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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAVANAVIRAJ (Thailand)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/460 and Add.1; A/C.3/38/L.12 and 13)

AGENDA ITEM 85: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 37/54 (A/C.3/38/4)
- (b) NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/63, 64 and Add.1; A/C.3/38/L.16)
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AGENDA ITEM 88: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/339; A/C.3/38/L.14)

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AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/506; A/C.3/38/L.18)

1. Mr. MASSOT (Brazil), speaking on items 84, 85, 88, 89 and 90, said he felt that the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs had painted a sombre but realistic picture of the world social situation in his introductory statement. One could not but recognize that the situation in basic public services, nutrition, education, housing and health had deteriorated everywhere. While it was true that the sad reality was directly related, in the case of the developing countries, to budget and import cutbacks and curtailments in social development programmes, particularly in the health area, the fact remained that the developing countries had been driven to such measures by the world economic recession. Similarly, in the absence of economic growth unemployment, which was one of the primary causes of hunger, was growing. It was thus clear that economic and social problems were closely intermingled at both national and international levels.

2. For social and economic development to progress there must first be a world-wide awakening to the problems in those areas and their causes. That, doubtless, was the main thrust of the reports on the world social situation. The 1982 report was a valuable study despite its general nature and its vagueness, and some of its remarks were most pertinent. The reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/38/460, 470 and 506 gave a better grasp of the problems of

(Mr. Massot, Brazil)

the young, the aged and the disabled and provided a good survey of the progress made in those areas. He was pleased with the conclusions of the Commission for Social Development on the 1982 Report on the World Social Situation, especially its recognition of the interdependence between economic development and social development and the importance of introducing a new international economic order; he welcomed the recommendations by the Commission on the preparation of the 1985 report and expressed the wish that the 1985 report would deal more thoroughly with the grave effects of the international economic crisis on the developing countries.

3. Identifying economic and social problems and announcing measures at the national level was not sufficient to solve them; true international co-operation for development must also be established. He echoed the appeal made by President Figueiredo at the previous session of the General Assembly and drew attention to Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter; by honouring their pledges under those Articles, Member States would ease the introduction of a new international economic order that would give all the world's people a better quality of life.

4. Mr. HEGYI (Hungary) said that Governments and youth organizations appeared to be making serious efforts to prepare properly for the International Youth Year. The various regional meetings, including the European one held in Romania, had been a success. The European programme of measures and activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year included a whole series of recommendations and suggestions on which Member States, governmental and non-governmental organizations could rely in making arrangements for the Year. The meeting had shown that if the representatives of Member States were aware of their mutual interests and respected them when they met at the conference table, they could reach agreement and arrive at a common position on the main issues involving young people, namely, peace, social participation by young people, and development.

5. His delegation was convinced that the Year was only one element in an overall process, and that the related activities should be undertaken primarily at the national level, with international and regional activities playing a supporting role and being clearly connected to national activities. While it still felt that there was no point in organizing large-scale activities which stood little chance of success, his delegation supported the idea that action by the United Nations in connection with the Year could be buttressed by the rational use of available financial resources. Co-operation among governmental and youth organizations at all levels was an essential feature of the preparations, and the informal meeting in Geneva should serve as the main channel for international communication.

6. As regards preparations at the international level, his Government and national youth organizations applauded the work by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in preparing for the Year. His country's activities for celebrating the Year would form part of the general efforts by existing governmental and non-governmental institutions involved with young people. However, the celebration of the Year would certainly serve to make the Government and the population as a whole more aware of the principal social, economic, cultural and other problems of concern to young people, and would

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(Mr. Hegyi, Hungary)

catalyse efforts to solve them. The national co-ordination committee and the planned working groups would shortly be set up, for their structure had already been preliminarily determined with broad participation by representatives of the youth organizations. The 1971 Youth Act provided the requisite basis for the task in hand. As it had been proving its worth for 10 years, there seemed no need to modify it; it did not, therefore, appear absolutely necessary to draw up a new, comprehensive international document - the most important thing was to have appropriate national legislation. His country was prepared to share its experience on policies relating to youth with any other interested country or organization during the preparation and observance of the International Youth Year.

7. Mr. SCHLEGEL (German Democratic Republic), speaking on agenda item 85, said that while economic development in some countries had led to considerable social improvements, in others the living conditions of working people had deteriorated sharply and the number of unemployed had risen because of the capitalist economic crisis. Many developing countries were still suffering from the after-effects of colonialism and were having to face up to neo-colonialist, fascist and racist exploitation and oppression.

8. His delegation had already expressed its position on the report on the world social situation and described its Government's social policy. He need therefore do no more than indicate that the socialist State had continued its development and its populace enjoyed full employment, complete social services and satisfactory housing conditions.

