levels: the first being a board of directors having supreme authority, appointed by the Government and presided over by the First Lady of the

Republic; the other being an executive management supported by a technical, multidisciplinary team, with expertise in the areas of education, health, nutrition, psychology and family and social welfare.

46. This is how we have begun to give form and shape to our beliefs and ideas—with distinguished professionals making up the staff of the Council and with prestigious consultants and well-known international organizations, all of whom have been compiling data, visiting and evaluating institutions related to the problem, in an arduous, patient, fruitful undertaking which deserves the recognition of us all.

47. These data and experiences covering a period of barely 10 months—which is the time the Council has been in existence—have made it possible for us to formulate programmes and projects of services to children up to the age of 15. Among them, we can mention: first, research on the characteristics of Dominican children, for the purpose of obtaining profiles to facilitate activities tending to solve their problems; secondly, the setting up of a programme of massive education through the various communications media—radio and television, an early-stimulation reader, booklets, and a care and orientation pamphlet for parents; thirdly, the construction and putting into operation of several integral assistance centres for children under seven years of age, which will operate in the marginal neighbourhoods of most of the cities, and will provide services of informal education, socialization, health supervision, early stimulation, and recreation which will have a consequent impact on the social and family well-being of the areas where they are located; fourthly, the establishment of a programme of assistance to street children as a response to the problem of waifs and strays; fifthly, the establishment of “S.O.S. Villages” in combination with the International S.O.S. Villages of Austria; and sixthly, the formulation of an integral national policy for children and of a code of protection for minors and families, which will be based on the conclusions of the first seminar for the formulation of policies for children, soon to be held with the participation of all the public and private institutions concerned with children.

48. As is only natural, the above projects have been interrupted as a result of the disaster caused by the passage through my country of the devastating Hurricane David and of Tropical Storm Frederic.

49. As a result of the damage caused, we have a great number of children who are helpless, hungry and naked. That is why, acting under Principle 8 of the Declaration of the Rights of Children, which states: “The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief”, we considered it our unavoidable duty to come to the aid and assistance of those children now completely helpless.

50. Even though, for that reason, the National Council for Children has for the moment postponed its programmes and projects, we do not consider this a departure from our obligations, since we are pursuing one of the objectives of the Council, namely, the safeguarding of the universal rights of the child.

51. This humanitarian task for immediate help consisted in a series of actions, of which I shall only mention the most relevant: first, the evaluation of the magnitude of the damage, visiting the affected localities and using the statistics compiled by various official and private institutions; secondly, the organization of the technical team normally operating in the Council, and of a body of volunteers made up mostly of the members of the committee for the International Year of the Child; thirdly, the transport of the help materials to our offices and to the warehouses of the National Theatre of Santo Domingo; and fourthly, the establishment of five work teams, whose names explain their functions—evaluation, receipt of resources, distribution, transport and delivery, and purchases and accounting.

52. Help came and continues to come from all the Dominican people and from the rest of the world. It consists of financial grants, food, clothing and medicines, among other things.

53. Shipments to the disaster areas were begun immediately, with priority being given to the areas that were the most affected and the most isolated.

54. The Air Force of the Dominican Republic and that of the United States of America formed a magnificent transport team for assistance to the affected peoples.

55. The National Government, by Decree No. 1144, entrusted the National Council for Children with the task of feeding children under three years of age, since they are the ones most in danger of dying in case of disaster.

56. We wish to emphasize that the National Council for Children is an apolitical, permanent institution that must endure and be strengthened through all Governments in the Dominican Republic. We have therefore given it a professional and scientific orientation that will increasingly respond both to a greater demand and more effectively to the needs, desires and aspirations of our helpless children.

57. It is our belief in the Dominican Republic that the fate of children is indissolubly bound to and dependent on the treatment afforded women in society. For this reason, my country has been a great champion of the cause of women and has eagerly supported the celebration of the United Nations Decade for Women in the framework of United Nations activities.

58. This conviction impelled the Dominican Government to support the initiative for the creation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which is aimed at better integration of women in the process of economic, social and cultural development.

59. My country has also offered to serve as the seat of that Institute, and premises for it are already being prepared. Discussions preparatory to the signature of the agreement between the Government of the Dominican Republic and the United Nations are in progress, and we expect that the Institute will soon be able to begin its operations.

60. For the welfare of all the world's children, I should like to exhort this great Assembly to see to it that the experiences, ideas, achievements and concerns that have arisen during this year that has been devoted to children shall become permanent in every country, and that they shall be co-ordinated, strengthened, and evaluated by the United Nations, which must continue to keep alive the enthusiasm it has aroused in all our consciences as adults through the International Year of the Child. Should we fail to do so, we shall be responsible to future generations for having encouraged humanitarian and socially just expectations without understanding and giving reality to the challenge that all those aspirations involved.
61. In other words, I propose to this Assembly that an official organization of a permanent nature be created in each Member State of the United Nations, an organization whose function would be to study the reality of children within each country and to promote activities and action that would achieve their protection and well being.
62. Once established, that organization should be autonomous, even when its financial resources are derived mainly from the public sector. International and regional organizations, international credit institutions, public and private foundations that exist in States Members of the United Nations, as well as the private sector of each country, would contribute to such an organization's institutional strength, in particular in the areas of technical assistance and in the financing of specific programmes.
63. Finally, let me express my thanks, on behalf of the Dominican people and Government, to all the nations represented in this Assembly for the generosity and unselfishness shown by their valuable and timely help in moments of anguish, sadness and disaster, which we are still trying to overcome in the aftermath of nature's harsh punishment dealt out to us by Hurricane David and tropical storm Frederic.
64. Mr. ASSEN (Norway): As we are now approaching the end of the International Year of the Child, we are in a better position to get an idea of the scope of the mobilization of human and material resources that has taken place for the benefit of children all over the world. We know, of course, that a more thorough evaluation can only be carried out after a certain period of time, but it is nevertheless encouraging to note the positive reception that the International Year of the Child has received around the world.
65. The Year was well prepared, and the thorough preparations and hard work carried out both by the international secretariat and by the national commissions for the International Year of the Child provide, in the view of all, the main explanation for the high level of activities.
66. We would all agree that even though the needs of children are universal, the severity of the problems children are facing varies drastically. For this reason, the General Assembly decision to let each individual country have the main responsibility for concrete actions at the national level was a sensible one.
67. While planning for the International Year of the Child, the Norwegian authorities recommended that in the activities in Norway equal stress should be put on the national and international perspectives of the Year. This policy has been followed both by the national commission and by the more than 400 local commissions.
68. The actions that have been taken for the benefit of children in Norway, of course, reflect the general problems facing children in an industrialized society. Although these children generally have had their material needs satisfied, they are to some extent also victims of industrialization and modernization. Little stress has been put on channelling resources to solve problems that are inherent in rapidly changing societies. The remedies are often expensive, and so far we have not been able—or rather, we have not been willing—to pay the bill. The problem is really one of setting priorities.
69. The philosophy promoted by the Norwegian national commission for the International Year of the Child is that we cannot afford not to invest in our children's future. It must be taken into consideration at every level of political planning. These thoughts are of course not new, but the International Year of the Child has provided an excellent opportunity for generating and directing increased attention to them.
70. Practical action with regard to international perspectives has consisted mainly in providing information about children's way of life in other countries, particularly in the developing countries. It should be stressed that efforts have also been made to spread information on conditions other than the material ones. Through such information attention has been drawn to the immense variety of cultural patterns and values facing children around the world. It is expected that this flow of information will result in an increased awareness of the problems with which children in those countries are confronted. Such awareness will in its turn give a strong impetus to the work done for children in developing countries by different organizations, above all, the work of UNICEF.
71. The enthusiasm that has been shown by the non-governmental organizations over the work relating to the International Year of the Child has indeed been very encouraging. This is a field in which those organizations have traditionally been very active, and the International Year of the Child has given their work an even greater impetus.
72. The experience gained from the International Year of the Child proves that international years as such can have a positive effect, notwithstanding the fact that my Government is of the opinion that restraint should be shown in proclaiming international years.
73. The resolution establishing the International Year of the Child linked it to the efforts to create a new international economic order. In Norway, stress has been laid on seeing the situation of children in this wider perspective, that is, seeing the situation of children as a result of the general economic and social situation in the world. The International Year of the Child has provided a unique opportunity for disseminating information on

the reasons underlying the present deplorable situation, and for explaining what can be done and has to be done in an international context in order to produce improvement in the longer perspective.

