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QUESTION OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In resolution 3137 (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973 on the question of the elderly and the aged, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to submit to the Economic and Social Council in 1977, through the Commission for Social Development, a progress report on the action taken in the implementation of the resolution and to report to the Assembly at its thirty-second session.

2. In response to that request, a progress report of the Secretary-General on the implication of General Assembly resolution 3137 (XXVIII) (E/CN.5/531) was submitted to and discussed by the Commission for Social Development at its twenty-fifth session and brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-second session.

3. The report outlined the current and projected activities of the United Nations in the field of aging. Among the current activities described was the establishment of an Information Exchange System on Aging, the objective of which is to inform better policy-makers, planners, researchers and managers of services of the concerns of the aging so that improvements may be made in planning, delivering and integrating services and in developing new and improved programmes to meet the human and environmental needs of the aging. Other activities in this field include technical assistance, monitoring of the present and prospective changes in the number and population of the aging, training through seminars and study visits of students and government officials on various aspects of caring for the aged, co-operation with non-governmental organizations and research on the aging in rural areas and the particular situation of older women. The report concluded with a synopsis of a recent publication entitled The Aging in Slums and Uncontrolled Settlements. 1/

* A/32/50/Rev.1.

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.IV.2.

4. When the Commission for Social Development considered this item, many representatives provided information about the growing numbers of the aged in their countries, and the measures being taken to provide the services and support considered necessary for them. It was emphasized that the views of the aged themselves should be heard and that they should be involved in the planning and provision of services for other aged people and for other members of the community who required special support and assistance.

5. There was general agreement that United Nations activity in this field had been useful. Some representatives expressed the view that, in the future, work in this field should be intensified in order to ensure that more information would be exchanged not only in the developed, but also in the developing countries, that more studies focusing on issues of common interest would be undertaken, and that more technical assistance services would be made available. Other representatives pointed out that the United Nations activities in this field should not be carried out to the detriment of other important social issues that are the purview of the Commission and of the United Nations as a whole.

6. Finally, the Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft resolution on the elderly which was adopted without a vote by the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-second session. In its resolution 2077 (LXII), the Council approved the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/531) and requested him to pursue, expand and consolidate his work on the status of the elderly, particularly with regard to research and exchanges of information, taking into account the views expressed during the debates which took place on the question at the twenty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development.

7. Since the issue of the Secretary-General's progress report, several additional activities have taken place in this field. The Information Exchange System has expanded its resources from 115 national and international institutions concerned with the aging to 274, covering the major geographic regions. The system's European Network of Correspondents on Aging has been established and an aide-mémoire has been sent to the European Governments concerned informing them of this network and requesting them to supply it with information regarding social and economic policies and programmes for the aging in their countries. The International Directory of Organizations Concerned with the Aging has been published, 2/ as well as an additional issue of the Bulletin on Aging.

2/ ST/ESA/63 United Nations publication, Sales No. 77.IV.10.