9. His delegation welcomed the fact that chapter XIV of the report took due note of the relation between increasing military spending and the deterioration of the social situation in many countries. A tenth of all such spending world-wide would be enough to combat illiteracy, sickness, hunger and food shortages. The arms race was thus depriving all peoples of material and intellectual resources vital to their economic development. Disarmament, as the socialist States argued, would release considerable resources for dealing with the most serious economic and social problems. But the most aggressive imperialist circles opposed such constructive proposals and threatened international stability and security with their policy of over-armament. The Declaration on Social Progress and Development, which recognized the links between peace and social progress, as well as the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order were, accordingly, more relevant than ever.

10. His delegation considered that the next report on the world social situation should take more account of the documents prepared by the Secretariat, particularly the report on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military spending. In order to promote the exchange of national experience, the next report should also stress the interrelationship between the world social situation and major political questions such as disarmament, the elimination of colonialism, racism, fascism and apartheid, and the establishment of a new international economic order; it should reflect more truly and objectively the situation in

(Mr. Schlegel, German
Democratic Republic)

States with different social systems and be based more on the official reports and documents submitted to the United Nations by Governments, particularly those of the socialist States dealing with the realization of economic, social, cultural and political rights. Such a document would make it possible to draw the right conclusions for overcoming social problems.

11. Mr. LILLO (Chile) said the statistics published by the specialized agencies showed that the number of young people was increasing at a staggering rate in the developing countries. It was therefore essential to set up more numerous and more effective programmes for integrating young people into society.

12. Chile was especially encouraged by the recommendations adopted at the regional meeting held in Costa Rica, which had laid particular stress on the need to give youth organizations a primary role in the preparation and carrying out of the activities planned for the International Youth Year. A problem of special concern was the alarming increase in unemployment among young people in many parts of the world, which could have serious social and political implications for the future. His delegation therefore felt that it was vital to take appropriate steps to remedy that situation.

13. With the International Youth Year not far away, Governments must redouble their efforts to make it a success at all levels - national, regional and world-wide. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 37/48, the Chilean Government had charged its National Youth Secretariat with organizing the activities planned for the Year and giving them the required emphasis. The main task of the National Youth Secretariat was to co-ordinate measures designed to strengthen communication between the State and Chilean youth in order to ensure their full participation in the national development effort. Among other activities, it carried out training and information programmes for directors of youth centres and organized seminars for leaders of the youth organizations on issues connected with the participation of the young at the community level. Along with the training and information programmes, the Secretariat carried out activities aimed at sensitizing young people to current world problems, such as environmental pollution, the consequences of drug abuse and alcoholism or the use of leisure time. Another interesting programme was intended to familiarize young Chileans with the different regions of the country. There were also youth centres concerned with promoting literacy, combating poverty and helping the underprivileged. In his opinion, it was extremely important to make young people understand that they must support the effort to build their country and assist in finding solutions to the problems affecting the society as a whole. The greatest possible number should therefore be involved in economic, political and social activities and in the national development effort.

14. His delegation believed that the holding of the World Assembly on Aging at Vienna in 1982 had done much to increase the awareness of Governments about the problems of the elderly, who constituted a large category of the world population. The Plan of Action adopted on that occasion was also very valuable, as it would

(Mr. Lillo, Chile)

enable Governments to take such practical measures as their means allowed to deal with the problems afflicting the elderly. However, efforts should not stop there; countries and the United Nations must take joint action to ensure the success of the Plan of Action at the national, regional and world levels.

15. Domestically, the Chilean Government continued to give high priority to the problems and needs of the elderly, as it did to those of other categories of the population. Despite the economic difficulties which Chile had to face as a result of the world-wide recession, the Government had allocated more than 59 per cent of the national budget in 1982 to the social sector in order to help the most disadvantaged. In order to mobilize more satisfactorily the efforts to assist the elderly, the Government had established the National Council for the Protection of the Elderly in 1974. The Council's task was to involve the elderly in community activities aimed at improving their living conditions and to provide them with the help they needed in housing, food and health. A large number of clubs, centres, restaurants and workshops had been created, catering to some 30,000 elderly persons, with the generous support of 2,500 volunteers. In addition to those initiatives there were other measures to help the elderly, such as the award of old age pensions to those who had not made the necessary provision, arrangements for the elderly to take summer holidays away from home and the observance of a Day for the Elderly on 15 October each year.

16. At the international level, his Government reaffirmed its support for the Plan of Action adopted at Vienna and undertook to do everything possible to implement it fully. It reaffirmed its intention of continuing to contribute to the Trust Fund, and hoped that the Fund would receive the generous aid of all Governments so that it could finance programmes which were extremely important for many countries, particularly the developing countries.

