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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

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Chairman: Mr. BELL (Canada)

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

AGENDA ITEM 91: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
(continued) (A/38/203)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/146)
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AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(continued) (A/C.3/38/L.19)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/38/45, A/C.3/38/7)
- (b) STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/378)

1. Miss GAUCH (Brazil) said that the documents before the Committee testified to the improvements in the status of women achieved during the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. In comparison with the situation at the outset of the Decade, there had been a vast increase in the understanding of women's rights and duties and in equal opportunities for women, especially in health, education, employment, political participation and decision-making. But many difficulties still must be overcome if the Decade's objectives were to be attained in full. Efforts to enhance the status of women were being jeopardized, chiefly in the developing countries, by the effects of the world economic crisis and deteriorating international economic relations. The situation of women was related to the question of development as a whole; in the developing countries especially, efforts to promote the status of women and provide for their basic needs usually formed part of national policies to benefit the population as a whole. Wherever poverty existed, efforts related to the status of women tended to be minimized and women lacked opportunities to exercise their rights and duties. Therefore, all efforts to secure women's rights and their full participation in development should coincide with efforts to establish a new international economic order.

2. Her delegation looked forward to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, since it was very

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(Miss Gauch, Brazil)

important to appraise the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered at international, regional and national levels. The factors on which the success of the Conference depended included the preparatory work; Brazil had shared in the consensus by which the Economic and Social Council, in decision 1983/132, had adopted the recommendations made by the Commission on the Status of Women as the preparatory body for the Conference. With regard to recommendation I, Brazil was pleased to note the relevance of the provisional agenda items proposed. Item 8 dealt with forward-looking strategies for the period up to the year 2000 and specific measures to overcome obstacles to the attainment of the Decade's objectives, bearing in mind the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the establishment of a new international economic order. The Conference would provide an opportunity not only to review the work done but also to discuss what action was required to overcome the difficulties faced by Governments and the United Nations system in improving the status of women, with due regard to the world economic crisis, which had affected the developing countries in particular, and the international co-operation called for pursuant to the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. With regard to recommendation II, her delegation agreed with the preparatory body on the need to concentrate on appropriate topics and avoid excessive documentation.

3. Brazil, which had made reasonable contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, was pleased to note that some 153 of the 347 projects supported by the Fund had been completed; almost 300 involved developing countries, and 2 had been carried out in Brazil. The Fund deserved praise for its role in supporting the Decade's activities, as did the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; her Government welcomed the inauguration of the Institute's headquarters at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

4. Her delegation had provided details to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session concerning Brazil's efforts in support of the Decade. The Government continued to attach great importance to the status of women in its national policies aimed at promoting the people's well-being, and it had undertaken significant programmes and initiatives to redress former discriminatory practices and allow women to play their part in society as agents and beneficiaries of development. At the international level, Brazil supported United Nations instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; it had signed that instrument in 1981, and the text was currently before the Brazilian Congress for further ratification.

5. Brazil looked forward to showing at the forthcoming World Conference that it had spared no effort in the task of improving the status of women. Much work remained to be done, and her delegation hoped that when the Decade was over, the international community would continue to view that task as a challenge, not a burden.

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6. Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador) said that his delegation attached the utmost importance to the forthcoming World Review Conference, which would provide an opportunity not only for examining the progress made and the problems encountered during the United Nations Decade for Women but also for preparing future strategies aimed at attaining the goals of the Decade. The Commission on the Status of Women, as the preparatory body for the Conference, had made encouraging progress, including the preparation of a provisional agenda; it had secured the active participation of non-governmental organizations and had recommended the holding of regional seminars as part of the preparatory work. But the essential step was for all countries to reply to the Secretariat questionnaire, which would be one of the Conference's most important documents, since actual details of the status of women would be much more useful than mere general statements.

7. The creation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) had been one of the Decade's outstanding events; Ecuador welcomed the establishment of the Institute's headquarters at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and thanked the Government of that country for its offer to act as host. Ecuador repudiated all forms of discrimination and advocated the submission of national reports on the observance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. His Government would shortly be submitting its initial report on the application of that international instrument to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; it had set up a special co-ordinating body, including representatives of the public and private sectors, which had led to a report on the legal and social status of Ecuadorian women. It had also submitted an exhaustive report on preparations for the World Conference, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/26.

