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SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 25 April 1984, at 3.00 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BENDIX (Denmark)

CONTENTS

Consideration of reports submitted in accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX)
by States parties to the Covenant concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9
(continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1988 (LX)
BY STATES PARTIES TO THE COVENANT CONCERNING RIGHTS COVERED BY ARTICLES 6 TO 9
(continued)

Report of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (continued) (E/1984/7/Add.9)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Borchak (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) took a place at the table.

2. Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia) expressed his appreciation for the excellent report of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. He would like to see some statistics on the minimum wage level and on occupational accidents. He also asked for clarification of what was meant by "remuneration in kind", as referred to in paragraph 52 of the report. Finally, referring to paragraph 100, he asked what the reasons were for the wide variation in the duration of paid annual leave.

3. Mr. KORDS (German Democratic Republic) congratulated the Ukrainian SSR for its successes in implementing the Covenant." He requested additional information on the relationship between the legislation of the Ukrainian SSR and that of the Soviet Union itself with respect to labour relations. Referring to paragraphs 86 and 87 of the report, which dealt with persons under the age of 18, he asked what the practical meaning was of their being considered adults under labour law while at the same time enjoying special protection. How was implementation of the special labour protection regulations monitored and what penalties were imposed if an enterprise did not comply with them?

4. He drew attention to the large differences between the possible lengths of paid annual leave (paragraphs 100 and 101) and asked why cash compensation was not permitted for unused leave.

5. Mr. IIYAMA (Japan), referring to paragraph 15, asked whether the legal obligation to work was strictly enforced and whether citizens were allowed to take temporary leave, provided they could live on their savings or the earnings of family members. He noted from paragraph 39 that the number of manual and non-manual workers had increased by over 4 million; how had new job opportunities been created to meet that supply? He asked for clarification of the phrase "remuneration in kind" used in paragraph 52 and, referring to paragraph 56, he asked what was the wage differential between manual and non-manual workers. With regard to the trade union system, he asked whether decisions were reached by consensus, majority vote or some other method.

6. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO (Spain) said that she would like to have some clarification of paragraph 29, concerning the additional guarantees of the exercise of the right to work for certain categories of citizens. She asked for a breakdown by sex of the figures provided in paragraph 39 and, with respect to paragraph 135, she asked whether single mothers were provided a monthly child allowance because they were women workers or merely by virtue of being single mothers. Future reports would be clearer if statistics were organized into tables rather than included in the text itself.

7. Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador), referring to paragraph 41, asked whether Ukrainian legislation provided for a maximum age for retirement. Referring to paragraph 125, he asked for some specific figures regarding old-age pensions; what were the conditions for receiving them?

8. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the expert from Denmark, appealed to all countries, including the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, to include comparable statistics in their reports; he pointed to the report of Spain as a commendable example. Since there were a number of different nationalities in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, it would have been helpful to have a breakdown of the population by group and some information concerning the criteria used for giving special treatment to some categories.

9. Referring to the last sentence of paragraph 9, concerning the prohibition of discrimination against citizens on the grounds of race or nationality, he asked what were the penalties for ignoring the prohibition. What sanctions were imposed on persons who evaded socially useful work? (Para. 14.) Was there any possibility of having floating unemployment, in other words, unemployment between jobs? He requested additional information regarding the legitimate grounds for annulling a contract (para. 20), and asked whether they were the same as in the Soviet Union. Finally, referring to paragraph 29, he asked for clarification of the phrase "certain categories of citizens".

10. Mr. Borchak (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) withdrew.

Report of Sweden (A/1984/7/Add.5)

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Saland (Sweden) took a place at the table.

12. Mr. SALAND (Sweden), introducing his country's report, said that a large amount of reference material had been submitted together with the report and that he would draw largely on that material, while providing some additional, updated information.

13. When ratifying the Covenant, Sweden had made a reservation with regard to article 7 (d) concerning remuneration for public holidays because, under the existing Swedish system, all questions concerning remuneration were determined through free negotiations leading to collective agreements between the parties. Current agreements did in fact cover the question of remuneration for public holidays. Since the submission of the first Swedish report concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9, the basic conditions, programmes and institutions relevant to those articles had largely remained the same. Where changes had occurred, they had been indicated in the present report.

