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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 70th MEETING

Chairman: Miss FAROUK (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/31/3, chap. VI, sect. D, A/31/3/Add.1 (part II), A/31/46, 83, 105, 187, 205, 220, 310; A/C.3/31/L.27, L.28, L.45) (continued)

1. Mr. CHIN HON NGIAN (Malaysia) said he had listened with interest to the statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and fully agreed with her that action at the national level was of decisive importance in promoting the status of women under the programme for the United Nations Decade for Women. He pointed out that in June 1976 a National Advisory Council on the Integration of Women in Development had been set up in his country. That multisectoral body, which was directly responsible to the Prime Minister, included both government and non-government members. Among its various functions were the provision of advisory services on the formulation of legislation affecting women in general, and the examination and appraisal of programmes undertaken by the Government or statutory agencies which related to women's interests. The establishment of that Council was one of the concrete measures adopted by Malaysia to implement the recommendations of the World Plan of Action.

2. His country's activities in that area had been further strengthened by co-operation among the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations - Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia - within the framework of which several seminars had been held and a Sub-Committee on Women had been established in 1975. At the seminar held at Kuala Lumpur the previous month, the theme "Women and employment" had been discussed. It was quite apparent that there was definite discrimination in that area, and it was to be hoped that the United Nations Decade for Women would have a decisive influence in that regard.

3. As to the future activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, his delegation shared the view expressed by the Commission on the Status of Women in document A/31/310 that the Institute should give priority to women in rural areas. The gap between rural and urban women was still extremely large since, despite rapid economic and social development, rural women did not enjoy the necessary educational and training opportunities.

4. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) said that the Committee had begun to discuss a very important question. His delegation had studied the documents before it with the greatest attention; indeed, the importance which his Government attached to the advancement of women at the national, regional and international levels was well known. In that regard, one of the chief merits of the Mexico Conference was that it had stressed and acknowledged before world public opinion that the future of the international community and its economic, social and cultural development were linked to a large extent to the evolution of the status of women and thus depended on the sincerity with which Governments dealt with that problem and the efforts they made to advance women and integrate them fully into society. The International Women's

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(Mr. Hoveyda, Iran)

Year and the Mexico Conference constituted a milestone in that field and it was to be hoped that they had helped to accelerate the necessary progress towards a more worthy and more humane world balance.

5. However, the International Women's Year was only a beginning and there was no room for complacency. The Decade that had just begun would determine whether the hopes placed in it would be realized. It would obviously be unrealistic to expect all the problems to be solved in 10 years and that women would by then be participating fully in all aspects of the life of their society, since ancestral ways of thinking could not be changed overnight. The documents adopted at Mexico City were none the less first steps in the direction which the United Nations had taken in proclaiming the Decade the previous year. A World Plan of Action had been drawn up and a Programme of Action laid down for the first part of the Decade, namely until 1980. That Programme would be useful only if Governments immediately took concrete measures in fields requiring urgent and priority action. Since the first year of the Decade was now drawing to a close, it was essential to take decisions aimed at implementing the Programme so that the minimum objectives set for 1980 could be achieved.

6. To carry out effective action it was extremely important to set up mechanisms at the national level to monitor the performance and to make a study and appraisal of the activities undertaken under the World Plan of Action and the Programme, within the context of national development plans. There was an Iranian Women's Organization supported at the highest level and by the Government. That Organization covered the entire country and was represented in most of the ministries. Furthermore, the post of Minister of State for the Status of Women had been established the previous year.

7. Both the Mexico Conference and the Third Committee had mentioned, in a general way, the lack of adequate basic data, information and statistics on the question, which was a major handicap. With a view to remedying that situation the World Conference of the International Women's Year had recommended the establishment of an International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which the Economic and Social Council had decided, in resolution 1998 (LX), should be established not later than 1977. In taking that decision, the Council had acted on the recommendations of the Group of Experts which had met in February to study the question. His delegation had been extremely active throughout the process which had led to the adoption of that resolution. It had indicated at the Mexico Conference, in connexion with its contribution to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, that Iran would like to be the host country of the Institute and would be able to make an additional contribution to help finance it.