8. Progressive legislation had existed in Ecuador since the nineteenth century. The revolution of 1895 and the subsequent reforms had marked the end of discrimination against women. The Basic Charter of the State guaranteed equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status, in all spheres of public, private and family life, with special regard to civil, political, economic, social and cultural affairs. Pursuant to legislation stemming therefrom, married women's rights were no longer subordinate to their husbands'; their right to paid pre-natal and post-natal leave and to child care at their workplaces was protected; there was no discrimination between women and men with regard to social benefits; and women had the protection of special measures such as benefits for mothers and widows, family allowances and sickness and old-age insurance. In recent years women had had increasing opportunities in the nation's political life and its development. Women held posts at the ministerial level and in public administration in general, as well as in the foreign service, public education, Parliament and the political parties. An example of the practical effect given to the relevant legislation was the National Office for Women, established in 1980 as a governmental body attached to the Ministry of Social Welfare and reflecting, for the first time, the Government's official concern for the improvement of the status of women through measures such as technical, vocational and professional training and assistance for women in all strata of social, economic, cultural and political life. The National Office had drawn up a five-year plan of action to integrate women into national

(Mr. Jativa, Ecuador)

development, had signed technical co-operation agreements with national and international bodies, had created training centres and had organized seminars and workshops on the greater role of women in society. In addition, other bodies, such as the Marginal Rural Development Fund (FODERUMA) and the Front for the Advancement and Integration of Women in Development, were helping to improve the status of women in urban and rural life, with particular attention to indigenous groups.

9. His Government, in accordance with the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States at its twelfth session, had declared 18 February Women's Day of the Americas, to commemorate the date on which the Interamerican Commission for Women had been created 55 years earlier.

10. Thus, it could be seen that his Government attached great importance to women's participation in national life and to the celebration of events - such as the forthcoming World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women - which sought to promote new ways and strategies aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and integrating them into the tasks of promoting peace and development at the national, regional and international levels.

11. Mr. AL-HADDAWI (Iraq) said that in reviewing the role of women in Iraq and their participation, on the basis of full equality, in all aspects of society, mention should be made of Iraq's national women's organization which had existed for the past 15 years and had branches in every city and town throughout the country. The organization carried out continuous research into all aspects of national life which affected women, such as traditions and customs and the humanitarian issues of modern civilization, with a view to ensuring equal rights for women and protection for the family in all spheres. Its activities included information and literacy campaigns, research and training programmes, symposia, exchange visits, publications and relations with similar organizations abroad, including women's organizations in the Arab world, the socialist States and many Latin American countries. Almost 20 per cent of Iraqi women were members of the organization, and during 1980 over 1 million had benefited from its training programmes. In its activities abroad, it sought to promote international co-operation and supported all measures to combat racial and other forms of discrimination.

12. Iraq had participated in the various international conferences for the enhancement of women's rights and had always taken action to give effect, at the national level, to instruments adopted at such events. For example, a conference had been held in 1980, pursuant to the relevant decisions of the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. Women in Iraq had equal rights in matters such as free education, medical benefits, old-age welfare and opportunities for promotion. Their benefits included day-care centres for the children of women workers, 72 days' annual leave, 6 months' post-natal leave and equal retirement benefits with men. The country's Constitution guaranteed equality of men and women; and the National Council currently included 16 women members. A number of laws enacted between 1970 and 1983 had provided further safeguards for

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(Mr. Al-Haddawi, Iraq)

women with regard to shorter working hours, income independence, literacy, the right to own property, and rights relating to civil marriage and legal separation, including protection against eviction by the spouse in the event of separation.

13. Iraq was a developing, non-aligned country, founded on the principles of peace and prosperity; it sought constantly to increase its co-operation with the United Nations system in achieving the goals of women's rights. It had participated in the World Conference on the International Women's Year and the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, and it would take part in the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. Iraq fully supported all the objectives of the Decade and sincerely hoped that the forthcoming Conference would be a success.

14. His delegation was pleased to note that the preparatory work for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women was well in hand. However, it was concerned at the provisional decision not to discuss political matters at that Conference; unless the participants were in a position to examine and define the political factors underlying women's suffering in southern Africa, in the occupied Arab territories of Palestine and elsewhere, the Conference would be prevented from taking action to solve the problems involved. Therefore, since the agenda of the Conference had not yet been finalized, his delegation urged that discussion of political issues should not be excluded.

