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35th meeting

held on

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at 3 p.m.

New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. von KYAW (Federal Republic  
of Germany)

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

AGENDA ITEM 72: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (E/CN.5/512/Rev.1 (ST/ESA/24); A/31/198; A/C.3/31/L.15) (continued)

1. Mrs. MARICO (Mali) said that the Report on the World Social Situation appropriately reflected the idea of a global concept of development in which "effort for society" would be seen as a far from negligible component of the effort for development. Her delegation was sure that account would be taken of the general guidelines contained in the Report when the time came to make the final mid-term review of the Second Development Decade and, perhaps, to prepare a new international development strategy.
2. Her delegation was willing to agree with the authors of the Report that the social situation in Africa during the period studied had given cause for great concern. It had taken note of the chapters devoted to the efforts of African Governments to alleviate the burden of the developing countries' colonial heritage and to solve, at the same time, the formidable puzzle of the economic development, social progress and political and civic education of their citizens with a view to realizing the full potential of their peoples in their true environment.
3. Despite the many decisions and recommendations of the United Nations and the international legal instruments adopted by its Member States and the General Assembly for the purpose of improving the situation in the world, the circumstances which prevailed in South Africa remained alarming. In that tormented country, the black 70 per cent of the population shared less than 20 per cent of the national income and were confined to only 19 per cent of the land, in the most arid regions. The African population suffered to an unsuspected degree from all the evils of society, and, as the Report stated, under the racist minority régime of Pretoria, "50 per cent of all children in one area reserved for blacks die before the age of five". Every year, starvation and inadequate health care killed thousands of human beings in South Africa, where only 30 per cent of the population, that is to say, the white minority, lived in ease and opulence.
4. Her delegation regretted that the Report on the World Social Situation had limited itself to providing statistical data without drawing all the inevitable conclusions from them. She drew attention once again to the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 3201 and 3202 (S-VI) and 3362 (S-VII), which firmly bound the international community to eliminate social injustice and inequality throughout the world.
5. For its part, her Government had chosen as its objectives growth and economic development by complementary means. The current 1974-1978 economic and social development plan had as its over-all strategy the achievement of the interdependent targets of increasing output with a view to meeting essential requirements, such as those of safeguarding and improving income, and reducing the vulnerability of the national economy to climate and external factors. In view of the significance of the agro-pastoral sector, the plan was largely

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(Mrs. Marico, Mali)

oriented towards the development of rural areas. Her Government had already taken a number of steps not only to remedy the adverse consequences of the drought but also, above all, to prevent the terrifying advance of the desert. It had concentrated its efforts mainly on meeting the basic needs of the entire population, enhancing the commodity-processing capacity of the secondary sector, ending the isolation of the country by improving the road network, and furthering its economic independence.

6. The development plan required substantial financial and technological resources, which the Government was striving to mobilize by its own efforts and by an appropriate policy of co-operation with foreign countries.

7. Owing to the climatic conditions in Mali, water management occupied an extremely important place in the country's development strategy, and her Government had already launched a series of operations ranging from the restoration of subterranean water resources to the construction of major dams. For example, the development of the Senegal River, which had been undertaken in close and fraternal co-operation with Mauritania and Senegal, would lead to far-reaching changes in social and economic conditions in the countries concerned.

8. For all those projects, her Government was striving to develop literacy programmes aimed at facilitating the assimilation of modern agricultural techniques by the peasants. The "Forest Development and Production" scheme would enable Mali, which was a savannah country, not only to meet a major part of its domestic demand for forest products but also, above all, to slow or even to halt the advance of the desert. The "Green Sahel" scheme aimed at replanting the country, and campaigns had been launched to prevent the destruction of reafforested areas.

9. The gradual development of the industrial sector was continuing. Since the country was land-locked, the Government had always been aware that the basis for true solutions to the problem of industrial development lay in the existence of suitable means of communication, and it had therefore begun, inter alia, to modernize the Dakar-Niger railway in order to facilitate the rapid transport of goods.

10. Its policy of social justice had led her Government to take energetic steps to alleviate the effects of the world economic crisis on its people; in particular, it had raised wages and the purchase prices of agricultural products and subsidized imports of essential goods.

11. Her Government was trying to adapt education to the actual circumstances within the country and to make it into a "global and integrated" system. In the field of health care, smallpox had been eliminated, but enormous efforts remained to be made in respect of both the eradication of epidemic diseases such as onchocercosis and the installation of modern health-care structures.

12. The task was far from completion, and Mali, not only a developing country but a land-locked country as well, recognized the extent of the sacrifices and the efforts it would have to make in order to achieve prosperity in a climate of social justice.

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13. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) pointed out that the item under discussion concerned the whole range of man's relations with society. Man was largely the product of his social environment. It was impossible to dissociate the world social situation from the economic and political forces which governed the nature of society, whether at the national or at the global level. Every human being must be fed, clothed and sheltered: those were his fundamental economic rights, to which his social and political rights were closely linked. However, man's aspirations in respect of social, economic and political justice were far from being achieved on the global level, even more than on any other.

14. The problems confronting the world were due to the fact that man, throwing caution to the winds and believing himself the master of nature, had decided that he could depart from its ways and had indulged in excesses of every kind. Some ate more than was reasonable, while others were dying of hunger. Man remained obsessed by fear and hoarded things he might never need, depriving his fellows of the essentials of life. Man was drunk with power, and that had led his leaders to spend \$300 billion on arms. There could be no hope of improving the world social situation so long as man continued to indulge in such excesses.