74. This leads me to a few remarks on the follow-up of the International Year of the Child. We consider the question of follow-up an important one at the present stage and one to be closely scrutinized if the desired continuity of activities is to be maintained. We find it important to stress that certain goals and objectives of the International Year of the Child ought to be clearly reflected in the new international development strategy.

75. On the national level, it will of course have to be decided by each individual country what form the follow-up activities should be given. This will have to be considered in view of the institutional situation in each country. The important point, however, is that the momentum that has been created during 1979 should be maintained.

76. As regards the role of UNICEF, we are in agreement with the views expressed by the Executive Director at the 1979 meeting of the Executive Board that the secretariat of the International Year of the Child should not continue in existence beyond the end of 1980. Any means to provide for referral of inquiries, information and advice after that date should be set up within UNICEF itself. It is also our view that UNICEF should continue to be the lead agency in the United Nations system in the general field of programmes benefiting children.

77. The delegation of Norway, in co-operation with a number of other delegations, has taken the initiative of elaborating a draft resolution on the International Year of the Child.¹ With the President's permission, my delegation will revert to this matter and introduce the draft resolution at the end of this debate.

78. The Norwegian Government has always attached great importance to the work of UNICEF. As an expression of the great respect that Norway has for the work of UNICEF, I am proud to announce that His Majesty King Olav V of Norway has decided to bestow upon Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, the Executive Director of UNICEF, the Order of St. Olav, in recognition of his very dedicated efforts to promote a wider understanding of the situation of the children of the world.

79. Mr. ROS (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Argentina, I have the honour of conveying to the officials of UNICEF who have worked for the International Year of the Child our gratitude for the dedication with which they have accomplished their task. Similarly, we wish to congratulate Mrs. Estefanía Aldaba-Lim, Special Representative for the Year, on promoting it with infectious enthusiasm in all the areas of the world to which she travelled.

80. We agree with the Executive Director of UNICEF when he states in his preliminary report² that the Inter-

national Year of the Child was an idea which took root on fertile ground. There already was a latent awareness of the fact that the needs of the child had to be met forthwith, not only to protect the future of mankind, but also to preserve its spiritual values, values which children embody in all their purity.

81. Argentina participated in the International Year by proclaiming 1979 the "Year of the Child and the Family", it being understood that that decision was based on the fact that the family is the social unit or nucleus and the focus of action by Government bodies responsible for its implementation.

82. Thus, Argentina lived up to its tradition and to the general objectives laid down by the General Assembly, that is, first, to provide a framework for the promotion of the welfare of children and, secondly, to further recognition of the fact that children's programmes must be an integral part of development plans.

83. This does not mean that we disregard the existence of minors deprived of their family, living in an irregular situation, in moral or material danger or without protection, because they have no natural family or because that family does not do its duty. The purpose was simply to strengthen the family nucleus from which a child cannot be divorced when that nucleus, as is only natural, offers it the necessary protection. The lack of a natural family nucleus would thus be covered through a substitute family nucleus, through the promotion of child protection institutions where children would lead a real family life and through letting all children enjoy the benefits of the community through schooling, sports clubs, cultural and collective centres and any other activities which would prepare them for reintegration into the home environment.

84. Since 1958 Argentina has had a technical administrative body which is aimed at fully protecting minors. Since 1969 that body has diversified its field of competence, embracing not only situations of danger to the child, but also those where the child's well-being was delimited by the well-being of the family.

85. The field of competence of this Office of Minors and the Family now includes the following: the surveillance of the legal tutelage of minors who have been materially or morally abandoned, or of children institutionalized by their parents, tutors or guardians; the complete care of minors in a foster family which is fulfilling the functions of the natural one; the complete care of children placed in tutelage up to the age of three by special outside nurses; the provision of small homes or units where a limited number of children are given full care within a family environment; the granting of scholarships for psychosomatic rehabilitation, through which the State seeks to obtain and finance special psychosomatic care for minors, without separating them from their family homes; the provisional support of families, when for financial reasons the stability of the family is endangered or where there is a danger that minors may run away from home; the encouragement and vocational training of the family, which would give it access to better opportunities for employment and better conditions for the family unit; the care of minors in institutions and youth homes, and financial support to facilitate their reintegration into the home environment; the granting of scholarships to enable needy

¹ Subsequently circulated as document A/34/L.4.

² See document E/1979/88.

children to continue their secondary and higher education; the registration and social rehabilitation of abandoned minors; and the promotion and co-ordination of sports, tourist and recreational activities for minors.

86. In 1978 an experimental national registry of minors was set up. Its aim was to analyse the problem of minors throughout the country in order to improve activities under way and to carry out research in order to find solutions. The National Registry of Minors began to operate in 1979, and preliminary results do not suggest the need to formulate a new national plan of action, different from the existing one. It was felt more useful to use the opportunity of the proclamation of the International Year to strengthen and co-ordinate existing government programmes for children and to intensify co-operation with private bodies.

87. In 1979, and bearing in mind that among the objectives of the General Assembly's resolution 31/169 of 21 December 1976 Governments were urged to make every effort with a view to achieving lasting improvements for the benefit of children and in particular those from the more vulnerable groups, Decree 549/79 was enacted, under the terms of which the Year of the Child and of the Family was declared. That same decree empowered the Ministry of Social Welfare to set up a national commission responsible for national programming for the Year, and composed of governmental and non-governmental representatives.

88. Existing legislation, based on adoption laws and the non-fulfilment of family assistance duties, was studied with a view to adapting it to the present situation in Argentina. Thus Laws Nos. 19134 and 13944 were amended at the beginning of June. The Chairman of the National Commission for the Year of the Child and of the Family and the Secretary of the country's Social Action Programme announced the enactment of the adoption laws before the end of the year. This announcement was made on the occasion of his visit to Budapest, where he took part in the Congress on Enforcement of the Rights of Children.

89. Once set up, the National Commission gave priority to the holding of regional seminars on two subjects: the exercise of paternal responsibility, and the child and its needs.

90. Those regional seminars were held in Mendoza, for the Cuyo area, in Resistencia, for the north-eastern area, in San Salvador de Jujuy, for the north-western area, in Paraná, for the central and coastal area and in Rawson for the Comahue and Patagonia area. Thus an attempt was made to suit the programmes to the characteristics of groups of the autonomous provinces of the Argentine Republic.

91. Towards the middle of the year the first national days were celebrated, grouping 150 teachers from all over the country, under the honorary presidency of the Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Argentina. Debates focused on health and family protection, education, culture and means of education, the social and legal protection of minors and recreation and sport.

92. The participants took special account of immediate needs, based on their day-to-day experience,

but they did not disregard experience amassed at the international level in four main aspects.

93. The first related to the training of teachers and the education of the parents of children up to the age of 18, which is the age-limit of childhood as given by UNESCO.

94. The second related to the prohibition of child labour for children under 15 years of age, which the ILO has been dealing with since its founding in 1919.

95. The third related to the critical picture of infant mortality, especially in the developing countries, and to the scourge of hunger, which is one of the great concerns of WHO in its programme "Health for all by the year 2000".

96. The fourth related to the very subject of the Year of the Child and of the Family in Argentina, "Education for Peace". In this context the words of Pope Pius XII were recalled: "All can be gained through peace; all can be lost through war".

97. This concept is the basis for all the efforts being carried out with a view to comprehensive education, including plans for school construction throughout the country.

98. The Government of Argentina shares the international community's concern about child labour, because it understands that it affects the rights of the child to special protection for his physical, mental and social development, and to receive free education and to enjoy recreation.