8. The reasons for Iran's offer should be obvious, but apparently even the best-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted. No one denied the need to set up such an Institute. It would be the only international body dealing

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(Mr. Hoveyda, Iran)

exclusively with the advancement of women and able to co-ordinate regional research activities in that field. It was clear, as Princess Ashraf, the President of the Iranian Women's Organization had stated at the Mexico Conference, that the establishment of the Institute in Iran would have an entirely beneficial catalytic effect on Iranian women. Since it attached paramount importance to the promotion of the status of women, Iran was prepared to contribute \$1 million to the financing of the Institute. The cost of setting it up was estimated at \$3 million. However, the problem of financing was not the only question to be decided and the location of the Institute's headquarters also had to be selected. It would be wise not to delay the decision unduly if the Institute was to be able to make an effective and timely contribution to the Decade and to the preparations for the 1980 Conference. To do so, it should be operational in 1977. Obviously, the necessary funds could not be collected until the Governments concerned decided on the details regarding the establishment of the Institute and the location of its headquarters.

9. In a note dated 8 July 1976, the Secretary-General had invited all Member States to submit suggestions to him on the subject. So far, Iran was the only country that had made a firm proposal backed up by an offer to contribute to the financing. Representatives of the Secretariat had visited Iran and had felt that the facilities which could be made available to the Institute were suitable and satisfactory. Furthermore, the question of the headquarters' accessibility had been raised on several occasions. Although that was an entirely relative notion, he pointed out that Iran occupied a central geographical position, that Teheran was linked to the rest of the world by direct air connexions, that it was a regular stop on very many air routes and that Iran also had a satellite-relay communications network. Moreover, the Iranian authorities issued visas without any particular restrictions. It was also on account of its accessibility that Teheran had been chosen as the meeting place for many international conferences.

10. Obviously, it was for the General Assembly to decide on the details regarding the establishment of the Institute and the location of its headquarters, but he hoped that his Government's serious and firm proposal would be taken into consideration. In co-operation with other delegations, his delegation had prepared a draft resolution on the question and it was now the subject of consultations. Recalling that the Economic and Social Council had, in its wisdom, considered that the Institute should be established not later than 1977, he expressed the hope that the General Assembly would endorse that decision at the current session and that the draft resolution on the Institute which he proposed to submit to the Committee could be adopted by consensus.

11. Miss BEAGLE (New Zealand) said that her delegation agreed with the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs that the most important task during the United Nations Decade for Women would be to put an end to the artificial distinction frequently made between questions concerning women and questions concerning the development of society as a whole. She had been surprised at the views expressed by the representative of Saudi Arabia at the previous meeting, and particularly by his criticism of those who were trying to enable women to participate more actively in international life. In proclaiming the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, at the thirtieth session, the General Assembly had recognized that the time for rhetoric was over, and that

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(Miss Beagle, New Zealand)

the Decade must be devoted to effective and sustained national, regional and international action to ensure that decisions made and pledges given during the International Women's Year became a practical reality.

12. New Zealand had much to report on the national front. Detailed information on steps already taken or contemplated to implement the World Plan of Action in New Zealand had been conveyed to the Secretary-General. The National Committee on Women, which had been established by the Government prior to the International Women's Year as an official advisory body on the status of women, continued to promote and co-ordinate national activities, and advised the Government on priorities for action. The National Committee was committed to the establishment of targets and the adoption of national strategies for the implementation of the World Plan of Action within over-all plans for national development. It acted as a link between the public and private sectors and had proved most effective in disseminating information and stimulating governmental and non-governmental activity. Conferences on "Education and the Equality of the Sexes" and "Women in Social and Economic Development" had been held, and a further conference on the special health needs of women would be held in early 1977. Legislation in many such areas was currently under consideration. Also, a conference was planned for 1979 to evaluate progress at the national, regional and local levels in New Zealand in preparation for the 1980 World Conference. Nevertheless, New Zealand was aware that legislative and administrative changes were not sufficient and that attitudes had to change, for although New Zealand had been the first nation in the world to give women the vote, in 1893, in the two general elections held in the 1970s, over 90 per cent of those elected to office had been men.