14. The Swedish Constitution stated, as a paramount principle, that the personal, economic and cultural well-being of the individual was the fundamental goal of the activities of the community. In particular, with reference to articles 1 to 5 of the Covenant, the Swedish Instrument of Government contained a provision to the

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(Mr. Saland, Sweden)

effect that the public power should be exercised with respect for the equal value of all human beings and the freedom and dignity of the individual. It also prohibited discriminatory treatment by courts and administrative authorities and the enactment of any laws and regulations which would treat citizens and aliens unfavourably by reason of their race, colour or ethnic origin or sex. Aliens had the same status as Swedish citizens with regard to the protection offered by sections 15 and 16 of that Instrument.

15. With special reference to article 3 of the Covenant, he drew attention to the Act referred to on page 2, paragraph 5 of the report concerning equality between women and men at work. In cases where discrimination based on sex was reported, an Equal Opportunities Ombudsman tried to persuade the employer to comply voluntarily with the provisions of the Act. If that was not successful, the dispute could be taken to the Labour Court by the employee's trade union or, if the person discriminated against was not a union member, by the Ombudsman. The employer could in certain cases be ordered to pay compensation for moral or other damage. With regard to the rights of non-nationals, he referred to the latest Swedish report to the International Labour Organization concerning ILO convention No. 111.

16. With regard to article 6 of the Covenant, he said that there had been an increase of 25,000 persons - most of them women - in the labour force since the fiscal year 1982/83. Currently, women made up 46 per cent of the labour force. Employment in mining, manufacturing and building had continued to decline whereas employment in private and, to a certain extent, public services had risen following the trend of the previous decade.

17. Unemployment had risen during the fiscal year 1982/1983. It had peaked at 4 per cent and was currently approximately 3.5 per cent and the decline was expected to continue. Sweden had consistently given a very high priority to achieving full employment. Accordingly, although unemployment was still low by international standards, special emphasis had been placed on short-term measures in the field of labour market policy, such as relief works and labour market training. The latter, which channelled unemployed persons into jobs which were necessary and secure, was particularly important in view of the major problems caused by structural adjustments. It was estimated that the number of participants in labour market training would increase to 120,000 in fiscal year 1983/1984.

18. The Employment Service played an important role in directing job seekers to vacancies. A comprehensive programme of measures had been proposed in order to train and provide work for unemployed young persons under the age of 18 and occupationally handicapped persons.

19. With regard to the implementation of article 7, he pointed out that wages in both the private and public sectors were determined through collective agreements between the organizations of employers and employees. Although there was no legislation on the substantive questions of remuneration, such as minimum wages, statutory provisions concerning collective bargaining had existed since the 1930s. His country had ratified the ILO Convention (No. 100) on Equal Remuneration.

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(Mr. Saland, Sweden)

Although the principle of equal wages for equal work had long been accepted in Sweden, there was still an income gap between men and women because women had traditionally been employed in lower paid jobs and tended to work shorter hours. In industry women's earnings had amounted to 92 per cent of men's earnings in 1982. The gap was slowly but steadily narrowing.

20. With regard to safe and healthy working conditions, he drew attention to the reference in the report (p. 4) to the Work Environment Act which inter alia stipulated that employers bore the main responsibility for the work environment and gave employees the opportunity to participate in the planning of the work environment. Work places with at least 50 employees had special safety committees and small-scale work places were covered through a system of regional safety delegates.

21. The Act on Equality Between Men and Women at Work ensured equal opportunity for promotion. The initial report of Sweden submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provided further information in that regard. Since 1973 a universal 40-hour work week had been in effect and since 1978 all employees enjoyed a minimum of five weeks paid annual leave. Work weeks of less than 40 hours had been established for employees in certain industrial and underground work.