99. The evolution of legislation and practice in our country indicates that the first concern of the lawmakers was to ensure primary education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14, as laid down compulsorily in Law No. 1420 in 1884. In 1924 Law No. 11,317 was enacted, prohibiting minors under the age of 12 from doing any sort of work for third parties, including such work in the rural areas, and this prohibition included children under 12 and of school age who had not completed their compulsory education. These prohibitions were extended to include minors under the age of 14 by Law No. 20,744, which also laid down that children under the age of 18 should submit a medical certificate guaranteeing their fitness to work and have periodic medical examinations, and which prohibited them from working more than 6 hours a day and 36 hours a week and from working at night or in harmful or dangerous occupations.

100. All these laws are at present under review by commissions set up by the Ministry of Labour with the participation of the Ministries of the Economy and Justice, with a view to extending existing legislation, including that relating to rural work by minors.

101. There are various bodies whose task is to ensure the fulfilment of the measures we have listed.

102. First of all, the Ministry of Labour polices conditions of work. For the purpose of the statement I have the honour to make today, the Ministry has stated that no violations have been noted and that, if there are any, they would be isolated cases.

103. Secondly, the Department of the Under-Secretary of State for Children and the Family, through its youth supervision bodies, detects cases where children work outside the supervision of their parents or carry out tasks dangerous to their morals or their health and places them under its protection.
104. Thirdly, the Office of Minors exercises responsibility for all children, especially in those cases where minors are employed in family businesses and where their work is regarded as indispensable to ensure subsistence incomes for their direct families.
105. Lastly, when a youth over the age of 14 is employed, he can enter into work contracts with parental approval and is empowered to bring action in the labour courts concerning such contracts or labour relations.
106. I have elaborated on the measures prohibiting or regulating work by children in Argentina because these are fully in keeping with ILO Convention No. 10, of 16 November 1921, concerning the age for admission of children to employment in agriculture³, which was ratified by my country. This information will enlighten those officials of the ILO who may wish to have up-to-date information on the situation of children in various developing countries.
107. The synthesis of activities undertaken this year which were given official support does not reflect the great enthusiasm with which the Argentine community promoted, through private institutions or individual initiatives, the Year of the Child and the Family. These include, for instance, the programme for the safety of passengers and pedestrians on public roads, which was inspired by the number of children injured in road accidents; courses on nutritional education and on premature children, which are organized periodically to meet a concern for the mental and physical health of children; studies on education on the use of time by adolescents; and a whole series of competitions, exhibitions and other events at the municipal, provincial and national levels, to be carried on throughout the Week of The Rights of the Child to be held from 19 to 23 November next.
108. All this information, however, is not enough for the preparation of future plans, and it is anticipated that the National Institute of Statistics and the Census will include in its national census in 1980 certain variables which will give greater information on the family structure and the situation of children in our country.
109. There is one primary and urgent concern which we could take care of without even seeking further information, namely, the abnormal situation of abandoned, maltreated and predelinquent children, to whom the delegation of Argentina referred in particular at the Special Meeting on Children in Latin America and the Caribbean which was held in Mexico City from 16 to 18 May 1979.
110. Another aspect which arouses great concern is that of violence affecting children. Every day the mass media inform us about children who are the object of violence throughout the world. Nor can we fail to urge the avoidance of indiscriminate violence affecting children in many countries, since those children are the victims of delinquency or criminal attacks.
111. The Argentine delegation, fully supporting the Declaration on attention to children in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted in Mexico City on that occasion⁴, understands the frustration of some representatives whose zeal led them to adopt a position of denunciation of the causes of the problems which are harmful to children of the region. However, whatever the position adopted then on the aspects of the Declaration, we must warmly congratulate UNICEF for the attention it has given to the problems of Latin American children.
112. The concern of Mr. Johan Grun, who met with the Latin American group in New York, and the co-operation of the liaison officers cannot be disregarded. It is very important and moving for the Governments of the region to know that they have in UNICEF true friends who can co-operate with them in their efforts and work with them in fruitful harmony. We commend to them today the recently adopted Declaration of the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Havana. [See A/34/542.]
113. In a country like Argentina, which has neither requested nor received assistance from UNICEF, the information supplied and the exchange of experience offered by UNICEF are nevertheless of paramount importance. That is why we consider it especially important that its department of information should provide in Spanish the same magnificent information it now provides only in English. By way of example, we should especially mention the material provided to us on incapacitated, invalid and mentally deficient children.
114. The Argentine delegation understands the need to continue the efforts at the national and international levels during the International Year of the Child and the importance of assessing the experience acquired during that year. That is why we shall support measures designed to extend the mandates of a small number of officials devoting themselves to that crucial task. At the same time, bearing in mind the links established on earlier occasions, we feel it important that the work carried out during 1979 in favour of incapacitated children should be continued in 1981, so that the situation of those children will be given the necessary priority in the activities of the United Nations system during the International Year for Disabled Persons.
115. I wish to add a further note which we regard as important. It is that, in the light of the present circumstances, we should not conclude this discussion of the International Year of the Child without making a clear recommendation to pay special attention to refugee children. I do not believe we should go into figures and details on such a painful situation which specifically affects the children in various areas of the world. Argentina has made and will make all the efforts

³ See International Labour Organisation, *Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference, 1919-1966* (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1966).

⁴ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1979, Supplement No. 11, annex I.

it can to help to resolve and mitigate the effects of this serious problem. It is in this spirit that we have accepted 1,000 families from South-East Asia with no limitation on the number of children. Moreover, with this we seek to consolidate the family unit, which, in our view is the one that best meets the needs of children and promotes their spiritual well-being and physical welfare in our country. However, without the generous participation of a greater number of countries we shall not be able to help them.

116. We have said that the needs of children call for immediate satisfaction, in view of the human dignity and spiritual values they represent. Therefore, we must assume a united commitment to translate into deeds the international community's concern to ensure the future and human integrity of generations to come.

117. Allow me, in concluding this statement, to read out the following message sent by His Excellency the President of the Argentine Republic, Don Jorge Rafael Videla, on the occasion of the International Year of the Child, in conformity with resolution 33/38 of the General Assembly:

“In fervently supporting the International Year of the Child, under the direction of the Year of the Child and the Family and with the slogan ‘Education for peace’, the Argentine Government attaches the utmost importance to this noble initiative, which has aroused so many hopes in the world. At the same time, this fortunate circumstance coincides fully with one of our concerns, since one of the main accents of our actions has been the strengthening of family ties and permanent moral and material support for the upbringing of children”.

118. Mrs. KOMAROVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): Is there any feeling on earth more ancient, more natural, more selfless, more beautiful than the love of children? And does a family, a people, a State possess anything more valuable than its children? The upbringing of children, the kind of people they are when they come to take over from their elders, by what ideas they are motivated—upon all this largely depends the future of every country and the world as a whole. Children's health, their up-bringing and their education are problems which are today a matter of concern to the whole of mankind.

119. More than one and a half billion children are now living on this earth, and they should all be happy. That is their right, which is laid down in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly in 1959 [*resolution 1386 (XIV)*]. However, even two decades after the adoption of this important document, there are still many countries where its fundamental provisions and principles are not being observed. And that is why today we must still work tirelessly and constantly to see to it that the rights of children are not only recognized but are actually put into effect.

120. This year has been proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year of the Child. The purpose of this is for mankind to unite its efforts to make a

real and important contribution to ensuring for all a happy childhood in a world of peace.

121. The human conscience cannot rest when children are suffering, when in so many countries they are languishing in conditions of poverty, hunger and disease. The sufferings of children who live in countries where Fascist dictatorial régimes are in control or where conditions of racism and *apartheid* prevail, are incalculable.