13. At the regional level, New Zealand had welcomed the preparation of the regional Plan of Action for Asia and the Pacific which called upon the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to formulate and implement a comprehensive regional programme for the integration of women in development. A focal point in that programme would be the establishment of a regional research and training institute to which New Zealand had contributed as an indication of support for the centre and appreciation for the initiative of the Government of Iran in offering host facilities. It was to be hoped that every effort would be made to avoid unnecessary duplication between the programmes of the United Nations specialized agencies and the proposed Institute, which should play an essential co-ordinating role and should therefore be established without delay. The Committee on Women had also contributed to a regional women's resource centre established in Fiji which aimed at diversifying and broadening the participation of women at all levels of social, economic and political activity in the Pacific region and at providing a channel through which their concerns and interests might be heard in the world.

14. At the international level, her delegation was particularly pleased with the joint interorganization programme which had been prepared. To ensure effective implementation of the programme, such interagency co-ordination would need to be repeated at the regional and national levels. Her delegation fully supported the criteria set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2005 (LX) on the use of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and agreed that priority should be given to the developing countries in implementing the Programme for the

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(Miss Beagle, New Zealand)

Decade. She was disappointed, however, that the United Nations had not played a greater role in the area of publicity and that the popular version of the Plan of Action which the Secretary-General had been requested to issue as a matter of high priority in General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) had not yet appeared. Her delegation considered that the eradication of sex-based discrimination would be considerably advanced by the adoption of a single convention. It hoped that the Commission on the Status of Women would be able to meet the request of the General Assembly in resolution 3521 (XXX) and complete the elaboration of the draft Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its resumed session.

15. Her delegation agreed with the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs that the problems of one half of humanity could not remain the concern of one intergovernmental organization of 32 members and one small unit of the Secretariat but must become the concern of the entire United Nations. The Promotion of Equality of Men and Women Branch must act as a focal point to co-ordinate action and maintain close liaison with the operational agencies and the missions of developing countries. The Secretary-General's proposal in document A/C.5/31/34 that the Branch should be moved to Vienna therefore had significant implications which went beyond considerations of finance and administration. Such a move in 1978, the mid-point of the first phase of the Decade, would inevitably cause considerable delays in the implementation of the Programme and the preparations for the World Conference in 1980. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should continue to be an integral part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs if the integrated approach to development, aimed at in recent years, was to be implemented. Her delegation hoped that those considerations would be given due weight when a decision on the matter was discussed in the Fifth Committee.

16. The elimination of sex-based discrimination would depend to a considerable extent upon the way in which human rights in general were protected and fulfilled. In that regard, the entry into force of the international covenants on human rights, which emphatically forbade discrimination on account of sex, marked a significant step forward towards the practical realization of the principle of equality of rights of men and women which was enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

17. Miss GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico) said that of all the measures planned under the Programme of the United Nations Decade for Women dealt with in document E/5894, her delegation attached special importance to broadening the field of studies on desirable developments in patterns of behaviour of the sexes with regard to family and social responsibilities, and on evaluation of the scope of legislation in force in that field, with a view to determining changes to be made. Equally important in its opinion was the question of information, as it was necessary to make men and women aware of their rights and responsibilities under the international instruments applicable in every country.

18. The integration of women in development could be achieved only in terms of complete equality, offering women the possibility of contributing to the general life of society if they so wished. In that connexion, the Programme provided for the establishment of an international research and training institute for women,

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(Miss Gonzalez Martinez, Mexico)

which would contribute substantially to the implementation of the Programme of the Decade and the World Plan of Action, not only in the form of research but through concrete participation in programme development and preparations for the World Conference in 1980.

19. Her Government regretted that because of postal delays, the Secretary-General had not received the note it had sent to him stating that it was prepared to co-operate with the Institute in technical, scientific and training matters as soon as the competent national institutes had identified suitable fields for co-operation. When the Congress had considered the federal budget, the Mexican Government would be able to announce its financial contribution to the Institute. In the note, her Government had also informed the Secretary-General that since 1975, it had supported the establishment of the Institute at Teheran. It regretted, however, that it had not known earlier that the Dominican Republic was also making a very generous offer to act as host.