22. With regard to trade union rights, he referred to the initial report of Sweden submitted under article 40 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The fundamental rights to freedom of assembly and association were constitutionally guaranteed and could be restricted only to protect national safety and public order and security, or to prevent an epidemic. Furthermore, freedom of association could be restricted only with regard to associations whose activities were of a military or similar nature or involved the persecution of a national group of a particular race or ethnic origin. The right to strike and take lock-out action and similar measures was also constitutionally guaranteed.

23. Sweden had a long trade union history. Out of a workforce of slightly more than 4,000,000, over 2,000,000 were members of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation. The Central Organization of Salaried Workers, which was the largest organization of white-collar workers, comprised 20 affiliated trade unions with a total of more than 1,000,000 members. There were also a number of smaller unions.

24. Employers had also formed associations in both the private and public sectors. White-collar and blue-collar employees in the public sector had long had the right to reach collective agreements and to strike. Labour law reforms carried out in 1977 ensured a greater degree of democracy in the work place. In that regard, particular mention should be made of the Act on Employee Participation in Decision-Making. That Act was currently being supplemented by collective agreements on what was commonly called the "co-determination" of employees.

25. Referring to the implementation of article 9 of the Covenant, he pointed out that the health insurance system covered the entire population, including

(Mr. Saland, Sweden)

non-nationals residing in Sweden. It provided sickness benefits and covered the costs of medicine, medical care, hospital care and related travelling expenses. Sickness benefits were taxable and were included in the calculation of the national supplementary pension. The Social Insurance Office deducted a preliminary tax before paying out benefits. Persons with no income or an income below 6,000 kronor received a tax-free benefit of 8 kronor per day. Under the public health scheme visits to a doctor cost the patient a maximum of 40 kronor, which included the cost of X-ray examinations and laboratory tests. Other costs were covered by the insurance system in accordance with specified tariffs. Persons requiring extensive medical care were protected from excessive costs. Public dental insurance covered all persons over the age of 20. Persons under 20 were entitled to free dental care. Parental insurance provided coverage for all parents for expenses arising out of the birth or illness of a child. The parental benefit had a guaranteed level of 37 kronor per day for six months in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. Women whose work was such that it could not be performed in the final stage of pregnancy had the right to be transferred to another job. Those who could not be transferred were entitled to a pregnancy benefit for a maximum of 50 days. Parents were also entitled to a special parental benefit for a total of three months per child. That benefit involved a guaranteed minimum of 37 kronor per day.

26. The basic pension system comprised the entire population with the exception of non-nationals. Although 65 was the general retirement age, workers could retire at any age between 60 and 70. Disability pensions were available to persons whose work capacity had been reduced by at least one-half and to elderly persons. There was also a widow's pension and children were entitled to a child's pension if one or both of their parents had died. The basic pension system also included supplementary benefits: a child supplement, a wife's supplement and a disability allowance. Furthermore, municipalities provided a housing allowance. The basic pension benefits were indexed and were calculated according to a base amount, which for 1983 had been fixed at 19,400 kronor. The basic pension for a single person was 95 per cent of the base amount. Husbands and wives who were both pensioned received 155 per cent of the base amount.

27. A pensioner who did not receive a national supplementary pension was entitled to a pension increment to supplement the basic pension. Currently the increment for old age pensioners and widowed persons was 47 per cent of the base amount. A disability pension amounted to 92 per cent of the base amount. Old-age pensions were not taxable if the recipient had no national supplementary pension or other income.

28. Under the system of partial pensions employees and self-employed persons could gradually reduce their working hours between the ages of 60 and 65 in order to have a smooth transition from work to full retirement. A partial pension was considered income for purposes of calculating the national supplementary pensions and did not diminish the old-age pension at 65. As of January 1983 approximately 62,000 persons were receiving partial pensions.

(Mr. Saland, Sweden)

29. The national supplementary pension system, which had been in effect since 1960, covered all Swedish citizens and resident non-nationals and was based on payments by employers and employees. It provided an old-age pension at 60 per cent of the previous annual income calculated as the average of the 15 years with the highest earned income. The system also included a disability pension and pensions for widows and children. The regulations governing the retirement age were the same as those governing basic pensions.