15. But even if the Conference was unable to achieve all the desired objectives, Iraq would continue its efforts, focusing on appropriate priorities, with a view to the eventual elimination of all forms of discrimination against women everywhere.

16. Mrs. KOZAKOU-MARCOULLIS (Cyprus) said that in order to solve problems relating to the status of women, the underlying causes must be determined. Her delegation was confident that the 1985 World Conference would endeavour to provide answers in that regard. The provisional agenda for the Conference contained all the necessary elements for a critical review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered during the Decade. Her delegation looked forward to reviewing the documentation now being prepared for the World Conference, which she hoped would be based on objective information and scientific analysis and would give a clear picture of the world situation concerning the status of women.

17. The world economic, political and social situation did not give much reason to hope for radical changes in the status of women the world over. It was well known that the three elements of the theme of the Decade - equality, development and peace - were closely interrelated and that real progress could be achieved only if society moved towards the attainment of all three. With peace and security at stake, with poverty, malnutrition, famine and disease striking millions of human beings, and with aggression and military occupation, colonialism and neo-colonialism rampant in many parts of the world, it seemed inescapable that women would remain in an inferior status and the progress achieved would be retarded in many cases. The women of Cyprus continued to suffer the consequences of some of those unfortunate realities even though considerable changes in

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(Mrs. Kozakou-Marcoullis, Cyprus)

attitudes, social structure and social behaviour had occurred after the Second World War.

18. Education had, quite correctly, been regarded as one of the principal means by which women's inequality could be reduced and their socio-economic mobility increased. Efforts should be intensified and international mobilization and co-operation increased if the international community was to achieve its noble goals. In that connection, her delegation hoped that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would continue to work in a constructive and result-oriented manner, thus contributing to the effective implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

19. Following independence in 1960, all segments of Cypriot society had benefited from increased industrialization, full employment and the rise in levels of living. The Turkish invasion of 1974 had radically and dramatically disrupted those significant achievements. Approximately 40 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus still remained under Turkish military occupation. Seventy per cent of the island's economic resources and wealth lay in the occupied areas, a fact which had serious implications for the economy of the country and the living standards of the people. Two hundred thousand people had been forcibly uprooted from their homes and lands and made refugees in their own homeland. However, Cypriots had been able to endure the tragedy and chaos that had followed the invasion, and men and women together had embarked on the struggle for reconstruction of the violently disrupted economic and social sectors of the country. The women of Cyprus had endured the hardships with patience, courage and dignity, and their tragic experience had made them more determined to work actively for peace, international co-operation and understanding. The experience of Cyprus was a living and painful illustration of the fact that no human rights could exist unless peace was first ensured.

20. Miss WRIGHT (Liberia) said her delegation hoped that the 1985 World Conference would provide an opportunity for further adjustment of strategies and an assessment of the resources and programmes required to meet suitable and realistic targets for the Decade. Over the years, Africa had made tremendous progress with respect to women's suffrage. It was an unquestionable fact that women were capable of holding the highest positions of trust, as in India and the United Kingdom, even in the present age of world-wide controversy. Liberia recognized that social and economic development was needed in order to deal with all problems, including that of promoting the status of women. There was a link between the low status of women in society and the related problems of world insecurity and discrimination. The struggle of women for liberation and equality was therefore no less valid than the struggle of colonial peoples to exercise their fundamental human rights and to achieve independence.

21. Since the 1975 Mexico City Conference, important gains had been made by women. However, the traditional concepts of the division of roles between women and men still remained strong in a number of countries. Liberia would continue to

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(Miss Wright, Liberia)

support international programmes and institutions aimed at giving attention and priority to development programmes relating to women. Her Government placed emphasis on rural development which was intended to help women to develop themselves towards self-reliance, with the hope of taking an active part in the national decision-making process.

22. In time of war, women and children were the ones who suffered the most, and the rehabilitation of refugee women was a difficult and painful process. Furthermore, women in regions affected by war suffered severely from conditions imposed by special political problems, such as the questions of Palestine and apartheid. The 1985 World Conference should discuss the condition of women and children in those circumstances, which involved the denial of basic human rights, including the right to participate fully in society. Lastly, she hoped that the World Conference would emphasize issues that would bring women together rather than devote a great deal of time to matters which tended to divide women politically.

23. Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that in today's world, in which conflict and tension prevailed, the strengthening of peace and co-operation between States was a task of paramount importance for all mankind. Certain imperialist forces, while encouraging the arms race, violated the independence and sovereignty of other States, particularly small ones, in total disregard of international norms governing relations among States. In such a situation, it had become difficult to promote the full and effective implementation of international conventions on human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. He wondered how one could speak of equal rights for Palestinian women when their land was still under foreign occupation, or of equal rights for black South African women, the overwhelming majority of whom were subject to heinous racist oppression under the apartheid régime.

24. The active participation of women all over the world in activities for the promotion of peace, disarmament and co-operation among States and in the struggle against colonialism, racial discrimination and all forms of injustice showed that they were conscious of their dignity, worth, rights and duties in society. It also reflected their deep concern about the future of international relations. As the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade correctly pointed out, the decisive factors for improving the condition of women were the strengthening of international peace and security, the halting of the arms race, the guaranteeing of détente and the establishment of a new international economic order. His delegation therefore noted with satisfaction the adoption of the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation. The full and effective implementation of that Declaration could help significantly to improve the status of women the world over.

25. With the proclamation of the new régime in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975, Lao women had entered an era of dignity and equality. Although facing difficulties of all kinds created by imperialism and hegemonism, the Party and Government had spared no effort to create favourable conditions for women in

(Mr. Kittikhoun, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

order to enable them to enjoy their rights and duties in the new society. While there was still much to be done, his country firmly believed that it was advancing towards the achievement of its goals. Lastly, his delegation believed that the World Conference should deal equally with the subjects of equality, development and peace.

26. Mrs. BLACKBURN (Chile) said that the United Nations was rapidly approaching one of the most important stages of its work for the benefit of women, namely, the end of the Decade proclaimed in 1975. Member States now had the responsibility of evaluating seriously and objectively the gains made in that period and the shortcomings that had emerged. The work of the 1985 World Conference would not be easy. The experience gained at the Mexico City and Copenhagen World Conferences showed that joint efforts of countries could be translated into substantial advances in the status of women. The Plans of Action adopted at those two Conferences were undoubtedly valuable instruments for that purpose. However, her delegation regretted that the introduction of political considerations had watered down those documents. It therefore felt it necessary to emphasize that the 1985 World Conference should be conducted within a strictly technical framework with a view to obtaining valid conclusions which could guide the future action of Governments after the Decade ended. Such action should be continued beyond 1985 and, where possible, increased at the national, regional and world levels.

27. Her delegation attached special importance to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which had been entrusted with the preparation of the 1985 World Conference. In addition, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, even though new, could make a valuable contribution to the World Conference and help to ensure the success that all hoped for. In line with its policy of previous years, her country would continue to make its contribution to INSTRAW during 1984.

28. The report of the Secretary-General (A/38/530) confirmed her delegation's view of the valuable work carried out by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of a data bank, which would undoubtedly contribute to a more rational use of resources. It also welcomed the strengthening of contacts with the United Nations Development Programme with a view to achieving a reallocation of existing resources to provide the necessary support for programmes on behalf of women. That would undoubtedly benefit a large group of countries, especially those with scarce resources, for which the assistance received from the various bodies within the United Nations system was essential. In that connection, the Voluntary Fund required generous contributions from countries, and Chile, for its part, would continue the co-operation it had maintained since the establishment of the Fund.

29. Chile welcomed the establishment of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; it was sure that that Committee's work would be fruitful and that its members would perform their functions in a manner that was

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(Mrs. Blackburn, Chile)

serious, objective and non-politicized. With respect to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, she said that her country had supported the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly even though it had signed the Convention ad referendum. Chile thus gave its moral support to efforts to combat discrimination against women notwithstanding the fact that it had found it impossible to ratify the Convention because of certain provisions which were not in accordance with Chile's internal legal order. Her delegation hoped that the Commission for the Study and Reform of the Civil Code of Chile would enable her country in the future to join those States that had ratified that valuable legal instrument.