20. Furthermore, the joint interorganizational programme had an important role to play in the promotion of the status of women. The importance of regional and subregional activities was to be emphasized, particularly those concerned with the development of technical co-operation activities involving women from rural areas and women belonging to low-income population groups. Priority should be given to the recommendation made in the World Plan of Action for the establishment of permanent regional and subregional committees, as well as regional training and research centres. There was also an urgent need to establish social and economic indicators that would accurately reflect the status and needs of women, and the International Institute could make a considerable contribution in that respect.

1. The maintenance of peace also depended on equality and development, and in that connexion much emphasis had been placed in recent years on the participation of women in political life and international co-operation. The Programme for the United Nations Decade for Women had devoted three paragraphs to that question (E/5894, p. 14), paragraphs which her delegation endorsed without reservation.

2. It would also be wrong to underestimate the role which could be played by the mass media in the evolution of the status of women and the elimination of the prejudices which obstructed the integration of women in the process of economic and social development. Although in recent years efforts had been made to ensure that the mass media served the purposes of social development, on the whole those media continued to reinforce established ideas and perpetuate ignorance and conformity, thus contributing to the subjection of women, particularly those in developing countries, by limiting their horizon to the household and by cultivating their traditional conservatism. Her delegation felt that in order to change existing outlooks, it would be necessary to project an image of women that was worthy of them, and no longer that of women as a consumer good, so that, once prejudices and legal barriers had been removed, women could participate fully in society.

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(Miss Gonzalez Martinez, Mexico)

23. Her delegation had asked the Secretary-General many times to increase the financial resources and staff of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, particularly the Promotion of Equality of Men and Women Branch. The latter could be divided into two sections, namely an organic section responsible for programmes and research and an executive section responsible for co-ordinating and evaluating those programmes.

24. Finally, she emphasized that the activities set out in the Programme for the United Nations Decade for Women would only be successful if women united, co-operated with each other and demonstrated at all levels their generosity and comprehension with respect to other women, whether those other women came from developed countries or developing countries; although women faced very difficult problems, they nevertheless shared the same aspirations.

25. Like the representative of the Philippines, she wished to have further information on the reasons behind the decision to transfer the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to Vienna. Her delegation was not opposed in principle to the transfer of certain units to Vienna, since it was convinced of the need to relieve the overcrowding at the Organization's Headquarters. According to the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the transfer would meet the concern to establish "functional groupings". However, her delegation had understood that the General Service staff members concerned did not want to be transferred to Vienna. The question should be examined closely by the Fifth Committee, particularly since the transfer of the Centre also implied that the organs with which it co-operated, such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development, would hold their sessions at Vienna. It should not be forgotten that very few developing countries had permanent representatives at Vienna, and those countries would therefore have difficulty in following the activities of those organs. A whole series of practical problems arose in that connexion, particularly with respect to the drawing up of documents, plans and programmes. Her delegation reserved the right to return to a question which it considered essential for the success of activities that had been undertaken by the United Nations in order to improve the status of women and ensure their equality with men.

26. Mr. DAGRA (Niger) said that his delegation, unlike some backward minds that clung to anachronistic traditions, attached great importance to the question under discussion; the integration of women in the development process was, for the Niger authorities a priority objective. Furthermore, when the International Women's Year had been announced, the Head of State of Niger, Mr. Kountché, had stated that the complete integration of the women of Niger in the national development effort, the wholesome emancipation of women and the full contribution of women to the equilibrium of Niger society represented for Niger economic and social imperatives rather than a mobilization based on circumstantial or political considerations. The Niger Government had therefore encouraged the establishment of an association of the women of Niger and, from 8 to 21 November 1976, had hosted a seminar at Niamey on the topic of women and development in African environments, a seminar in which representatives from 11 countries had participated.

27. Rather than merely promulgating feminist laws, his country placed the emphasis:

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(Mr. Dagra, Niger)

on the multidimensional integration of women by encouraging women to participate in all aspects of development; document A/31/205 was therefore correct in dealing with agriculture, trade, industry, science and technology.