30. Occupational injury insurance covered employees and self-employed persons, and provided full coverage for loss of income due to work-related injuries. It was financed entirely through contributions from employers and self-employed persons. In connection with the reform of the voluntary unemployment insurance scheme cash labour market support had been set up to cover all gainfully employed persons. Benefits were available for a maximum of 300 days at a time. Persons over 65 were not entitled to such benefits. Cash labour market support was available to persons who were not members of unemployment societies or did not qualify for benefits. In order to obtain the support, a person had to have worked for at least five of the previous twelve months. Such support was provided for a maximum of 150 days to persons under 55, 300 days to persons between 55 and 60, and for an unlimited period to those between 60 and 65.

31. Mr. TEXIER (France) said that States parties submitting their second periodic reports should indicate progress made in implementing the provisions of the Covenant since the submission of their initial reports. Furthermore, tables containing statistical data should be included in reports in order to provide a clearer picture of the overall situation in each country.

32. Referring to page 2, paragraph 2, he inquired why the Swedish Government had made a reservation with regard to article 7, paragraph (d), of the Covenant. It was gratifying to note that the Government of Sweden had provided information on the implementation of articles 1 to 5 (p. 2, para. 4).

33. Further information would be appreciated with regard to the responsibilities of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman and the composition and jurisdiction of the Labour Court referred to on page 2, paragraph 5. Noting the absence of legislation governing minimum wages he inquired what the average minimum wage was. He also requested information on sanctions imposed for violations of the Work Environment Act (p. 4) according to which employers bore the main responsibility for the work environment. Additional information would also be appreciated with regard to the overall number of trade unions in Sweden and their affiliation with international trade union organizations.

34. He inquired whether foreigners residing in Sweden could obtain coverage under the national insurance scheme referred to on page 6. Further information would be appreciated with respect to the system of partial pensions and with regard to the size of the daily benefits available to unemployed persons (p. 8).

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35. Mr. SVIRIDOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it was difficult to determine the real situation with regard to the implementation of the Covenant in Sweden as many of the reference materials were not reproduced in the report. Other Western European countries had provided the fundamental provisions of relevant legislation together with statistical information and he hoped that Sweden would follow their example. The introductory statement had to a certain extent made up for the lack of information in the report.

36. Referring to page 3, paragraph 7 he asked whether Swedish legislation provided for any sanctions other than fines for employers who did not promote equality between men and women. According to the information provided by the Swedish representative, traditionally more women than men had been employed in lower-paid types of jobs. In light of the obligations the Government had assumed under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its obligation to ensure equal conditions of work, were any measures being undertaken to ensure that that tradition was eliminated?

37. Since there was no legislation on minimum wages in Sweden how was the Government fulfilling its commitment under article 7 (a) of the Covenant to equal pay for equal work? He requested specific details concerning occupational injuries in Sweden (p. 5, para. 4). If specific information was not available, he would like to know whether such injuries were on the increase or on the decrease. He also asked whether parents who were not insured were entitled to parent's cash benefits (p. 7, para. 3). What percentage of the population was not covered by cash sickness benefits (p. 6, para. 2) and how were such benefits paid? He was requesting that information merely in order to complete the report and did not wish to imply that he was dissatisfied with it.

38. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO (Spain) said that it would be helpful to receive a copy of the introductory statement made by the representative of Sweden.

39. She understood that both mother and father were entitled to take leave after the birth of a child. Could they take such leave simultaneously? Was it paid leave? If so by whom? Were they guaranteed to be able to return to the same job after returning from leave? Referring to the widow's pension (p. 7, para. 4), she asked whether it applied also to widowers and whether an individual's other income or economic circumstances were taken into account in the calculation of such pensions.

40. Mr. KORDS (German Democratic Republic) echoed the request for a copy of the Swedish statement. He would confine his questions to the report as it was difficult to digest information that was provided orally. The Government might bear that in mind when preparing its next report.

41. Referring to pages 2 and 3, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, he welcomed the fact that an Act on Equality between Women and Men at Work had come into force. It was stated that the Act aimed at "promoting" equal rights; the word "promote" seemed to imply limits whereas the purpose of an Act should be to guarantee. Would the representative of Sweden care to comment on that observation? He wondered what experience had been gained in the few years since the Act had come into force.