122. According to information from UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO and WHO, 500 million children in the world are living in conditions of poverty and 200 million go hungry every day. One billion inhabitants of our planet are deprived of normal living conditions and normal housing, while one third of them live in actual slums. A hundred million children have never held an alphabet book in their hands. There are so many countries in the world today where even the most elementary standards of health for children are non-existent. Millions of children die from lack of medical assistance. The lack of vitamins leads to a situation where every year more than 100,000 children in developing countries go blind. Necessity compels many parents to send their children to work. More than 50 million children under the age of 15 are forced to go out to work. The wretched plight of millions of children in the majority of developing countries is the result of many years of colonial and continuing neo-colonialist exploitation of those countries.

123. Similar phenomena, unfortunately, are not a rarity even in developed capitalist countries. According to data from UNESCO, children aged from 10 to 14 years make up 4 per cent of the labour force in these countries, while millions of adults find it impossible to find any kind of work. Employers prefer to use child labour because they can exploit such labour without controls; they can pay lower wages to children than to adults; and they do not have to bear any social welfare costs.

124. That is why the International Year of the Child is viewed by the Soviet people as a year of solidarity with the struggle of all progressive forces on our planet against social privation, racial humiliation of children, and as a year of struggle for the future of mankind.

125. What is so heartbreaking and so unbearable a feeling of spiritual pain for all honest people in the world is the monstrous fact that innocent little children are still the first to become victims of aggressive wars in which they are killed, crippled or orphaned.

126. We, as representatives of a country which went through the horrors of the Fascist invasion in the Second World War, can well understand these feelings. Peace means the happiness of children, the happiness of all people. There can be no childhood without peace; there can be no future. But millions upon millions of people were robbed of their childhood by wars. It is very important that nobody should ever forget this.

127. The Soviet Union is the first country in the world where the upbringing of children and concern for every aspect of their physical and moral development has been made a high priority matter of State. Since right after

the establishment of Soviet power, not a day has passed in our country when this concern has slackened even for a moment or been allowed to lose its priority.

128. In the Soviet Union, a country of genuine equality and people's power, children are known as the only privileged class.

129. "To ensure a happy childhood for every child is one of the most important and noble tasks in the building of a Communist society"; this is what is laid down in the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and this task is being successfully carried out.

130. What is viewed by many countries in the framework of the International Year of the Child as a long-term goal has long become a reality in the Soviet Union. Comprehensive concern for children and the fundamental principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child have become an immutable law in our country and have been enshrined in the Constitution of the USSR.

131. Concern for children is a concept with many facets. It calls for a broad range of measures connected with raising the material living standards of the people as well as with the development of systems of education, improvement in the upbringing of children and young people and the comprehensive development of people who are actively building a new society.

132. In his New Year message to children, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, stressed: "We are striving to teach children kindness and friendship . . . to teach them to have respect for labour and be able to work for the good of all mankind" [see A/34/54, annex]. These words define the fundamental thrust of the education and upbringing of Soviet children.

133. In accordance with the decisions of the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government and local governmental bodies with the active participation of public organizations has been carrying out a broad range of measures designed to help children to develop their potential, to acquire knowledge and habits of work and to grow up educated, cultured and physically robust.

Mr. Illueca (Panama), Vice-President, took the Chair.

134. The State provides considerable amounts of material assistance to families in the raising of children, through free and subsidized attendance at children's institutions and the payment of State allowances to mothers with many children and single mothers as well as to families which are ill provided for. It pays pensions on the loss of the bread-winner, pensions to invalids from childhood and supplementary pensions for disabled children, as well as providing scholarships for students and so on.

135. In the Soviet Union there is universal compulsory secondary education for young people.

136. To use the stark language of figures, we have 120,000 pre-schools serving more than 13 million children. We have 140,000 schools with places for about 40 million children. More than 13 million children and adolescents each year take vacations in pioneer camps and health centres. An important role in the cultural development of the rising generation is played by children's choirs, dance groups, opera and drama groups, circus groups, studios, orchestras for folk instruments, and schools, clubs and studios for the musical and graphic arts education of our children. The number of these institutions is growing constantly.

137. Traditionally in our country we hold children's festivals and special children's book, music, theatre and cinema weeks. Books are written for children. We issue papers, newspapers and magazines for children. We make films and put on shows all designed to instil in children feelings of good and high moral standards.

138. A matter of constant concern for local councils, trade unions, the Komsomol and sports organizations is that of trying to involve children in active participation in physical culture, sport and tourism. Every year about 20 million school children take part in competitions for prizes given by clubs. These competitions are known as the "Leather Ball", the "Golden Puck" and the "Silver Skates", among others.

139. The concern in our country for high moral ideals and the development of the cultural world of the child harmoniously blends with concern for the child's physical health. For the first time in the world the USSR has set up a comprehensive system of scientifically based free medical services, care and treatment for every child. Hardly has a child seen the light of day than thought is given to his welfare and every possible measure is taken to see that he was born healthy. Particular emphasis is placed on mother and child care services. This is an area which clearly and strikingly reflects the preventive nature of Soviet medicine. There are about 100,000 pediatricians to look after the health of our children. There are 12,000 children's polyclinics and there is a vast network of children's consultations and other medical institutions for children.

140. The experience of the Soviet Union, where everything is done to see that children grow up happy and vindicate the hopes of their parents and society, is that our society can serve as a striking example for so many countries in their struggle for the protection of children. Our experience demonstrates that an improvement in the situation of children and their protection from infringements of their rights as enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child can be put into effect only by the energetic carrying out of progressive legislative policies and radical social and economic reforms by Governments.

141. We in the Soviet Union are sympathetic to the efforts of the international community to ensure the necessary conditions for a normal life, and for the full flowering and future welfare of children.

142. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR supported the United Nations decision to proclaim 1979 as the International Year of the Child. To this end it set up a special commission headed by Candidate Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. N. A. Tikhonov. The Presidium recommended that the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on questions of the work and life of women and the protection of motherhood and children, and other commissions also, should exercise closer supervision over the implementation of measures designed further to improve the protection of mothers and children and to improve the health, upbringing and education of children.

143. The USSR Commission for the Observance of the International Year of the Child, is the co-ordinator of a whole range of activities carried out in our country in connexion with this very important work.

144. On the initiative of the Commission numerous lectures, reports, talks, discussion groups, film festivals and photo exhibitions are held in factories and other institutions, on collective and State farms and in educational and scientific research institutions, while posters, post cards, records, envelopes and postage stamps have been issued to celebrate the theme of the International Year of the Child. In plants and factories as well as in institutions and educational establishments, meetings are held devoted to the International Year of the Child. A very interesting festival entitled "Let the Sun Always Shine" was held. In the Artek pioneer camp in the Crimea a mass international children's festival entitled "For a Happy Childhood in a Peaceful World" has been held in which many children from many countries took part.

145. Within the framework of the International Year of the Child we are holding conferences, seminars and meetings of writers, composers, artists, actors, scholars and scientists to discuss matters of relevance to the organizing of artistic education and the encouragement of the scientific and technical creativity of children.

146. Articles are published regularly in the Central Press, together with extracts and photographs all aimed at describing the results of the work undertaken in order to implement the decisions of the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Party adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Soviet Government in order to improve the conditions of life for children, their educational progress, their upbringing, the preservation of their health and the organization of their leisure.

147. Special films are being shown in our country devoted to the International Year of the Child.

148. Detailed information about the measures taken in our country in connexion with the International Year of the Child was sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and this has been issued as a document of the Organization [see A/34/232].

149. There was considerable response in our country to the appeal of the General Assembly of the United Na-

tions to expand the efforts of States, both nationally and internationally in order to promote and enhance in a stable fashion the well-being of children. Within the framework of economic and cultural co-operation with the developing countries, the USSR has been providing them with assistance in training qualified personnel for national systems of educating and bringing up children as well as providing them with medical services. The USSR is taking an active part in programmes of action on these matters within the United Nations, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO and other international organizations.