28. International Women's Year, the most important specific results of which had been the Declaration of Mexico, the drawing up of a World Plan of Action and the adoption of certain measures aimed at implementing that Plan, gave reason to hope that the United Nations Decade for Women would have a very positive effect and make it possible to attain complete equality for men and women, so that men and women could henceforth work jointly and harmoniously in the interests of development and look forward to genuine peace.

29. Mr. PETROV (Bulgaria) said that the promotion of international peace and security, economic development, social equality and universal respect for human rights were closely related to the promotion of the status of women and their active participation in political, social and cultural life, at both the national and international levels. It had become obvious that women's participation in the search for solutions to the difficult problems which arose in those areas was not only a right, but also an absolute necessity. That fact had been increasingly recognized by Governments, international organizations and individuals, and it had been highlighted at the Mexico Conference, the World Congress in Berlin and the thirtieth session of the General Assembly. For its part, the People's Republic of Bulgaria had, from its very inception, given problems related to women high priority within the framework of its economic and social development.

30. At its sixtieth session, the Economic and Social Council had recommended, on the basis of the report of the Group of Experts, that an International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women should be set up not later than 1977, provided that voluntary contributions totalling at least \$3 million were made available. So far, a relatively small number of Governments had responded to the Secretary-General's note of 8 July 1976 concerning financial and technical arrangements and the possible location of the Institute, since there was no preliminary text spelling out the requirements for the establishment of such an institute. Only one significant financial contribution had been announced, and there was no clear indication as to the way in which the Institute would be financed after the initial three-year period. It was obvious that the proposed Institute would have a role to play in the preparation of the 1980 World Conference, but, since its functions would be rather narrow and specific, it would be wrong to put too much emphasis on the relationship between the work of the Institute and the preparations for the Conference. His delegation was uncertain about how the General Assembly should proceed in that respect, and therefore wondered whether, under the circumstances, it would be possible or advisable to take a final decision immediately. His Government would have no objection should the General Assembly accept the offer to host the Institute made by the Government of Iran, provided that the latter ensured the necessary conditions for its smooth functioning.

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(Mr. Petrov, Bulgaria)

31. He noted that document A/31/83 contained an invitation from the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria offering Bulgaria as the venue for the 1980 World Conference. However, since the Government of Iran had addressed a similar invitation to the Secretary-General, as a result of bilateral consultations which had taken place in the spirit of friendship which traditionally existed between Bulgaria and Iran, his Government had decided to leave to the Government of Iran the honour and privilege of hosting the Conference.

32. Mr. PETROPOULOS (Greece) said that he had read with interest the report of the Secretary-General regarding the measures taken to implement the World Plan of Action and related resolutions of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (A/31/220), which, inter alia, dealt with the elaboration of a joint interagency programme for the United Nations Decade for Women whose first objective was "to promote the inclusion in national development plans of measures designed to ensure the full integration of women in society". However, the question arose as to whether that should be interpreted as a call for action by Member States or a proposal to have the specialized agencies suggest measures for the benefit of States. If the latter interpretation was the correct one, he suggested that care should be taken to avoid general formulations of little use to specific societies, since the role of women in each society was determined by its traditions. That was also applicable to the other points of the interagency programme, namely promotion of the participation of women in political and economic life and in cultural and leisure-time activities.

33. A pragmatic rather than an unduly academic approach should be taken with regard to the Decade and the Programme of Action that would be directed toward the specific problems of each society. It was essential for societies to become aware of the need for the advancement of women, which would generate the necessary momentum for change. It was in that light that his delegation viewed the establishment of a Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which should be geared to specific needs.

34. In Greece the momentum generated by International Women's Year was reflected in increased participation of women in public life and in the process of development. The recent appointment of a woman to the post of Minister of Education was indicative of the importance his country attached to the talent and competence of women.

35. Miss WALDRON (Guyana) expressed her satisfaction at the determination with which the United Nations and Governments were approaching the implementation of the objectives of the World Plan of Action. At the preceding meeting her delegation had emphasized the considerable importance her country attached to the integration of women into society and into the development process. It was therefore very encouraging to note that many States whose laws already provided for the equality of men and women had moved substantially closer to total integration of women in development and had taken - or planned to take - additional measures in the field of education and health to improve the status of women.