17. Another problem which deserved the full attention of the international community was that of disabled persons. The proclamation of 1981 as International Year of Disabled Persons had not been aimed at solving in so short a time the difficult and complex problems of disabled persons, but rather at educating international public opinion to understand that the disabled had the right to participate in community life in all areas and to play a useful part in it. His Government believed that the attempt to sensitize public opinion had largely been successful, since more than 142 national committees had been established. The Chilean Government had stressed from the outset the importance of programmes of prevention and rehabilitation. Where the prevention of disability was concerned, the authorities had made great efforts to help mothers and children in the most disadvantaged social categories in order to reduce the number of children suffering from birth defects or from disability caused later by nutritional deficiencies. Chile had succeeded in reducing the infant mortality rate to 23.4 per cent and the maternal mortality rate to 0.52 per 1,000 in 1982, giving it one of the best records in Latin America in that respect.

18. With regard to rehabilitation, various organizations, appealing to national solidarity, had obtained outstanding results with the help of the Government.

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(Mr. Lillo, Chile)

Internationally, his Government wished to reaffirm its support for the World Programme of Action which the General Assembly had adopted by consensus at its thirty-seventh session. He considered it vitally important that the Trust Fund, referred to in paragraphs 157 and 158 of the Programme, should have the resources required to meet the ever-increasing number of requests for assistance made to it by national organizations. Without such assistance, the developing countries would have great difficulty in ensuring the full implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Chile undertook to continue its co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which performed its task in a serious and unpoliticized manner.

19. Where the world social situation was concerned, his delegation wished to reiterate that the report issued as document E/CN.5/1983/3 had been prepared seriously and objectively and constituted a fair diagnosis of social and economic realities in the world. The report indicated that in certain well-defined areas, such as infant mortality, some progress had been made. However, it also showed the enormous imbalance between developed and developing countries. The figures it gave highlighted the tragic situation of some countries, particularly in Africa. International co-operation, the responsibility for which rested mainly with the developed countries, must be speedily stepped up and a new, more just and more equitable international economic order must be established, so that the developing countries could partially close the gap which separated them from the developed countries and enjoy more just and decent conditions of life.

20. He said that despite the world recession his country had embarked on a policy of integrated development with priority given to the elimination of the direst poverty. The solution to that serious problem was not only economic. It necessitated appropriate education and cultural training for the most disadvantaged social categories to enable them to participate more easily in productive activities. Chile had achieved encouraging results in that field despite its economic difficulties. In addition to the reduction in the infant and maternal mortality rate to which he had already referred, life expectancy had increased from 57 years in 1960 to 67 in 1981 and the rate of illiteracy had fallen to less than 10 per cent of the adult population.

21. Chile's experience showed that economic underdevelopment should not impede the solution of social problems but, rather, provide an impetus for dealing with them expeditiously by means of a serious and effective policy and an appropriate reallocation of available resources.

22. Mrs. KOLAROVA (Bulgaria) endorsed the expression "development with a human face" used by Mrs. Shahani. Her Government had always emphasized the need to maintain peace, eliminate the dangers of war and adopt specific measures in the field of disarmament, the necessary preconditions for the achievement of such development. In that respect, it was particularly important to put an end to the activities of the imperialist forces: as had been stressed once again in the communiqué on the most recent meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, the imperialist increasingly tended

(Mrs. Kolarova, Bulgaria)

to resort to the threat or use of force against independent States which had chosen the path of social progress to foment new military conflicts and exacerbate political confrontations. There could be no equitable development when social policies were subordinated to the interests of the military-industrial complex. Admiral Rickover, echoing President Eisenhower's warning had recently referred in the New York Times to the power held in the United States by industrialists working for national defence. Steadily increasing military expenditures, exacerbating the world economic crisis, led, in the economically developed as in the developing countries to cutbacks in national social programmes for the old, the poor and the unemployed. Without enjoyment of the right to work, a life of dignity was not possible. According to U.S. News and World Report of 5 September 1983, there were 10,590,000 unemployed in the United States, the most developed capitalist country; unemployment affected mainly the ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups such as women, the young and the old and led to despair, drug addiction and suicide.

23. An in-depth analysis of the world social situation showed that the problems confronting the developing countries were particularly serious. It sufficed to read the figures prepared by FAO to realize that poverty, illiteracy, hunger and deprivation were still the greatest obstacles to social progress in many of those countries. That state of affairs was, of course, the legacy of colonial domination and exploitation; but it could also be attributed to the activities of transnational corporations, the most blatant manifestation of modern colonialism which impeded the economic development of the developing countries by exploiting their human and material resources and exporting enormous profits which could have been devoted to the implementation of social policies.

24. Referring more particularly to the Report on the World Social Situation, 1982 she said that it failed to provide an objective picture of the situation and of the progress made in the world. That was why, on the whole, she supported the conclusions of the Commission for Social Development, which showed that some countries were unaffected by the deterioration in the world social situation. She hoped that the 1985 report would take greater account of information on the question furnished by Governments.