(Mr. Kords, German Democratic Republic)

42. What was meant by "psychological work environment" mentioned in page 4, paragraph 2, in connection with safe and healthy working conditions? Finally, noting that some workers in Sweden worked less than 40 hours a week and that the reduction of the work week was being discussed in other countries, he wondered how such reductions were effected. Did workers continue to get paid as much as they had prior to the reduction in their hours?

43. Mr. IIYAMA (Japan) asked for further details regarding the ombudsman system mentioned on page 2, paragraph 5. Secondly he asked how many foreign workers there were in Sweden and whether they presented any difficulties on the labour market.

44. Sweden was regarded a model welfare society. How much did the Government spend on social security in relation to the total national budget? Had it ever been suggested that the social welfare system needed reappraising because it was too expensive or for any other reason?

45. Mr. MITREV (Bulgaria) said that, in future, it would be useful to have the kind of data which had been provided in the introductory statement included in the report. Also, when reference was made to other reports it would be useful to have a very brief outline of their content.

46. He had been interested to read about the Act on Equality between Women and Men at Work and would have liked to have a general outline of its contents. What was meant by the statement that exceptions to the ban on discrimination were made for "the furtherance of ideological and other special interests" (p. 2, para. 5).

47. While he could understand how rules on active measures to promote equality could be supplemented through collective agreements, it was more difficult to see how they could be replaced by them (p. 2, para. 6). Certain provisions of the Covenant - such as that relating to minimum wages - were not guaranteed by Swedish legislation but left to the bargaining process. How did the Government guarantee that the outcome of the bargaining process was in keeping with its international obligations? There must be some framework or limits for the bargaining process. How were such limits set in general and, more specifically, how were they set with respect to the promotion of equality (p. 2, para. 6) and the minimum wages?

48. Referring to the cash sickness benefits (p. 6), he wondered why the provision that persons must have an annual income from gainful activity amounting to at least \$6,000 Swedish crowns was necessary since the following paragraph cited categories of people who were exempt from that requirement. Was the parent's cash benefit (p. 7, para. 3) a fixed amount? Was it intended to assist in the raising of a child or was it compensation for lost salary? How was the amount of the benefit calculated if a woman had not worked prior to having a child?

49. Mr. JEMAIEL (Tunisia) asked what was the percentage of unemployment among foreign workers and what happened to such workers when they lost their jobs and could not find other employment.

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50. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the expert from Denmark, asked whether resident non-Swedish citizens (p. 6, para. 1) were covered by the social insurance scheme. They appeared to be covered by the supplementary pension scheme (p. 7, para. 4). Migrant workers certainly could be covered through special agreements with their countries of origin. But what was the position of refugees in that regard? He, too, would have welcomed a brief description of the legislation referred to as well as data on the breakdown of the population.

51. Mr. SALAND (Sweden) said that he would convey the comments concerning the scope and outline of the report and the balance between texts and annexes to his Government. He pointed out that the guidelines for the preparation of reports relating to other international instruments indicated that reference to legislation was sufficient. Many of the questions which had been raised were covered by his introductory statement. He would answer the others the following day.

52. Mr. SALAND (Sweden) withdrew.

Report of Spain (continued) (E/1984/7/Add.2)

53. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Somalo Giménez (Spain) took a seat at the table.

54. Mr. SOMALO GIMENEZ (Spain), replying to questions on the report of Spain (E/1984/7/Add.2), said that industrial restructuring in Spain was governed by the so-called White Paper on Industrialization which put into effect an outline scheme to be applied by sectors as of 30 November 1983. The additional information he had submitted to the Working Group provided the latest details in the section on redeployment and reindustrialization.

55. Regarding the relationship of wage increases to the rate of inflation, wage scales had been set in recent years by agreement between unions and management; they were based on estimates regarding inflation rates and sought to raise the workers' purchasing power as far as possible. For 1984, the Government had recommended that salary increases should not exceed 6.5 per cent.