150. Our children are growing up as true internationalists. Long ago, in 1924, the first Pioneers of Moscow were collecting coins to support the strikers in the Ruhr, Hamburg and Dresden; and the Pioneers of the 1970s are providing help to their peers in Viet Nam, Angola, Chile and Uruguay and to Palestinian children. These are acts of solidarity with all those struggling for peace on earth and for national independence and social progress. In Moscow alone there are 768 schools with international friendship clubs and throughout the country there are tens of thousands of them. They are all promoting the noble cause of bringing up children in a spirit of peace and friendship among peoples.

151. Our children—those who are newly born and those who are just beginning school—all of them will have to live and work in the twenty-first century. It will be for them to promote the progress of human civilization, develop science, technology and culture and establish a system of just relations among nations and peoples. And that is why, when we think of the fate of our children, we must think peace.

152. The Soviet Union has consistently and persistently fought for peace and against the arms race and the threat of nuclear war. It is the task of us all to do everything in our power to promote the attainment of these noble goals, the attainment of genuine disarmament, thereby freeing funds which could be diverted exclusively to the purposes of social and economic development, which, of course, includes improving the lot of children.

153. In connexion with the International Year of the Child the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Comrade Brezhnev, on the first day of this year appeared on Soviet television and said:

"... children are our future, and it is they who will have to continue the work of their fathers and mothers. I am convinced that they will make life on earth better and happier. And our task is to strive to ensure that the children of all peoples will never know war and will have a peaceful and joyful childhood". [See A/34/54, annex.]

154. The Soviet people, like all honourable people on earth, are doing everything in their power to see to it that there is no single child who grows up knowing, as do the children of southern Africa, the horrors of fascism, apartheid and genocide, that no single child becomes the victim of aggression, like the children of Viet Nam, and that no single child can ever be deprived

of the right to be born in his own country, as is the lot of the Palestinian children.

155. We want all children of our planet to grow up healthy and happy, and once they have grown up they will be able to defend peace and friendship and our beautiful planet. These noble goals are served by the proposal of the Polish People's Republic for the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child⁵ and we should like to express the hope that work on this extremely important document will be swiftly concluded.

156. From 7 to 11 September this year a World Conference in Moscow entitled "For a Peaceful and Happy Future for All Children" was held, in which representatives of 130 countries of the world and 47 international organizations, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, took part. It was an extremely representative Conference which received greetings from the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, as well as from 38 Heads of State or Government of various countries. It discussed urgent matters pertaining to the upbringing and education of children and the protection of their health, as well as problems of the responsibility of society for the rising generation. The Conference adopted an appeal to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly and to the Governments and Parliaments of all countries of the world and an appeal to the world public, public organizations and movements. These documents have been circulated as official documents of the United Nations [A/34/600].

157. The participants of the World Conference called upon the United Nations and its Member States, their Governments and Parliaments to take measures and step up their activities in the struggle against all forms of aggression, economic domination and foreign occupation, colonial oppression and genocide, which are violations of the norms of the international right of peoples to self-determination and national independence.

158. The participants in the Conference also pointed out that it was necessary to do everything possible in all countries to consolidate and render irreversible the easing of international tension, halt the arms race and bring about the prohibition of nuclear weapons and all other kinds of weapons of mass destruction and one of the most important goals of the whole of mankind which is complete and general disarmament, thereby enabling our children to live in a peaceful and happy future.

159. The participants in the Conference expressed their conviction that the United Nations, all its Member States and their Governments and Parliaments should do everything possible to invigorate joint efforts to attain the humanitarian and noble purposes embodied in the motto of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child: "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give".

160. We heartily endorse this appeal and we are sure that the International Year of the Child, which is drawing to a close, will leave much good behind it in our planet and spur the United Nations and the other international organizations and all Member States to continue in the future even more intensively to strive to en-

sure peaceful conditions for a normal life and the full flowering, the welfare and the happiness of children.

161. Mr. SCHELTEMA (Netherlands): It is fair to say that the momentum generated by the International Year of the Child is far beyond our original expectations. This of course is a tremendous achievement for which UNICEF and, more particularly, the International Year of the Child secretariat deserve much credit.

162. I do not wish to dwell upon the immediate enthusiasm and interest which the Year of the Child has brought about. We are all well aware of the many activities that have been undertaken during the past months and also of the useful ideas and suggestions for the improvement of the living conditions of children that have been put forward. Instead, I want to stress our responsibility to ensure that the expectations aroused during the International Year will be fulfilled. We face the challenge of consolidating and utilizing to the utmost the gains of the International Year of the Child.

163. First and foremost, it is the responsibility of us as individual governments to guarantee beyond 1979 permanent and systematic attention to the essential needs of children. In the Netherlands the International Year of the Child has served an extremely useful purpose in demonstrating that the problems of children in an industrialized society are manifold and that the situation of certain deprived groups of children is not as favourable as many perhaps thought it to be. The Netherlands National Commission for the International Year of the Child has played an important role in this respect. The country has become increasingly aware of the problems faced by special groups of children, such as the children of migrant workers and handicapped children. We have come to realize that we ought to consider the effect our modern industrialized societies have upon children and that we have to take into account the plight of children of the so-called fourth world. In the years to come these and other matters will need our full attention. Often, it is more a lack of public understanding and political will than of resources which leads to a continuation, and sometimes even a deterioration, of existing problems in industrialized societies. We shall have to take a stern look at ourselves and may also have to redetermine our priorities so that we can meet the needs and wishes of children in the richer parts of the world.

164. In the Netherlands we are at present elaborating proposals which would lead to a strengthened continuity in our attention to the child. The National Commission is also working out a plan for the establishment of regional children's councils in all provinces. The membership of these councils will be open only to children. Thus, these councils could be an instrument in the hands of Dutch children to make their needs and wishes known.

165. The International Year of the Child is, of course, a particularly suitable occasion on which to determine how sufficient attention can be paid to the child in the third world. Whereas the problems of children in the industrialized world are basically "improvement problems", the situation of the child in the third world is often a matter of sheer survival. Thus, this latter category of children deserves our continuous attention. Despite the efforts of third-world countries themselves

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1978, Supplement No. 4, chap. XXVI, sect. A, resolution 20 (XXXIV), annex.

and despite considerable multilateral and bilateral assistance programmes, the solution of immense problems such as child mortality, malnutrition and illiteracy is still a long way off. An improvement in the condition of children is hardly noticeable. Perhaps the satisfaction of the most elementary human needs is often accorded too low a priority in the development process.

166. It is impossible to dissociate the problems of children in the third world from development in general. Their situation does not present an isolated problem. The situation of the child is determined by its direct environment, the living conditions which it encounters. Therefore, efforts to improve the situation of the child should in the first place be directed to an improvement of that environment. When this is done, we are immediately confronted with a number of problems of a structural nature: poor health services, limited educational possibilities, lack of water and sanitary facilities, and so on. Thus, an improvement in the situation of the child necessitates a many-sided development policy which, among other things, should be directed at providing basic services and which should emphasize the development of people. If conditions can be created under which people in the third world can develop to their full potential, then children will be able to share in the advantages that such development creates.

167. Even with such an approach, special attention to the specific needs of the child remains essential. The first five years of a child's life especially are of crucial importance for its further development. A child which in the first phase of its life is deprived of wholesome adequate nutrition and elementary health care will suffer the consequences throughout its adult life. One of the organizations which concerns itself with such basic assistance to children under five years of age is UNICEF. The Netherlands Government has always had enormous respect for the most valuable work undertaken by that organization, which of course is not limited to direct assistance in the field of mother-and-child health care. UNICEF directs its attention to the entire environment in which a child grows up and which must give it the opportunity to realize its full potential. With its basic strategy, UNICEF attempts to develop methods to reach those children and families which until now have not been reached, or not effectively reached. The rendering of basic services in areas such as primary health care, water and sanitation, food production, family planning and the improvement of the situation of women has a central place in this strategy, which also emphasizes the active participation of the local population in the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes.