25. Bulgaria's social policy was determined above all by the very nature of its economic system, socialism, which aimed at eliminating exploitation in all its forms and at achieving genuine political, social and economic equality for all. The country's economic growth rate (8.1 per cent) was among the world's highest: in 25 years, per capita consumption had quadrupled, there had been a five-fold increase in the real income of the population, and a fourteen-fold increase in funds spent on social security, medical care, education and culture. In keeping with the characteristic dynamism of the socialist system, her Government constantly endeavoured to improve the situation still further, irrespective of progress already made. Through its national policies and its assistance to the developing countries, Bulgaria made an effective contribution to universal social progress and to "development with a human face".

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26. Mr. SECKA (Gambia) said that the continuing recession in industrialized countries had severely constrained growth in the developing countries. The restrictive monetary policies adopted by the industrialized countries and the high interest rates they imposed in order to control inflation had reduced demand for primary products from the developing countries and increased their external debt. The economic problems attributable to the international situation were compounded, in the case of developing countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region, by a decline in food production as a result of persistent drought. Because of the disastrous decline in their gross domestic product, those countries in order to satisfy the requirements of international financial institutions, had to cut back sharply public expenditure, notably the budget for basic services, such as education, housing, primary health care and work-intensive projects, which most severely affected the young. The retrenchment was particularly serious in education, because there were very few institutions for higher education and vocational training, with the result that thousands of young people left school too young and ill-equipped to survive on the job market. Many young people left the countryside for towns in search of jobs they would not find. Trapped, they ended up in moral decay. The youth of developing countries were too often an easy prey and the innocent victims of foreign advocates of political subversion.

27. Alarmed by that loss of human resources and anxious to channel the dynamism of the young towards constructive activities, his Government did its utmost to ensure the well-being of the young and integrate them in national development despite the limited resources available to it. In the past 10 years, it had established various institutions to prepare and implement self-help programmes in culture, sports, adult literacy and technical training. The Ministry of Education had also assumed responsibility for culture, sports and youth organizations and gave them moral and material assistance; the expansion of its mandate had made it possible to improve channels of communication between youth organizations and the Government. A National Youth Week had been instituted in 1974; celebrated each year in a different part of the country, the Week attracted many young people from Gambia and other countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region. The cultural and sports activities, seminars and lectures organized during the week enabled young people to exchange ideas in an atmosphere of fraternity. The Week also provided the opportunity to launch programmes for the year, particularly education, health and road-building projects.

28. His Government unreservedly supported the celebration of International Youth Year around the themes participation, development and peace. It had established a national co-ordination committee to prepare the Year and participate actively in the specific programme of measures and activities to be undertaken.

29. Mr. SOKALSKI (Poland) deplored the proliferation of international years and decades. Although they could serve as a catalyst for real progress, in prevailing socio-economic conditions, they could not replace broadly-conceived progressive reforms and real self-reliance at the national level. The relative failure of events of that type was attributable to the superficial manner in which they dealt with the problems they were supposed to solve and to the absence of solid structures for social development in too many countries.

(Mr. Sokalski, Poland)

30. There were cruel paradoxes associated with the question under consideration. The International Plan of Action on Aging indicated that, technically, aging began at age 60. Had any consideration ever been given to determining the number of people - particularly in the least developed countries - who had never reached the age of aging, simply because their life span did not exceed the age of 40? Also, the elderly should not be considered solely as the recipients of the benefits offered by their societies. The fact that they shared their rich experience of life with their society and young generations was no less important. Nor should the fact that a large number of national and world leaders were persons aged 60 and over, with particular responsibilities for world peace and the destinies of their peoples, be overlooked.

31. Poland had implemented the Plan of Action and the World Programme of Action with all the seriousness they deserved. A number of bills on disabled persons and the elderly had been submitted for approval by the appropriate legislative bodies. An advisory council for the elderly and for disabled persons had been established, which had prepared for the Government proposals designed to expand rehabilitation of the disabled, establish co-operatives run by disabled persons and improve the general care given to disabled children and youth.

32. Turning to the reports of the Secretary-General in documents A/38/470 and A/38/506, he said that they raised too many expectations with respect to the Trust Fund for Aging and the International Year of Disabled Persons. It was risky to expect to eliminate serious social ills through voluntary international funds, even if they were only meant to provide seed money for innovative projects. It was at the national level that the problem must be solved. Besides, with two thirds of the resources of the Trust Fund for Aging appropriated in 1982-1983 for personnel costs and travel, the usefulness of the Fund was open to question.

33. Poland would offer its full co-operation to the Commission for Social Development which had been designated as the international body to appraise and review the implementation of the Plan and the Programme of Action.