30. Equality between men and women had been established in Chile in its Constitution, adopted in 1980, which proclaimed the equality of the duties and rights of all Chileans, without distinction of any kind. Women in Chile had achieved a high level of participation in the most diverse activities within the country. In order to ensure the full participation of Chilean women in various areas, the role of the General Secretariat for Women had been strengthened. The work of improving the status of Chilean women and ensuring their full and equal participation constituted an essential goal of the Government of Chile, which would spare no effort to achieve it.

31. Mr. YASSIN (Malaysia) said that the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen had laid down strategies and operational guidelines which could serve as an effective framework to ensure the achievement of the goals, objectives and targets of the 1975 World Plan of Action. His delegation noted with interest that the holding of regional preparatory meetings for the 1985 Nairobi Conference had been advocated by the Commission on the Status of Women for the purpose of review and appraisal of the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. Malaysia looked forward to participating actively in the regional meeting scheduled for Tokyo in 1984, with the special sub-themes of employment, health and education of women, especially the urban and rural poor. His delegation was happy to note that many Member States had adopted positive attitudes and provided the necessary measures to ensure women's equal participation both as agents and as beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the development process. In that regard, Malaysia had taken a number of steps to implement the Programme of Action. Firstly, the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women had been widely publicized in Malaysia. Secondly, his Government had made some adjustments to existing programmes and plans in order to accommodate the suggestions contained in the 1975 Plan of Action, with activities such as seminars, workshops and community projects. Thirdly, with regard to the identification of priority projects, the Programme of Action had helped to clarify the approaches already made by Malaysia in improving the status of women, particularly in the rural area, and in establishing and expanding educational opportunities. Malaysia, as a young and developing country, took pride in the significant advances made in accelerating socio-economic development and raising the quality of life of the people. As part of a nation in the Eastern world with its unique culture and tradition, the women of Malaysia were diligently endeavouring to strike a balance between Western influence and Eastern values, selecting what was best for them and focusing special attention on fighting social evils.

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32. Ms. FRANCO (Portugal), speaking in reference to document A/CONF.116/PC/9, said that her delegation was particularly pleased with the positive manner in which the preparatory work for the Conference had started. It welcomed the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory body for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had unanimously agreed in setting a dual objective for the Conference: review and appraisal of progress made during the Decade and identification of necessary future action for the achievement of further progress. Those objectives had the advantage of delimiting the ideal framework for such a conference, for they simultaneously answered the need for a broad scope and for clear guidelines.

33. Her delegation shared the view of the Commission that the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women - equality, development and peace - remained valid, as did the sub-themes of the Copenhagen Conference - employment, health and education. It was important that the global nature of the themes of the Decade and the links between them should be fully acknowledged, for only through the adoption of global policies could the Programme of Action be implemented with the necessary strength and authority. She also stressed the need for agreed concrete measures aimed at overcoming the obstacles encountered so far in the implementation of the Programme of Action and at establishing forward-looking strategies to be carried out at the national, regional and international levels. The themes of the Decade should constitute the framework of the Conference's deliberations.

34. Some of the topics mentioned at the meeting of the Commission which were of specific concern to her delegation were the bridging of the gap between the status of women in law and their situation in practice; the integration of women into the development process; the achievement of greater equality between men and women in the field of employment; rural women; adequate health protection; the implementation of educational policies that would promote women's access to jobs in which they were traditionally underrepresented, and the problems of migrant women. Because the problems that women faced were multiple and complex, her delegation felt that the preparatory body had taken a wise decision in recommending a generic agenda, leaving the consideration of concrete issues for a later stage. Portugal was convinced that the forthcoming meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, of the five regional commissions and of the specialized agencies concerned would provide an important and valuable contribution to the identification of the topics to be dealt with by the Conference.

35. Referring to recommendation II, concerning documentation for the Conference, she said that her delegation welcomed in particular the intention to keep the number of basic documents to the minimum. In reporting the status of women in their respective countries, Governments should strive to point out the difficulties encountered and to scrutinize the reasons why more progress had not been made rather than merely enumerate their achievements. Reports on the review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered should also endeavour to render an objective, rigorous and independent assessment. With regard to recommendation III, her delegation attached particular importance to careful regional preparation for the Conference. Portugal was ready to contribute to the preparatory activities to be conducted at the level of the Economic Commission for

(Ms. Franco, Portugal)

Europe. Her delegation fully supported the view expressed in recommendation V that publicity for the Conference should be directed at both women and men and be integrated into the mainstream information channels, as a means of making all elements of society more aware of questions that were important not only because they concerned women but also because they were essential to the improvement of the living conditions of humankind.