56. Early retirement was possible at 64 years, provided it was guaranteed that the post in question would be filled by a younger worker. Early retirement provisions were also being studied in the redeployment decrees and the legislation covering workers not scheduled for redeployment.

57. Regarding disadvantaged workers, the additional information supplied to the Working Group outlined steps that had been taken to promote the employment of those, such as older workers, who had difficulty finding work. Handicapped workers were covered by article 13 of the Basic Employment Act, the Act of 7 April 1982 on the social integration of the handicapped and the Royal Decree of 11 May 1983.

58. As for parental leave for child care, Spanish legislation had been revised to recognize the right of both parents to take up to three years' leave for child care. Women were entitled, in addition, to 14 weeks of maternity leave - during

(Mr. Somalo Giménez, Spain)

which time their jobs were held for them - and nursing mothers to a reduced working day. Mothers received 75 per cent of their wages under social security while on maternity leave and 100 per cent under some collective agreements. Leave above and beyond the 14 weeks for maternity leave was unpaid leave. There were no statistics on how many men had availed themselves of paternity leave.

59. Regarding the retraining of workers in case of redeployment, the policy was to channel a considerable portion of the funds freed in the medium term by unavoidable layoffs in faltering industries towards the creation of new productive posts and, under chapter VI of the draft redeployment Plan, towards vocational training of the workers affected.

60. The protection of the right of refugees to employment was governed by articles 15 and 22 of the Act of 26 March 1984. The right of prisoners to paid employment and related social security benefits had been discussed on page 13, paragraphs 18 through 22.

61. Temporary work contracts for seasonal agriculture work had remained much the same, but there had been a marked improvement to the conditions of work and the supervision and assistance of migrant workers.

62. The Wage Guarantee Fund was an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Labour financed exclusively from corporate contributions amounting to 8 per cent of the total real wages. The Fund could be used to compensate in case of suspension of wages and insolvency or indebtedness, and it paid wages to workers for up to four months and unemployment benefits for up to one year.

63. Regarding the protection of the uninsured segments of the population, the National Social Welfare Institute, an agency of the Ministry of Labour, provided such benefits as old-age and disability pensions, geared to the minimum social security pensions, to persons over 69 with no income (in 1983, it disbursed 50.4 billion pesetas for that purpose), and ran old-age homes and schools and summer camps for children.

64. The decline in family protection benefits noted by one expert had been minimal and was therefore of no consequence.

65. Referring to the discussion of Spain's medium-term and long-term economic programme on page 8, paragraphs 7 through 10, he said that the economic, financial and social programmes begun under the Moncloa Pact had been continued under the Inter-Federation Agreements and the collective agreements on labour relations.

66. Regarding temporary recruitment, the Government had submitted to Parliament a bill reforming certain parts of the Workers' Charter to set up more stable machinery for establishing new jobs as needed. Temporary contracts were used to promote employment, particularly during the first three years of a new undertaking, and rules for so-called replacement contracts were laid down.

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(Mr. Somalo Giménez, Spain)

67. There were two sides to social security reform, one was administrative - the aim being to enhance efficiency - the other substantive. Paradoxically, whenever there was less employment and hence a greater need for redistribution of wealth, there were fewer resources for distribution. Resources had thus to be directed towards productive investments which would generate new jobs and thus provide more income for social security.

68. Concerning how the system of co-operatives functioned he said that co-operatives were a long-standing institution in Spain and they were currently helping many troubled enterprises to survive, as workers took over their management. Some, such as the Mondragón Co-operative, were models which were widely studied abroad. A General Division of Co-operatives under the Ministry of Labour provided financial assistance through the National Labour Protection Fund for the establishment of co-operatives in agriculture, fishing, industry, crafts, housing, education and any other likely field.

69. The report described on page 42, paragraph 33 (c), the agencies responsible for safety and health regulations and the fact that unions participated in their application. The Miners' Statute, which was discussed in detail in the additional information submitted to the Working Group, was a case in point, with worker participation in the National Silicosis Institute.

70. Despite the slight decline in the percentage of the population covered by the social security system the total number covered had risen in 1982.