34. Mr. BEN HAMIDA (Tunisia) said that the world economic situation, with recession, soaring inflation and widespread unemployment, was a source of grave concern to the international community. Despite that situation, which impeded the efforts of the developing countries to execute economic, social and cultural development programmes, Tunisia was not wavering in its efforts to promote global development.

35. Convinced that the family was the nucleus of the social structure, Tunisia, after achieving independence in 1956, had enacted a personal status code which guaranteed equality in marriage between men and women, regulated the filiation of children and instituted legal divorce. The family enjoyed legal and social protection. For some years, a programme entitled "productive families" enabled poor families to obtain the equipment or raw materials they needed in order to engage in economic activity.

(Mr. Ben Hamida, Tunisia)

36. The main objective of Tunisian social policy was to protect all citizens against social risks and to guarantee jobs for the entire working-age population to the extent of its means and abilities. The concern for improving working conditions and the desire to promote and consolidate the spirit of co-operation and national solidarity between the different social partners had led in the 1970s to a social contract between the labour unions, the employers and the Government. All workers enjoyed social protection.

37. The number of young people attending schools and universities was more than 1.6 million out of a population of more than 6 million. Specialized schools were increasing in number and the quality of teaching was being improved. In the area of health, preventive medicine had made it possible to stop the spread of most diseases which persisted in the third world and to strengthen health education. Cultural life was marked by the organization of festivals at which all cultures of the world found expression and by the activities of subsidized cultural institutions. Finally, the protection of the environment was another objective which Tunisia pursued with a view to improving the quality of life for all of its citizens.

38. The problem of international migration had been on the rise since the Second World War and migrant workers had made a positive contribution to the economic prosperity of many nations. Convinced that international migration promoted co-operation between peoples with common interests, Tunisia had concluded agreements, particularly in the area of social security, with fraternal and friendly countries. It was indispensable that migrant workers should be protected by international co-operation conventions between States against xenophobia or violent rejection.

39. As part of inter-Arab co-operation, the Arab countries in the Arab Economic and Social Council had taken the initiative of implementing an Arab strategy of social action and had agreed to establish an Arab fund to finance social projects provided for by that strategy.

40. Only just and equal co-operation between the developed and the developing countries could promote world economic recovery and the elimination of the ills afflicting the international community. It was therefore essential to put an end to the arms race and to harness every effort to establishing a new world order in accordance with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

41. Mr. ZMEEVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that with respect to the recommendations contained in the World Plan of Action regarding the strengthening of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, his delegation felt that it was not necessary to expand existing Secretariat units or establish new ones which was totally unjustified, but only to make the work of the existing Secretariat staff more efficient.

42. Most of the principles and recommendations set forth in the World Plan of Action had already been put into practice in the USSR as part of its social and economic development. That Plan nevertheless, was of special interest in connection with measures to solve problems related to the aging of the population.

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(Mr. Zmeevsky, USSR)

43. The rights and interests of the elderly and the aged were guaranteed by the legislation of the USSR. The concern which the Soviet State showed for the elderly and the fact that it allowed them to participate in every type of social activity instilled in them a sense of comforting optimism. The elderly participated with citizens of all other age groups in every area of the country's political, social and economic life, in social production and in the activities of many social organizations.

44. The State allocations to workers' pension funds were constantly increasing. Whereas total pension benefits amounted to 10.6 billion roubles in 1965, on 1 January 1983 that sum had reached 37.8 billion roubles. In accordance with the economic development plans for 1981-1985, the minimum amount of old-age pensions had increased by 11 per cent and that of bonuses for length of continuous service had doubled. Many other measures were being taken to raise the level of material resources of the elderly and they were being worked out as part of long-term planning. Many scientific studies had been undertaken for better understanding of the problems related to the aging of the population. His delegation felt that questions related to the situation of the elderly and the aged in the world should remain within the province of United Nations bodies such as the Commission on Social Development.

45. His delegation attached great importance to the implementation of the World Plan of Action concerning Disabled Persons. In the Soviet Union, care of disabled persons was part of the socialist way of life and was provided for by the Constitution of the USSR, which guaranteed to everyone the right to take part in the economic, political, social and cultural life. A comprehensive programme of social and economic measures made it possible to improve working conditions and job safety techniques and to improve the living conditions of the workers away from the work place. Preventive measures were so effective that, according to WHO, the USSR was the country which had the fewest occupational accidents.

46. In recent years, the living conditions of disabled persons had further improved in the USSR. Rent for a family absorbed 3 to 4 per cent of its income, the lowest proportion in the world, but it was further reduced by 50 per cent for the disabled. All disabled veterans of the Second World War with motor difficulties received a free automobile. Occupationally handicapped persons received motorized wheel chairs, either free or at an 80 per cent discount.