36. Among the steps taken to improve the status of women, the enacting of appropriate legislation to bring about formal equality between men and women was of paramount importance. That had recently been achieved in many countries and at the international level through the adoption and entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Portugal attached the utmost importance to that Convention and had been among the first to ratify it. She expressed her delegation's satisfaction at the businesslike manner in which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had started its work, with the adoption of guidelines for the elaboration of national reports and with a review of the progress made in the implementation of the Convention.

37. The ultimate objective of all activities for the promotion of the status of women was undoubtedly "equality". However, the definition of that concept must be fully clarified, so that the aims of the United Nations Decade could be precisely understood and advances or difficulties could be accurately evaluated. The problem was not merely that women should have the same rights and responsibilities as men but that the differences between the sexes should not be obstacles to the full realization of each individual's personality and full participation in society at either the private or the public level.

38. Miss CHENG PHOBOL (Democratic Kampuchea) said that the 1985 World Conference at Nairobi should be another step forward towards the elimination of all discrimination against women. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that the preparatory work for the Conference was going well and that the regional preparatory meeting for Asia and the Pacific would be convened in March 1984 at Tokyo. Democratic Kampuchea was prepared to make its modest but active contribution to the success of the regional meeting. The official inauguration of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had been an outstanding event which testified to the success of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Institute had successfully overcome the obstacles of its period of formation and, despite many difficulties, was making headway towards the achievement of its objectives; it would promote the active and full participation of women in social and economic development.

39. Although Kampuchean women were delighted with the success and achievements of the Decade at the international level and at the national level in several countries, there were countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia where people under foreign or colonial domination or under foreign invasion and occupation had not been able to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. In her country, for example, the Vietnamese invasion had brought ruin, separation, mourning and repression. Everyone knew of the tragic plight of Kampuchean women

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(Miss Cheng Phobol, Democratic
Kampuchea)

since the invasion. The countless crimes committed by the invaders against the people of Kampuchea and against Kampuchean women in particular were far beyond those described in the declarations and conventions on the status of women. They were crimes of unheard-of cruelty and savagery which shocked the conscience of mankind. For five years, Kampuchean women had been forced to leave their homes, separated from their husbands and children, raped, tortured and pursued in their own country and driven away from their motherland. In the regions under Vietnamese control, the invaders continued to implement their policy of "Vietnamization" of the spirit and body of the Kampuchean people. Rape of Kampuchean women by Vietnamese soldiers was a crime that occurred almost daily. Furthermore, under the policy of "Vietnamisation", Kampuchean girls and women had been forced to marry Vietnamese men or to become their concubines, so that their offspring would have Vietnamese nationality. Since early 1980, the invaders had expelled Kampuchean women, together with their husbands, parents and children, from their ancestral villages and had installed more than 600,000 Vietnamese settlers. Through its letter dated 14 October 1983 (A/38/510) the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea had denounced those latest Vietnamese crimes. It was not only in the Vietnamese-controlled areas that Kampuchean women were suffering from repressions and crimes committed by the invasion forces; those forces had not hesitated to commit their crimes in the refugee camps along the Thai-Kampuchean border.

40. In the large areas controlled by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, security had been increasingly guaranteed every year, rendering the situation more stable and thus making possible the development of productive activities and an improvement in the living conditions of the population. However, the social, economic and sanitary infrastructure which had been developed year by year was too fragile and too limited to meet the needs of the newly-arrived tens of thousands of Kampucheans fleeing from the Vietnamese enemy. More than ever, the Red Cross of Democratic Kampuchea needed humanitarian aid from the international community. International aid had already brought tremendous comfort and encouragement to Kampuchean women, as well as to all of the Kampuchean population. The recent vote by an overwhelming majority on General Assembly resolution 38/3 was a new manifestation of the firm international solidarity with the just struggle of the Kampuchean people. Once liberated from the Vietnamese yoke, Kampuchean women would be able to make their active contribution to the United Nations Decade for Women, while participating actively in the defence and reconstruction of their homeland in close co-operation with all friendly peoples and countries.