168. In view of the encouraging results UNICEF has achieved with its basic services strategy, the Netherlands Government has over the past years been one of its earnest supporters. We believe that this past year has shown that in issues affecting children UNICEF can fulfil a vital role as the lead agency of the United Nations system. Therefore, we believe that this role should be continued beyond 1979. UNICEF's own direct involvement in matters relating to children, however, should be limited. The basic services strategy should remain UNICEF's first priority and major policy guideline. No matter how urgent and important other needs may be, UNICEF should primarily direct itself to assisting third-world countries in their efforts to extend basic services to children. UNICEF's function as lead

agency should first and foremost be determined by its "needs" mandate.

169. At this point I take great pleasure in announcing a special contribution to UNICEF. The Netherlands Government has decided to contribute \$US 6,770,000 to 10 UNICEF projects in 9 different countries. These projects cover a wide range of activities such as urban development, water and sanitation, the role of women in development and primary health care. This special contribution, which comes over and above our 1979 contribution to UNICEF's general programme of 14.5 million Dutch guilders, which is approximately \$7,250,000—that is, more than \$US 7 million—is an expression of our earnest intention to help improve the social and economic conditions in which children live. It is also an expression of the confidence that we have in UNICEF's approach to development. I must stress, however, that this special contribution does not set a precedent for the coming years and may not be construed as an indication that similar special contributions will be made in the future.

170. One cannot but wish that the tremendous momentum generated by the International Year of the Child will result in a new drive and incentive for all countries concerned to initiate and expand policies and programmes for children. The challenge is ours. Let us accept it in the hope that the International Year of the Child will not remain a isolated event.

171. Mr. TABIBI (Afghanistan): We are gathered here to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

172. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan supports every effort of the international community aimed at providing necessary conditions for a happy future for the world's children.

173. Not only did our people and our Government welcome with great interest this Organization's decision to observe the International Year of the Child, but also observed and celebrated this commemoration all over Afghanistan in our cities, towns and schools, and through our press and our other news media. We believe that the children of today are the guardians of tomorrow—the guardians of peace and welfare, security and economic well-being. If we attend to their education, health and happiness today, we will have a happy, healthy and peaceful world tomorrow. It is rightly said that war waged on the battlefields is first waged and planned in the minds of the people. Therefore, if we train our children to be guardians of peace and international co-operation the future will be brighter and happier for everyone, because with better education, the children of today will make a better life for themselves, their children, and their children's children. If we pay attention to the health and education of a child, we must pay attention to its mother as well, because the health of a child when it is born depends mostly on how it has developed during its mother's pregnancy, as well as on the education the child receives at home—in its cradle as well as in its mother's lap.

174. During this commemorative we should not be satisfied with making statements, but should translate our words into actions by the broadest section of the world community in order to implement the principles

of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and ensure them and their families a better social and economic atmosphere and one more conducive to good health. Every Member State should have within its national planning a comprehensive scheme for the welfare of its children, and UNICEF should be strengthened to extend its activities further to the needy children and mothers of the world. Other United Nations agencies—in addition to UNICEF, which has done the groundwork so far—such as FAO, the ILO, UNESCO, WHO, and UNDP, should work jointly in a board or a commission to be established by the Secretary-General to prepare a world-wide programme for the welfare of the world's children and mothers and request the developed countries, private and humanitarian institutions and wealthy individuals to donate generously to a fund larger than the one at present being contributed annually to UNICEF, for this noble objective.

175. We believe that the appeal made by the General Assembly three years ago in paragraph 3 of its resolution 31/169 urging the Member States to “expand their efforts at the national and community levels to provide lasting improvements in the well-being of their children” should be reaffirmed to see what has been accomplished since the appeal was made.

176. Afghanistan is not only concerned with the well-being of its own children as part of its national planning, but is also concerned in the fate of all children, who number more than 1.5 billion most of whom are in the ancient continent of Asia and suffer from hunger, poverty, unemployment and disease.

177. Colonialism, neo-colonialism and colonial wars, and national and international conflicts have contributed to the aggravation of the plight of children in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It is our responsibility and this Organization's duty to take speedy action to divert funds from the armaments race and to use them instead for the economic and social development of the impoverished 1.5 billion hungry, sick, needy and naked children of the world. As the President of Cuba, Mr. Fidel Castro, rightly reminded us the other day:

“With \$300 billion [the amount spent by the world on armaments annually] one could in one year build 600,000 schools, with a capacity for 400 million children; or 60 million comfortable homes . . .”
[31st meeting, para. 129].

Why does mankind waste so much on destruction while it is capable of saving millions of suffering, naked and starved children and mothers so easily?

178. In the five-year plan of our Government, the needs of children in the fields of health and education are among the priority items, and we welcome the co-operation of United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, as well as the assistance from friendly countries in this respect. We hope the United Nations authorities will pay attention to our proposal for a board composed of various agencies under the auspices and leadership of UNICEF—to be established by the Secretary-General—to prepare a comprehensive world blueprint to assist the children of the world.

179. The problem of children should be among the priority issues before this Assembly, and for this reason we have proposed a board composed of representatives of various United Nations agencies, to co-ordinate a

world-wide blueprint of assistance for children. The United Nations should undertake the necessary action so as to ensure that this blueprint does take effect beginning from this very commemoration so that the acute and world-wide problems of children, such as nutrition, health, education, family planning and social needs, can be attended to without further delay. And UNICEF can play a wider role if it has more resources at its disposal.

180. We believe that the most decent service of mankind is help for the children of the world, help for the most decent and helpless of earth's creatures, whose eyes twinkle like stars, whose hearts are warmer than sunshine, whose innocent smiles are more beautiful than the spring breezes. These innocent creatures need our help, our care, love and attention. Such should not be denied them. We must take their little and beautiful hands.

181. Mrs. NGUYEN NGOC DUNG (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): It is a great privilege for me to be able to speak on behalf of the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam at this plenary meeting of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly devoted to celebrating the International Year of the Child.

182. The proclamation of 1979 as the International Year of the Child has met with a widespread and profound response from all strata of my country's population, including the highest levels of government. The message of 30 July 1979 from the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Pham Van Dong, to Mr. Henry Labouisse, the Director-General of UNICEF and Mrs. Estefania Aldaba-Lim, the Special Representative for the International Year of the Child, is a striking illustration of this response. The message reads as follows:

“The International Year of the Child is proceeding with the whole progressive mankind's profound interest. I would like to take this opportunity to affirm with you once again that the Vietnamese people and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam highly appreciate this initiative of the United Nations and regard it as a contribution to the struggle for the happiness of thousands of millions of children on this planet, where many of them have still to live in poverty, illiteracy, disease and oppression, especially in the Asian, African and Latin American countries, which are bearing the heavy burden of the imperialist, colonialist and racist legacy.

“The child is the future of each nation and of humanity. The protection and care of children and the making of their life a happier one are bound to the economic and cultural construction and development of each country, to the struggle of nations for independence, freedom and peace, for a society of justice, free from oppression, exploitation, a society in which everyone is entitled to enjoy the fruit of his or her labour, equal opportunities to develop his or her talent and contribute his or her energy to the progress of his or her nation. The struggle for these noble goals is the practical action to defend the rights of the child and the firm and ensured way to the happiness and future of our children's generations.

“Over the last half century, the Vietnamese people

had to stand for an uninterrupted struggle and defeated the most reactionary and brutal forces of our times to win and defend independence, freedom and to protect a peaceful and happy life of our children, thus also contributing to the common struggle of other nations for peace and the happiness of children in the world". [See A/34/188, p. 114.]

183. By its decision No. 179/CP, dated 17 July 1978 the Council of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam created the Vietnamese Committee for the International Year of the Child, headed by leaders drawn from the highest level: the Vice-President of the Republic, Nguyen Huu Tho, as President of the Committee, and the Minister for National Education, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, as Secretary-General; the Committee includes representatives from many ministries and from all political and social branches and organizations. The Committee undertook the task of co-ordinating the activities of all these branches and organizations, as well as those of parents, devoted to the protection, care and education of children in order to create conditions favourable to their development, from the physical and moral, as well as the intellectual, point of view.