47. To improve the situation of the many millions of elderly and handicapped people in the world, it was necessary to get rid of the policies of colonialism and neo-colonialism, genocide, racism and discrimination in all its forms and to restructure international economic relations on a democratic and equitable footing. The resolution adopted by the General Assembly on elderly people in Lebanon was timely and completely justified. The position of the elderly and handicapped could only improve in a climate of peace and security, and for that the arms race must be ended and the resources devoted to military ends must be used for economic and social development. That was becoming particularly important at a time when the forces of imperialist aggression were threatening mankind with

(Mr. Zmeevsky, USSR)

nuclear catastrophe, when the crude intervention of the United States of America in the internal affairs of Lebanon was turning into direct armed intervention and when the direct armed intervention against the peace-loving people of a tiny inoffensive country, Grenada, illustrated the fact that the militaristic policy which the present United States Government was pursuing throughout the world was a threat to the peace and freedom of all nations.

48. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia) said that his country had played an active part in international conferences and other meetings concerning youth. Young people represented a dynamic force which, if its creative energy was properly tapped, could make an important contribution to the process of nation-building and assist in improving the quality of life of the population as a whole.

49. Ethiopian youth had proved that it had an essential part to play in national life. In 1975 and 1976, more than 60,000 young Ethiopians had participated in a national campaign to help the rural population. The campaign had enabled them to establish closer relations with the rural population and thus to prepare the way for further constructive endeavours in the future.

50. One of the most outstanding achievements of the Ethiopian revolution had been the recognition of the important role of youth and the creation of a climate in which young people could organize to meet to the full their obligations towards society and safeguard their own rights, particularly the right to education, the right to work and the right to develop their creative abilities. Thanks to the efforts and devotion of Ethiopian youth, the illiteracy rate had fallen from 92 per cent to 46.2 per cent in less than five years.

51. When it came to tackling the problems of youth, national endeavours alone could not be sufficient and must be supplemented by international efforts with the active participation of young people themselves. The International Youth Year and the activities associated with it were steps in the right direction.

52. It was the profound conviction of the Government of socialist Ethiopia that popular participation in decision-making, particularly in matters affecting the daily life of the people, was an essential part of national development. The corollary was that those whose participation was acknowledged to be important must reap the fruits of their own labour and be masters of their own fate. In Ethiopia, the organization of the rural population in agricultural associations and co-operative societies had laid a firm foundation for wider participation at all levels. Young people constituted the majority of the population, and their role was therefore considered to be of paramount importance.

53. The participation of young people in development and peace had become more than ever an imperative necessity. It was essential for all States to work, through their youth, for the prevalence of a spirit of co-operation and understanding and to solve the basic human problems which existed in all States, particularly developing countries.

54. Mr. NABIEL (Afghanistan) said that the recession in the leading capitalist economies had seriously affected the economies of developing countries and that the transnational corporations active in the developing countries were motivated not so much by a desire to ensure the well-being of the population as by a desire to earn large profits. Moreover, the militarization policies imposed by imperialism on developing countries through the creation of hotbeds of tension in many parts of the world generated major economic and social problems there, particularly for the poorest segments of society, since they resulted in the diversion of a large part of national income and manpower into the unproductive military sector, thus throwing economic development as a whole out of balance. The social situation in the developed Western countries was far from promising. Military preparations had brought about a reduction in resources for the civilian sectors of the national economy, and the consequences of that reduction weighed heaviest on the workers in those countries. However, it was in the developing countries that the average life expectancy was shortest, the number of doctors per inhabitant lowest, the number of children in school lowest and the fresh water supply most limited. Yet according to United Nations experts, only 10 per cent of world spending on arms would be enough to put an end to hunger, disease and illiteracy throughout the world. World economic development and international co-operation were therefore largely dependent on the success of the forces for peace.

55. The economic crisis in the West had had the most severe effect on the trade of developing countries, which were seeing the demand for their exports decrease and the prices for them fall at a time when they had to pay more for imports from Western countries. The protectionist barriers raised against exports from the developing countries had exacerbated those countries' balance-of-payments difficulties and caused a further deterioration in their social situation. The only way to overcome those problems was to establish a new international economic order.

56. The economic and social difficulties of some land-locked countries, of which Afghanistan was one, were increased by the lack of co-operation of some of their neighbours who denied or limited the right to free transit of goods over their territory. Those countries must respect their obligations to the land-locked countries within the framework of international instruments in force.