41. Mr. KHALIFA (Sudan) said that his country attached great importance to the United Nations Decade for Women and had taken an active part in the World Conference of the International Women's Year at Mexico City in 1975 and the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women at Copenhagen in 1980. It looked forward to participating in the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985 because it believed in the objectives of the Decade. The achievement of peace required greater participation, solidarity and understanding, and without peace there could be neither development nor equality. International peace could be achieved only

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(Mr. Khalifa, Sudan)

through just solutions for world tensions, especially in Africa and the Middle East - by overcoming the South African apartheid régime and finding a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem on the basis of the enjoyment of the legitimate inalienable right of the Palestinian people to an independent State in its own territory.

42. Achievement of the objectives of the Decade also called for the solidarity of the entire international community, men and women alike. While women had made some advances since the proclamation of the Decade, especially in health care, education and employment, a great deal remained to be done. He welcomed the progress made by the Commission on the Status of Women as the preparatory body for the 1985 World Conference and hoped that the Commission would also assume responsibility for activities after 1985. His delegation would co-operate with all delegations in the Third Committee and the Commission on the Status of Women in efforts to ensure the success of the Conference.

43. The Sudan was following the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women with close interest and regarded its establishment as one of the outstanding achievements of the Decade. The participation of women in development together with men was essential to any developing country - indeed, degree of a country's development could be judged from the extent of women's participation. The status of women was therefore a vital issue. Social and economic changes had benefited women throughout the world, and women now had greater opportunity to participate in social life and in decision-making at the highest levels.

44. In the Sudan, women were included in all spheres of activity, including government, business, diplomacy, the law and education, and their rights in all spheres were embodied in the Constitution. Women in Islamic society - whether they were Moslem or not - now enjoyed independent economic status, with the right to own property, they were allowed to choose their own spouse and could not be forced to marry against their will, and they were full members of society, enjoying the same responsibilities, rights and benefits as men. They also enjoyed full maternity rights and benefits.

45. Mrs. CAMARGO-VILLARREAL (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO) said that UNESCO had adopted a new approach, based on the recognition that women's issues were relevant to all aspects of living and thus an integral part of all the problems facing society; it was endeavouring to include women's interests in all the Organization's programmes and activities.

46. With regard to UNESCO's activities aimed specifically at women, she said that the twenty-second General Conference now taking place at its headquarters in Paris had before it document 22 C/17 entitled "UNESCO's contribution towards improving the status of women", which covered the period 1981-1983 and concerned, the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women, whose three themes - equality, development and peace - corresponded to the three themes structuring UNESCO's activity in pursuit of objective 6.B of the first Medium-Term Plan as set out in

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UNESCO document 20 C/4. UNESCO's activities in the promotion of equality between women and men within its fields of competence were aimed at bringing to light the various forms of discrimination and inequality that affected women, the process giving rise to them and their consequences for women and for society as a whole, and also aimed at formulating strategies to promote effective observance of the fundamental rights of women and equality of opportunity between the sexes in UNESCO's fields of competence. The standard-setting and intellectual functions of UNESCO were of particular importance in that respect, while it was clear that operational activities, in helping to promote effective equality between the sexes, would also facilitate the integration of women into development in a manner more in keeping with their rights and responsibilities. The aim was not merely to integrate women into the development process, for they had always been one of its principal agents, but rather to bring out the importance of their contribution to economic, social and cultural life and to bring about a better understanding of ways to increase the part they played in development, as agents, leaders and beneficiaries.

47. One of the first tasks in that connection was to assemble the statistical information and work out the indicators likely to help in an objective assessment of the inequalities affecting women and to measure the contribution women made to the life of their society. To that end, efforts to increase the quantity and improve the quality of data classified according to sex in the fields of education, science and technology, culture and communication were being continued. During 1983, UNESCO had participated in the work of a group of experts convened by the United Nations Statistical Office and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) to investigate means of improving statistics and indicators relating to women. It was also continuing its work on the development of socio-economic indicators for assessing the situation of women and following the evolution of their roles and status in society.