184. Following the restoration of peace and the successful reunification of our country in 1976, the Vietnamese people—including its children—believed that they could once and for all have done with war and the concomitant bombings, massacres and destructions in their country. Everyone bent himself to the task of staunching the wounds of war, of building and developing culture and the economy. At the end of 1978, at the very time when the Government of our Republic published its decision to establish a National Committee for the International Year of the Child, catastrophic natural disasters befell 18 Vietnamese provinces, ravaging crops and destroying people's property. At the same time, violent and repeated attacks by the troops of the Pol Pot régime against the frontier provinces in the south-west of our country led to savage massacres of the inhabitants of the region, the majority of whom were women and children.

185. Indeed, it was in this International Year of the Child, at the time the National Vietnamese Committee had just been formed and was preparing to set to work, that the brutal armed aggression of our neighbour to the north was unleashed against the 6 frontier provinces of north Viet Nam. Wherever they passed, the invading troops committed indescribable crimes against the civilian population. Burned and dismembered corpses of children were found everywhere—in wells, in classrooms, on the edges of forests and rice paddies. In the 6 provinces, in an area of 10,000 square kilometres, after one month of aggression the toll was *inter alia*, 735 out of 904 schools totally destroyed; 428 out of 430 hospitals and dispensaries, 691 nursery schools, many cultural and social establishments, cinemas, and so on, devoted particularly to children, were pillaged.

186. In these tragic circumstances, the concern of the Government and people of Viet Nam for their children could only grow, particularly in those regions affected by the aggression. As soon as the invaders had been beaten back, everything possible was done to stabilize the life of the people, including the children who are, of course, the most vulnerable. With the devoted assistance of the social services and organizations of the country, food, medicine, clothes, building materials and

school equipment were collected and sent by the towns and villages unaffected by the war to those sorely tried provinces, in order to enable them as soon as possible to remedy the plight of the people of the area, to prevent epidemics, gradually to rebuild houses and also to resume classes, particularly the more senior classes.

187. Throughout the country a great deal was done by our people within the framework of the International Year of the Child. Permit me to give the General Assembly a brief account of what has been done.

188. According to statistics compiled in August of this year with regard to education, at the present time we have 42,031 nursery schools with places for 1,040,840 children from two to three years old; 1,400,000 children aged from four to six years go to kindergarten. Schooling is universal. More than 12 million pupils throughout the country have free universal education. Special classes have been created at several levels for particularly gifted children in mathematics and literature.

189. The fruits of these modest efforts have proved particularly encouraging for the young mathematicians of our country. The four-member national Vietnamese team which in 1979 took part in the international young mathematicians competition in London won five grand prizes including one first prize, a special prize and three second prizes.

190. Within the framework of the International Year of the Child, study centres for child psychology have been set up. New disciplines have been inaugurated with regard to research into educational methods for handicapped children and also combined play and study centres for applied sciences to help in the initiation of children into science and culture.

191. Medical assistance has embarked upon a vast programme of general medical examinations of children. Pediatrics has been developed in hospitals which hitherto have not had such services, and we have increased the number of beds for children from 25 to 30 per cent of beds available in 1979. The training of doctors and physicians for pediatrics has been developed. Gardens for herbal medicines for children's diseases have proliferated at the village and locality level.

192. Information services and cultural services have organized writers' and artists' schools for children. A national drawing contest on the theme "How will children live in the year 2000?" organized in our country attracted thousands of children from the provinces and cities who sent in about 10,000 drawings. After the process of selection, 2,100 drawings were sent to the jury and 30 received a national prize. Ten of these 30 drawings were sent to the international competition in Paris and to exhibitions organized in various Asian and European countries.

193. A national competition of musical composition for children brought in 679 musical works by 415 budding composers. Two of these works were chosen for presentation to an international competition.

194. Mobile film projection teams have been sent to the mountainous regions and remote rural areas, showing 140 films within the framework of a film week on the theme "For the future of our children".

195. In order to collect funds, labour and equipment, and material offered by the people and by people's organizations, the Vietnamese Committee for the International Year of the Child has organized a "day of voluntary work for the future of our children" in order to assist in the building of village premises for nursery schools, clubs, libraries, and the laying out of football fields and summer camping sites for children.

196. Television and the press have devoted special broadcasts and articles covering the activities of the local committees on the International Year of the Child, as well as the activities of other countries in the world.

197. To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the Declaration was printed and circulated throughout the country. In the south of our country, we have inherited a heavy burden stemming from the many years of foreign occupation and the neo-colonialist régime. Hundreds of thousands of children have been orphaned, disabled or handicapped and have become invalids. Despite their extreme youth some have become drug addicts and delinquents because they had previously been abandoned or returned to the old society. Tremendous efforts have been made by the State as well as by public organizations to rehabilitate these children physically and morally. In hundreds of special centres these children have been receiving, apart from education, medical treatment as appropriate and vocational training. Schools for deaf mute children have begun to yield good results.

198. A broad movement of volunteers among the people has effectively assisted the hundreds of thousands of orphans and waifs to be reintegrated fully into the normal life of the people.

199. Within the framework of our national children's policy, a policy which goes back to the very first years of the August revolution of 1945, we attribute these encouraging results to the unanimous will of the whole of our people and to the devotion of the various State services. We also owe a debt of gratitude to international assistance. I should like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude, and that of my country, to the many fraternal countries and friends, to non-governmental organizations and personalities, to assistance organizations of the United Nations, particularly UNICEF, ICCAM⁶ and WFDY⁷, for their warm feelings and their effective assistance to the children of Viet Nam.

200. We are aware that our task still remains immense. We shall do our utmost to see to it that 1979, the International Year of the Child, is marked in our country by substantial progress in terms of action as well as in terms of the mood of our people to pursue our nation's policy with regard to children in the years to come and to contribute, as far as our modest resources permit, to the development and well-being of children in the world.

201. Permit us, in this International Year of the Child, to recall the thought of our dear President, Ho Chi

Minh, a thought which constantly inspires all our activities within the framework of this International Year:

"In our 10-year term interests, let us grow trees;
In our 100-year term interests, let us grow people."

202. Mr. SAMHAN (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to begin my statement by expressing our gratitude to UNICEF for the sincere efforts it makes for the benefit of children, and for putting into operation programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children throughout the world.

203. The United Arab Emirates welcomed the decision adopted by the General Assembly in December 1976 proclaiming 1979 as the International Year of the Child. This Year coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1959 [*resolution 1386 (XIV)*].

204. The interest that this international Organization attaches to children stems from the fact that children throughout the world, especially in the developing countries, are undernourished and without access to adequate health and education services. United Nations statistics show that over 350 million children in the developing countries are deprived of the elementary amenities of life in the area of health, education and nutrition. In addition, millions of children die each year from malnutrition, inanition and all kinds of diseases. The international community was therefore duty bound to consider in great detail the problems affecting children in order to find appropriate solutions to them. That is why we welcome the International Year of the Child as a point of departure for energetic efforts to ensure the well-being of children throughout the world. The children of today are the men of tomorrow; they represent the future. When we speak of rights we must clearly define the need for children to fundamental rights—the right to nourishment, the right to health services, the right to education and the right to survival. Fourteen centuries ago Islamic legislation laid down many provisions guaranteeing those rights to children. In addition, the Koran reflected felicitously the importance of children, saying that they were the joy of life on earth.

205. That is why it is very painful to see in our time so many children, especially in the developing countries, suffering from undernourishment, lack of education and lack of health services. The fact that in different parts of the world children are condemned to suffer from injustice and to live without shelter because of war and aggression is an even more deplorable state of affairs. The example closest to us is the one of the Palestinian children living under Israeli occupation, oppression, persecution and racial discrimination. The Palestinian children in the refugee camps in Lebanon are exposed continuously to Israeli aggression. So many children have died as a result of barbarous Israeli attacks against refugee camps. How many children are deprived of education, stability and security? The sufferings of the Palestinian children represent a flagrant violation of human values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

206. We could not fail to mention here the sufferings of the African children whom, in South Africa,

⁶ International Committee of Children's and Adolescents' Movements.

⁷ World Federation of Democratic Youth.