57. Following the success of the April revolution, Afghanistan had begun to make profound social changes. The political, economic and social power of the big landowners, merchants, corrupt officials, a bourgeoisie with links abroad and money-lenders had been curbed. Despite the plots of the imperialist forces and the undeclared war which they were waging, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan had pushed ahead with its agrarian reform and given material assistance to those who had received plots of land, helping them to organize co-operatives and allocating funds for the building and repair of irrigation systems, roads and hospitals. The literacy campaign, which had already reached more than a million adults, was continuing, whilst the enrolment figure in schools had increased to 100 per cent. The Government had increased wages by 26-50 per cent, the prices of some necessities had been reduced and the distribution system had been improved. The Government was installing a network of dispensaries and providing free medical care for the population.

(Mr. Nabel, Afghanistan)

58. Popular participation was a fact of social life in Afghanistan with public organizations, trade unions, co-operatives and associations of the intelligentsia playing their part. The members of the national bourgeoisie, young people and women had also formed their own associations. The goal of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and of the Government was to construct a happy and prosperous country, with the co-operation of all patriotic people.

59. The revolution in Afghanistan was there to stay, as its achievements proved; the Afghan people asked only for peace and an end to foreign interference to be able to devote themselves to building a new Afghanistan.

60. Mr. ODOCH-JATO (Uganda) said that the international economic recession, excessive interest rates, protectionist policies and high levels of unemployment in the developed countries were causing immense hardship in the developing countries, for whom debt-servicing had become prohibitive and the decline in prices of primary products had resulted in a reduction in real national income and consequently the abandonment of vital programmes for the promotion of social development and welfare. Precarious food, health and shelter situations in many developing countries bore testimony to the gravity of the effects of the crisis.

61. Efforts should be made at the global, regional and national levels to find speedy solutions for the existing problems. Uganda, along with other members of the Group of 77, considered that the interdependence of national economies called for global measures to establish a new international economic order. Concurrent improvements in the economic performance of the developed and the developing countries were a prerequisite for social progress. Regional co-operation in the economic and technical fields could help the developing countries, with their common concerns and experience, in their joint efforts towards social advancement. The slow progress towards the establishment of the new international economic order emphasized the importance of national efforts. The involvement of all sectors of the population in the development process, in the planning and execution of programmes and in the decision-making process was crucial for the developing countries, even though in most of them bottlenecks in the industrial and service sectors imposed limitations on the level of popular participation. However, popular participation should not be confined to planned or nationally organized sectors. Due attention must be paid to the role of self-help programmes and to the contribution of the co-operative movement both in developing the national economy and in raising the standard of living of its members. In Uganda, the co-operative movement played a significant role in the production, distribution and marketing of primary products. As in other countries, government involvement had been necessary to give impetus and direction to the co-operative sector. The Government had established a policy of reviving interest in the co-operatives remaining after the collapse in the 1970s. It had adopted legislation guaranteeing increased and assured payments to the co-operatives in exchange for products sold and services rendered to State corporations; that had improved the income of both rural and urban co-operatives and resulted in a notable increase in the number of co-operatives affiliated to the Uganda Central Co-operative Union. Co-operatives in the developing countries could play a vital role in the transport and

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(Mr. Odoch-Jato, Uganda)

distribution of food. The alarming food situation in the developing world, especially in Africa, could in part be attributed to the lack of adequate transport and distribution facilities. It was therefore encouraging to note that the World Food Programme was considering the involvement of transport co-operatives in its food-assistance projects. The Uganda Co-operative Transport Union had played a decisive role in relief efforts in Uganda during the 1979-1981 drought.

62. Regarding agenda items 84 and 88, the objectives of International Youth Year epitomized the aspirations of present-day youth and their quest for full participation in the development process and in the search for world peace. To the extent that young people would have to face the future consequences of present-day political and economic policies, it was natural that they should participate immediately in decision-making. It would be inadmissible to limit the role of youth to non-political participation.

63. For the achievement of the objectives of International Youth Year, it was imperative that the activities envisaged should be carefully implemented and co-ordinated at the national, regional and international levels. Uganda had undertaken various programmes relating to youth, some of them to arouse greater awareness among young people of their value in society and the contribution they could make to national reconstruction, development and unity and others to reinstitute and assist youth organizations. The three national youth organizations, reinstituted after a 10-year ban under the fascist Idi Amin régime, were actively engaged in the co-ordination of youth activities in various fields. Uganda had established a National Co-ordinating Committee for International Youth Year and hoped that, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, Ugandan youth would carry out its national and international mission in respect of participation, development and peace.

64. He commended the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, UNESCO, UNDP and FAO on their role in strengthening channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations.