48. Throughout the triennium 1981-1983, there had been continued work on the research projects already under way, with a view to analysing the structural factors that affected women's participation in the economic, social and cultural life of their society, and great efforts had been made to clarify the developing interactions between different social phenomena, such as population movement, transformation of modes of production, evolution of employment or family structures, and the changes taking place in the situation of women. Thus, in line with the priorities set by the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women, there had been a series of studies on the evolution of the role and status of women in fast-changing rural societies owing, in particular, to the internal or international migratory movements affecting many developing countries. Case studies had been carried out in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

49. Efforts to extend the application of the international instruments adopted by the General Conference at previous sessions had also been continued. Those instruments included the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Revised Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational

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Education (1974), the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (1976), the Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, adopted by the Special Intergovernmental Conference on the Status of Teachers in 1966, and the Recommendation Concerning the Interaction between Education and Productive Work, adopted by the International Conference on Education at its thirty-eighth session in 1981.

50. Considerable effort had been made to develop research on matters relating to women and to incorporate the results into higher-education curricula, as recommended by the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women adopted by the Copenhagen Conference, particularly in paragraphs 184, 185 and 193. In that connection, she emphasized the convergence between the guidelines of the Copenhagen Programme of Action and activities already undertaken by UNESCO in pursuance of the recommendations of the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights, held at Vienna in 1978. There had been studies on inequality between men and women at various levels, such as inequalities in society and inequalities in education. Observance of the right to education had always been one of UNESCO's priority objectives. In respect of women, the Organization had continued its efforts to eliminate from educational material all stereotypes, prejudices and forms of discrimination based on the roles of the two sexes. A series of country studies on the image of women and men presented in primary and secondary school textbooks and in children's books had been undertaken. Six Member States - China, Kuwait, Norway, Peru, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Zambia - and two international non-governmental organizations had participated in the research.

51. The Committee no doubt realized how essential education and training were as tools in preparing women for their tasks and their responsibilities in development. Accordingly, most of UNESCO's educational activities for women had the twofold aim of reducing inequality between the sexes and increasing women's share in development. Access of women to scientific, technical and professional training was becoming increasingly important. A recent survey in Europe and Latin America had confirmed that girls tended to be restricted to a few branches of activity which were outside the most dynamic sectors of the life of society. In Western Europe at the beginning of the 1980s only between 9 and 11 per cent of all students in engineering sciences and technology had been girls. It was clearly a matter of particular importance, at a time when profound changes were taking place in the structure of the professions and of employment, to give women access to training for a wider variety of professions, and in particular those created by recent advances in science and technology. To that end, UNESCO was carrying out a wide range of activities in co-operation with national educational information institutes, UNESCO regional offices and UNESCO national commissions.

52. With regard to the role of women in the strengthening of world peace, she said that peace had been a specific area for research in UNESCO's programme since 1979. A collection of articles by women specialists on the role of women in peace movements, in the development of peace research and in the promotion of friendly relations between nations had been published in the 1981 UNESCO Year Book on Peace and Conflict Studies. UNESCO had continued its efforts to involve women

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specialists in its research programmes on questions concerning disarmament and peace. In the period 1981-1983 research had concentrated mainly on the role of women as historical actors in national liberation struggles on the African continent, with specific emphasis on newly independent countries and on countries still under colonial domination. There had also been research on the extent to which women were able, in the post-independence period, to maintain the momentum they had gained during the struggle.

53. Regarding preparations for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held in 1985, she said that UNESCO was actively involved and remained in close contact with the Advancement of Women branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. It had participated in the session of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory body for the World Conference, held at Vienna in March 1983, and would be involved in the preparation of two of the basic documents agreed upon for the Conference. The first was a report on the review and appraisal of progress achieved, with particular attention to obstacles encountered in attaining the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be based on answers from Member States to a questionnaire, for which UNESCO had prepared the questions on education and training of girls and women. The second was a report on the review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered by the United Nations system in attaining the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, for which UNESCO would be evaluating the education programme. The Organization had also participated in a preparatory meeting for the World Conference held by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in Mexico, and it expected to participate in other preparatory meetings to be held by the Commission on the Status of Women and the other United Nations regional economic commissions.

54. UNESCO had carried out a number of activities in the triennium 1981-1983 for the promotion of new legislation in favour of women based upon the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A subprogramme relating to study and research on the basic rights of women and the elimination of discrimination based on sex was included in the medium-term plan for 1984-1989.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.