71. Social co-operation work consisted mainly of community projects, usually public construction works, and was governed by articles 38 and 39 of the Royal Decree of 25 June 1982, discussed on pages 17 through 19 of the report.

72. Regarding wage differences between men and women, the National Statistical Institute had unaccountably published no breakdown of statistics according to sex after 1977, on the assumption that there was no discrimination. In fact, women did receive lower wages because they were less highly trained. There were, likewise, no statistics available on the comparative number of men and women covered by the social security schemes.

73. Health expenditures did indeed rank second in the order of public expenditures. Employed non-citizens received the same health benefits as citizens.

74. With regard to unemployment coverage he said that the fall in the coverage rate was explained on page 32, paragraph 136. The figures given in the report did not, however, include any of the assistance under Royal Decree-Law No. 1/82 of 15 January, which established the Special Employment Protection Fund, nor any assistance under the special scheme for agricultural workers. The new system under article 19 of the Basic Employment Act provided a series of unemployment benefits graduated according to length of employment, ranging from three to eighteen months for periods of employment ranging from six months to over three years.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that the Working Group had concluded its consideration of the report of Spain.

76. Mr. Somalo Giménez (Spain) withdrew.

Report of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (continued) (E/1984/7/Add.1)

77. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Peshkov (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) took a seat at the table.

78. Mr. PESHKOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) replying to a question on how the essential distinctions between town and country and between workers engaged in intellectual and physical labour were being eliminated (p. 1 of the report of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), said that in the 10 years since education was made compulsory, educational levels in both urban and rural areas were becoming more uniform. Also, in fields involving manual labour like agriculture, there was increased reliance on new technology, which also served to eliminate those distinctions.

79. There had been questions regarding changes in the demographic situation in the country, discussed on page 3, paragraph 4, and regarding the statistics on pages 7 to 8, paragraph 29. The high percentage of women workers reflected the population figures. In 1959, men had accounted for 44 per cent of the population and women for 56 per cent; in 1976, the figures were 46 per cent and 54 per cent women respectively; and in 1982, they were 47 per cent and 53 per cent. The total population of the Byelorussian SSR was 9.9 million.

80. The high percentage of women with a specialized secondary education (p. 8, para. 29 (c)) could be explained by the nature of the technical fields entered largely by women, some of which were mentioned in the report. They also included such fields as electronics, watchmaking and textiles which women had begun to enter as a result of the casualties in the Second World War.

81. Clarification had been requested regarding the statement that the increase in the productivity of social labour set for the current five-year plan would ensure a 90 per cent growth in national income (p. 6, para. 20). It would indeed have been clearer to say that through the increase in the productivity of social labour, the Government would ensure a 90 per cent growth in national income.

82. Questions had been raised regarding pages 6 and 7, paragraphs 22 to 26 concerning the job placement bureaux. Paragraph 25 was, indeed, inaccurate; it should have said that approximately 30 to 50 per cent of workers who applied to the bureaux found jobs through them. There were many other opportunities to learn about available employment, both in the press and elsewhere. The usual wait before a job request was filled by a bureau was two weeks. As for the job placement of young people just entering the job market, there were commissions and local bodies especially set up for that purpose; the job placement bureaux did not have primary responsibility in that area.

(Mr. Peshkov, Byelorussian SSR)

83. Concerning the request for further information about employment for pensioners (p. 7, para. 27), he said that given the relatively low retirement age - 60 years for men and 55 for women - all pensioners were given an opportunity to continue working. About one third of all retired workers in industry and farming availed themselves of that right, and they received their full pensions plus any wages earned.

84. There had been a question regarding the additional paid leave granted over and above annual leave (p. 9, para. 2). By law, the minimum annual leave was 15 working days. Workers in the fields mentioned in that paragraph received a total of 18 days and in some other fields, such as teaching, the total paid leave was as high as 48 days.

85. A question had been asked regarding the minimum working age (p. 9, para. 5). The Labour Code stipulated 16 years of age but allowed for exceptions at 15 years of age, with the agreement of the trade union involved. Many special privileges had been legislated for such young workers, especially as far as health conditions were concerned, as discussed on pages 9 and 10.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.