65. Mr. ARCILLA (Philippines) said that his country's Constitution emphasized the need to strengthen the family as a basic social institution, to acknowledge the vital role of youth in nation-building, to promote social justice and to provide adequate social services for all, especially the disadvantaged. His delegation accordingly noted with satisfaction that preparations for International Youth Year in 1985 had progressed, particularly in respect of channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations. In that respect, there appeared to be a need for better co-ordination of the various activities being undertaken by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Since the main channels used so far to communicate with youth and youth organizations were publications, radio and television programmes, exhibitions and briefings, the Department of Public Information, UNESCO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) should play leading roles in efforts to integrate the various communication activities at all levels. The three-stage project envisaged by the secretariat of the Year to improve channels of communication should draw on

(Mr. Arcilla, Philippines)

the expertise of those agencies in the production of technical publications. Other organizations such as UNIDO, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF and ILO also had useful contributions to make in pursuing the main objective of International Youth Year. The same integrated approach should be pursued at the regional level.

66. His delegation commended the Division for Economic and Social Information on its publications on the new international economic order, including Global Dialogue, now widely used by schools and universities. Perhaps in the future schools should become the main channel for communication between the United Nations and the children and youth of all countries. Many educational systems needed teaching material that would give the millions of students a better understanding of the peace-keeping and developmental role of the United Nations.

67. At the national level, the Government of the Philippines had already formed a National Co-ordinating Committee to help attain the goals of the International Youth Year. That Committee publicized the goals and objectives of the Year at the grass-roots level. As part of the Philippine commitment to the role of youth in the national development effort, 7 million young Filipino men and women, aged 15 to 21, were organized into the Kabataang Barangay, whose organizational structure facilitated the systematic receipt and dissemination of information even in small localities. Of far greater significance was the fact that three members of the National Assembly were from the youth sector, thus demonstrating that in the Philippines, youth participated fully in national policy-making at the highest levels.

68. On the issue of aging and disabled persons, he said that the need for concerted international action was urgent in the developing countries, where the aged and the disabled disproportionately formed the bulk of the poor and disadvantaged. The primary responsibility for prevention and rehabilitation lay with individual countries, but technical co-operation, especially among developing countries, had a great potential. His delegation welcomed the Vienna Affirmative Action Plan adopted by the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Technical Assistance in Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons. Co-operation in the training of personnel, production of prosthetic appliances using locally available materials, and exchanges of experience constituted an important step in implementing Recommendation 9 of the Buenos Aires Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC), which had called for the promotion of greater self-reliance of developing countries in the economic and social spheres. Recommendation 35 of the same Conference had called for support by developed countries for TCDC, including co-operation envisaged in the Vienna Affirmative Action Plan.

69. At the national level, the Government of the Philippines was firmly committed to the welfare of disadvantaged groups, especially the aged and the disabled; comprehensive programmes were further intensified through a Ministry of Social Services Development. As part of its participation in the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, the Philippine Government had undertaken various

(Mr. Arcilla, Philippines)

activities to rehabilitate the disabled and actively involve them in the functioning of society through musical contests, sports festivals and conventions, upgrading of rehabilitation centres and the like. The National Commission concerning Disabled Persons had been created to strengthen further the activities for the disabled and to conduct relevant research.

70. His Government fully supported popular participation in its various forms as an important factor in development and in the realization of human rights. President Marcos himself had said that the interests, objectives and needs of the poorest working people took precedence over those of the rest of the population and that national development meant the participation of the poor. In the Philippines setting, popular participation was achieved through the citizen assemblies. All citizens 15 years of age and older were entitled, indeed obligated, to lend their voices to the consideration of great national issues. Consequently the Philippines supported the recommendations of the International Seminar on Popular Participation held in Yugoslavia in 1982. His delegation wished to stress the key importance to the economies of the developing countries of the existing unjust international economic order, which was an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The comprehensive analytical study mandated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1983/31 of 27 May 1983 must pay due attention to the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living and the right to development.

71. Popular participation in development was inextricably linked with the co-operative movement because it involved the participation of landless peasants, women and youth. His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on national experience in promoting the co-operative movement (A/38/62), which had pointed out that, contrary to a widespread misconception, it was not true that co-operatives could succeed even when external circumstances were unfavourable, especially when co-operatives were involved in transactions governed by the international market system. Producer exporting associations based on principles of co-operation for the purchase and marketing of products such as groundnuts, cocoa, coffee, sugar, bananas, coconuts and natural rubber had had only mixed degrees of success because of the heavy monopoly power of transnational corporations in those commodities.

72. Another valuable lesson of experience in different countries concerned the fundamental nature of co-operatives: they existed to benefit their members through their joint efforts, so that when Governments used co-operatives as just another type of governmental institution, members soon lost interest.

73. The Philippines had a long-standing interest in the formation and promotion of co-operatives. The results had not always been entirely successful but had shown that co-operatives could be a vehicle of land reform. The experience of his country had shown that the co-operative movement was a potent instrument for achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress. The Government of the Philippines therefore endorsed efforts within the United Nations system aimed at further monitoring and evaluating co-operatives in order to promote their efficiency and strengthen their participative character.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.