Namibia, Zimbabwe and other parts of the world, are weighed down by the yoke of oppression and racial discrimination. The time has come for this international Organization to put an end to these flagrant violations of human rights and all human values.

207. With respect to my country's policy in connexion with the rights of children, we have undertaken prospective studies on the needs of the child from every point of view, be it health care, education or social well-being. We have created protection centres for the child and the mother. We have doubled the number of kindergartens and nurseries. Further we have built the most modern schools throughout our country because we are convinced that the education of adults who were deprived of education in the past is necessary if the children are to grow up in a healthy environment. The State has created literacy centres for parents. In addition, we are paying special attention to the education of the handicapped and are in the process of building special centres for them. As for health care, we have doubled the number of hospitals, dispensaries and protection centres for the child and the mother.

208. As I said before, the proclamation of 1979 as the International Year of the Child is a point of departure for a wider process, and for this reason I invite all States to co-operate in order to improve the living conditions of children. Action programmes should be envisaged and implemented for the welfare of children. We should not stop at discussions, because while we are speaking here children are dying and suffering all over the world, children who are deprived of everything. They look to this Organization to improve their living conditions, to meet their needs and to guarantee their rights.

209. We speak a great deal about and discuss at length the establishment of the new economic order based on justice, equal opportunity and the eradication of the injustices which characterize international relations. For our part, we believe that one of the fundamental bases for the realization of this new order is the existence in the developing countries of a healthy new generation which will enjoy high standards of cultural services and opportunities for education and training. To achieve this we must, as of now, ensure the protection and well-being of children who are in fact that new generation which is to institute that new economic order.

210. In conclusion allow me to say that my country will spare no effort to improve the condition of the children, to ensure their well-being and to secure their future.

211. Mr. HOLLAI (Hungary): At the turn of the century the population of the earth will reach the figure of 6 billion, and half of it will consist of children and adolescents. In the next two decades, therefore, questions affecting the situation of the new generations will pose tremendous problems all over the world. The International Year of the Child has succeeded in focusing the world's attention on the whole complex of issues related to children. Here lies the merit of the initiative taken by the United Nations in 1976 in proclaiming the year 1979 the International Year of the Child. This praiseworthy initiative has also permitted unprecedentedly wide and useful exchanges of views and experiences among countries and peoples of the world on the question of the child.

212. The report on the subject prepared by the Executive Director of UNICEF [A/34/452 and Add.1] does appropriately reflect the numerous activities, and the enthusiasm which accompanied them, undertaken by a great number of States Members of the United Nations with the aim of contributing to the objectives of the Year, assessing their national efforts and examining actions to be taken once the Year is over. The various national programmes, as is reflected in the report, were rich in content and have encompassed all strata of society. The report is also a reflection of the most dedicated work accomplished by the Secretariat of the International Year of the Child in New York and in Geneva. I wish to take this occasion to commend it for the excellent performance of activities it has undertaken throughout the preparation and the organization of the Year.

213. I do not wish to dwell on the multifarious events which have been taking place in my country under the aegis of the International Year of the Child. I should like merely to point out some of the major activities related to the Year which could be of interest to the international community in dealing with problems of children.

214. Our country, in line with its endeavours stemming from the socialist system, was among the first to identify itself with the aims of the International Year of the Child. Early in 1978 a national commission representing all segments of Hungarian society was formed for the preparation of the International Year of the Child. A national general programme in observance of the International Year of the Child was elaborated aiming at improving the conditions of life and education for children in Hungary as an integral part of the Government's social, educational and health programmes, the implementation of which is guaranteed by the Youth Act and other legislation.

215. The general programme also invited our society to take practical steps to help children in developing countries. In this spirit a solidarity fund was set up and a bank account of solidarity opened to which considerable contributions were paid by individuals and collectives, together with receipts from different solidarity programmes, for utilization through multilateral and bilateral channels. A contribution of 5 million forints has been recently made by Hungary to UNICEF from the proceeds of the solidarity fund.

216. Some 130 state, social, church, scientific and youth bodies and organizations have been taking part in the wide-ranging general programme. There is a general feeling in this regard in Hungary that the joint efforts realized through the International Year of the Child for the benefit of the child should continue to serve a useful purpose even after the Year is over. As regards our country, it will be done mainly within the framework of the State Committee for Youth of the Government and of the Hungarian National Commission for UNICEF.

217. It was in the spirit of the relevant resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that a conference on "The defence of the child and the enforcement of his rights" was organized by the Hungarian National Peace Council in February 1979. The main purpose of that scientific meeting was to focus on achievements and problems in present-day Hungary and to review the ma-

major tasks before us in the field of children. Another purpose of the meeting was to place Hungarian performance in this field within the international context.

218. The participants have discussed the 10 principles of the 1959 Declaration on the Rights of the Child in five main areas, namely, international factors affecting children, the situation of the family, the international legal protection of children, the interrelationship between the development of children and the tasks of society, and the protection of disadvantaged children.

219. In the same context of improving our children's situation, the Hungarian Government organized an international forum on "International co-operation for a happier and more secure future for children", which took place in Budapest in June 1979. The forum was attended by 145 government experts from some 70 countries, as well as by leading personalities of the United Nations Secretariat, the Director-General of UNESCO, the Assistant Director-General of FAO, the Director of the Regional Office of WHO in Europe and representatives of ILO and UNICEF.

220. The statement of Mrs. Estefanía Aldaba-Lim, Special Representative for the International Year of the Child, and two Hungarian keynote contributions on the topics "Situation and perspectives of children in our age" and "Aspects of the protection of the child under international law" served as a basis for discussion in the forum. Working papers, recommendations and proposals had been prepared by UNESCO, FAO, WHO, ILO, UNICEF and the Geneva office of the Division of Human Rights. The delegates submitted some 35 working papers and made nearly 120 statements in the plenary sessions and in the meetings of the three sections concerned with the rights of the child, his economic, social and health conditions, and questions concerning his instruction and education.

221. The work of the plenary sessions and the sectional meetings was summarized in a report which the participants have approved by consensus. The report will soon be circulated as an official document⁸. All the participants in the forum expressed their appreciation of the positive achievements of the International Year of the Child. Moreover, there was a general consensus that the highly favourable experience of the Year and the energy expended in its context should be used for the benefit of the children of the world even in the period following the Year. The message sent to the forum by Mr. Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Na-

tions, as well as the address made at the closing session by Mrs. Helvi Sipilä, Assistant Secretary-General, earned the careful attention and appreciation of all participants.

222. The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic feels that by arranging the international Forum on "International Co-operation for a Happier and More Secure Future for Children", it has made a modest but valuable contribution to the attainment of the noble objectives of the United Nations.

223. In other related activities, Hungary participated in issuing commemorative stamps on the occasion of the International Year of the Child and was among the first to respond to the appeal made by the UNICEF International Year of the Child Coin Programme to mint commemorative coins for the International Year of the Child. The Hungarian silver coin was officially presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in June of this year as the first silver coin minted by countries participating in the UNICEF International Year of the Child Coin Programme. The Hungarian coins will benefit UNICEF, as well as Hungarian social policy directed towards the further improvement of the situation of children.

224. In conclusion, in the name of my Government, I should like to express my satisfaction with the results achieved so far in the course of the International Year of the Child and to voice our hope that the extraordinary momentum initiated by the proclamation of the Year will not be lost, but, on the contrary, reinforced in the coming years. This process should extend and deepen in each individual country and ought to become part of our governmental policy designed to ensure the well-being of children. This objective, we believe, can be considerably promoted by the adoption during the International Year of the Child of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is now at the stage of completion on the basis of a Polish proposal.

225. The United Nations and its Member States, when at the end of the Year they assess the positive experience accumulated by the International Year of the Child secretariat during its term of office, will have to find the most appropriate ways to continue to respond adequately and more consciously to the expectations of the men of tomorrow, that is, our children of today.

⁸ See documents E/ICEF/Misc. 324 and E/ICEF/Misc. 325.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.