15. The evils afflicting the world could be traced to the industrial and technological revolution, which had destroyed all existing structures, split up families, promoted the proliferation of governmental bureaucracy, spawned new sectors of activity, such as publicity and public relations, which did not meet the essential needs of human beings, and created a spirit of universal rivalry.

16. Most politicians governed by expediency instead of relying on proven principles. Teachers were pedagogues only in name. The community had been uprooted and religion no longer had any hold on mankind. In an ever more populous society, the human race would disappear unless it gave thought to establishing the division of labour on fresh bases and respected family values. A moral rule, whether based on a religious ethic or dictated by man's deepest conscience, must be found if mankind was, if not to advance, at least to survive.

17. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that, in keeping with the principle of unified approach, the social survey and social planning that had originally been the responsibility of the Division for Social Development had become in 1972 the responsibility of the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policies. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs dealt mainly with the institutional and social-welfare aspects of development, as well as with the various disadvantaged or vulnerable groups of the population and their role in the development of society. The activities of the Centre were dealt with in chapter XV of the Report on the World Social Situation.

18. Despite the universally recognized need for a unified approach, United Nations organs had until then dwelt mainly on the economic aspect of development. She was therefore gratified at the interest taken by members of the Third Committee in the social and human aspects.

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19. It was appropriate, in a year which marked the entry into force of the International Covenants on Human Rights and the midpoint of the United Nations Second Development Decade, to determine whether the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, particularly those relating to economic, social and cultural rights, were in fact being implemented and whether the objectives of the International Development Strategy, especially its social and humanitarian objectives, had been attained.

20. For anyone whose principal aim was to improve the standard of living and quality of life, the world social situation as reflected in the Report appeared far from satisfactory since millions of people, including a large percentage of children, were dying from the effects of weakness, malnutrition or disease, illiteracy affected one fifth of the world's population and was still on the increase, and hundreds of millions of people lived in poverty and destitution. Social progress had been even slower than economic progress.

21. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the groups whose economic, social and cultural situation had to be improved were, in fact, the fast-growing groups and it was estimated that the world's population would increase by 100 million people annually for the next 24 years. How could such a multitude be guaranteed the rights which it had not been possible to ensure for all of the present population? There was the additional factor that aid came from the developed countries, whose population was decreasing and, in a few decades, would represent only 20 per cent of the world's population.

22. Efforts were now being made to bridge the economic gap between the developed and the developing countries and to enable the latter to become self-sufficient and to determine the course of their development. Accordingly, the General Assembly at its sixth and seventh special sessions had laid the basis for a new international economic order. If the human resources in each country were to be able, as they must, to contribute to economic growth, the people would have to enjoy an adequate level of health and education. There was thus a link between economic development and social development, the latter contributing to the former. Recent world conferences had stressed the need for greater participation by the people in development planning and decision-making, as well as in the global development effort. It had also been emphasized that everybody should benefit from the fruits of development. However, approximately half of the world's population, consisting mainly of women and young people, did not have the opportunity to do so. To remedy that state of affairs, existing institutions would have to be reformed. The question was whether the necessary political will existed at the national and international levels.

23. As the poorest segments of the population were the most seriously affected, preventive and remedial social welfare programmes directed at those segments should be undertaken with a view to enabling them to engage in economic activity; social workers should be trained and social services established, particularly in rural areas and shanty-towns.

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(Mrs. Sipila)

24. One of the negative effects of development was the increase in violence and crime which was associated with alcohol and drugs, together with the sharp increase in juvenile delinquency and female criminality. That trend was a source of growing concern to the international community. It would therefore be helpful to Governments if guidelines were defined and measures proposed for combating crime, on the basis of comprehensive, comparable and reliable information. Each country was responsible for improving the quality of life of the individual, the family and society, with bilateral and multilateral assistance to supplement the national effort.

25. The more information was available on the economic and social situation of each country, the more each country would mobilize its human resources, with or without foreign aid, to improve its situation. Establishing more contacts among nations and regions would encourage joint efforts, which would promote international solidarity.

26. The programmes, policies and strategies adopted following the conferences held in recent years, and in particular International Women's Year, proved that Governments had the political will to implement the many recommendations that had been made. As had been seen at the time, it was possible to mobilize the human resources of all the industrialized and developing countries with a view to strengthening social justice throughout the world, which was important for the individuals themselves but also essential for carrying out the many programmes undertaken in the field of industry, agriculture, trade or the transfer of science and technology for improving the economic situation of the developing countries.

27. Increased co-operation within the United Nations system could also be seen in the fields of environment, population, rural development and human settlements; interorganizational programmes had been established in various fields and activities had been undertaken in a number of sectors as a follow-up to International Women's Year and in support of the World Plan of Action and the resolutions adopted during the Year. In view of that positive trend, it was to be hoped that the next Report on the World Social Situation would show real progress at the international level.

28. The CHAIRMAN announced that the general debate was now concluded and that Guatemala and the United Republic of Tanzania had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.15.

AGENDA ITEM 70: ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COLONIAL AND RACIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/31/221; A/C.3/31/L.16) (continued)

29. Mrs. MARICO (Mali) moved the suspension of the meeting in order to allow the African group to continue its consultations on draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.16.

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30. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the members of the Committee wished to suspend the meeting.

31. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 79: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/10166; A/31/199; A/C.3/31/L.17) (continued)

32. The CHAIRMAN announced that Ecuador had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.17.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.