36. Although it had still not achieved total integration, her country could point

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(Miss Waldron, Guyana)

to the unceasing efforts it had been making to apply a policy of equality for women and to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women, overt or otherwise. The idea of male superiority that permeated the entire international community and was reflected in juridical systems made any change extremely difficult. Nevertheless, education, the economy and society as a whole were undergoing profound changes that were opening the way to change.

37. Inspired by the World Plan of Action, Guyana had made promotion of the principle of equality one of its national objectives and had taken legislative measures to correct certain aspects of laws that pointed to discrimination against women, particularly with regard to employment and civil rights.

38. The United Nations Decade for Women opportunely coincided with the quest for a new international economic order and with universal recognition that at the national level the establishment of any new economic system aimed at improving the situation of a particular country could not be successful unless all that country's natural and human resources were utilized. All States should therefore ensure the total participation and integration of men and women in the national economic and social development process.

39. Early achievement of true equality between men and women required the establishment of certain national mechanisms, which would vary from one type of society to another. Guyana had called upon existing services for that purpose, particularly upon its Ministries of Labour and the Interior. It had also encouraged the formation of a new women's organization of a social and political nature that was in contact with other women's movements in Guyana and in the Caribbean region in order to ascertain the fields in which changes were needed and to study the means of bringing such changes about.

40. The Government and people of Guyana were convinced that the total involvement of men and women would be bound to facilitate the establishment of a sound international system and promote the cause of international peace, security and co-operation, all of which were objectives of the United Nations and the Third Committee. Desirous of applying socialist policies and programmes at the national level founded on egalitarian concepts and principles, Guyana pledged itself to support all policies and programmes inspired by those concepts and principles at the international level. It would consequently give its full support to any resolution formulated along those lines by the Third Committee and by the Economic and Social Council.

41. Mr. SAMHAN (United Arab Emirates) observed that the resolutions adopted in 1975 by the General Assembly regarding International Women's Year had had far-reaching repercussions not only in his country but throughout the world. The General Assembly had thereby reaffirmed the determination of nations to support the elaboration of national strategies for development that provided for maximum participation of men and women. The efforts that had been made in all fields at both the national and international levels should be directed toward ensuring that women would be granted responsibilities and rights equal to those of men.

42. His delegation believed that it was imperative to improve the status of women

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(Mr. Samhan, United Arab Emirates)

and that international measures were necessary to achieve that purpose since measures at the national level were not sufficient. The situation demanded radical changes. It was important to be thoroughly acquainted with the problems related to the role of women in society. The World Plan of Action, which aimed at implementing the objectives of the International Women's Year, covered both the scientific and economic fields as well as the field of national and international co-operation. Consequently, in order to carry out the Plan, information had to be collected and research activities had to be initiated, bearing in mind the priorities in the various fields and the experience which had been gained.

43. The participation of women in decision-making could contribute a great deal to establishing peaceful relations among all countries regardless of their stage of development. The importance of solidarity at all levels had been emphasized at the international meetings held, in particular, in Mexico City and Berlin. Even if the connexion between the status of women and the need for a new economic order had not always been clearly grasped, that connexion existed, and as long as the international economy was founded on injustice, the progress of the developing countries would be hampered and both men and women would remain in the poverty resulting from colonialism. For that reason his delegation was particularly pleased that Palestinian women were fighting side by side with their Arab sisters against Zionism and racial discrimination. For the same reasons, his Government firmly supported the struggles for liberation by African movements against the racism, apartheid and racial discrimination that prevailed in southern Africa, and it would spare no effort to support such struggles until complete liberation of the men and women in all those territories had been attained.

44. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the establishment of an International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (A/31/310), he said that it had the full support of his delegation, particularly in connexion with paragraphs 5, 7 and 15, and that his country would make a financial contribution to the Institute at the appropriate time. He also supported the recommendations contained in the Report of the Secretary-General in document A/31/220.

45. Despite all the efforts that had been made in his country to eradicate illiteracy, promote the role of women in all fields and provide them with equal opportunities in society, much remained to be accomplished. However, his Government would continue its struggle to bring about complete equality of men and women and bring prosperity to all citizens without distinction until those objectives had been attained.

46. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Ivory Coast had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45.

47. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that revised draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45/Rev.1 was ready to be submitted to the Committee in English, which was the text on which the sponsors were in agreement. She asked the Secretariat to circulate the French and Spanish texts as soon as possible and said she would take up the revised draft resolution at the next day's meeting to explain the few minor amendments made to the original draft.

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AGENDA ITEM 73: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/10143, A/10275; A/31/212; A/C.3/31/L.32, L.35, L.45)

Draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.32

48. Mr. NEAGU (Romania) said that nowadays the younger generation was called upon to play an outstanding role in furthering the independent economic and social development of each country and in building a future of well-being and prosperity in peace and security. Youth was already participating in the efforts to establish a new international order that would provide better opportunities for the younger generation to assert itself and to fulfil its aspirations to happiness. The fact that the responsibilities of the younger generation had gained increased importance in the contemporary world deserved particular attention on the part of the international community. A number of steps should therefore be taken in order to promote the active participation of youth in social, political and economic life and to establish an adequate framework so that the energy of young people might be focused on improving society and shaping a better world.

49. The Romanian Government, which attached great importance to the problems facing the younger generation, was bent on finding suitable solutions. The all-round education of youth, including vocational, political, cultural and moral training as well as physical development, was considered the duty of Romanian society as a whole. Youth organizations mobilized young people working in production units with a view to making full use of their creative abilities in the sectors essential to the advancement of society. The training of young people with high vocational and political qualifications and a deep sense of their social responsibilities represented an essential premise for the development of Romanian society. In that connexion, an important role devolved upon the schools as the principal purveyors of education and culture.

50. Action had been taken to ensure the participation of the different segments of the population, including young people, in the activities of collective decision-making bodies. Through the representatives of their organizations, young people participated in working people's committees, university senates, teachers' councils and the governing bodies of ministries and central institutions. Since 1968, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Union of Communist Youth had automatically served as Minister for Youth Problems. The fact that youth organizations had the right to put forward their own candidates for election to the membership of the people's councils and the Grand National Assembly was illustrative of the way in which the problem of the participation of youth in the social and political life of the country was dealt with in Romania.

51. Thus, the younger generation had proved to be an active element in economic and social transformations and a direct participant in the permanent process of the renewal and development of Romania. Education within and outside the schools aimed at instilling in young people the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among nations. The goal was not only to acquaint young people with the principles

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(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

embodied in the documents adopted by United Nations bodies but also to encourage them to apply those principles in practice.

52. Youth organizations in Romania were inspired by the ideals of peace and international détente and of co-operation and militant solidarity with the struggle of peoples and progressive democratic forces everywhere for peace and mutual understanding among all peoples. They had co-operative relations with more than 400 national and international youth and students' organizations of the most varied political, philosophical and religious shades of opinion. In recent years alone, more than 1,000 Romanian youth and student delegations had visited other countries or had participated in meetings, seminars and conferences held on different continents. In Romania itself, many meetings, seminars and conferences had been organized with a view to promoting active co-operation between youth organizations. In co-operation with the Research Centre for Juvenile Problems, a European meeting had been held under the auspices of the Social Development Division of the United Nations on the theme "Youth and the dynamics of social development". Romania had also acted as host to meetings of UNESCO experts on themes of concern to youth. A recent development had been the founding of the Association of Romanian Youth and Students for the United Nations, whose activities were proving fruitful at the national and international levels. The recommendations on education of youth adopted at the meetings to which he had referred had been widely circulated among young people in Romania and had been communicated to governmental institutions and interested international organizations.

53. His delegation felt that the international community should undertake the task of thoroughly examining the problems facing the younger generation, and of creating, through the establishment of an adequate framework, a favourable climate which made it possible for young people to have their say on all the fundamental issues of international life and to participate directly in the economic and social development of peoples. To that end, the United Nations was called upon to tackle in a more comprehensive way the problems relating to youth and to adopt concrete measures that would take greater account of the changes and developments which had occurred in the different fields of economic and social life. As a sponsor of the 1965 Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples as well as other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, Romania hoped to see an extension of United Nations activities in that field. Some practical suggestions had been made in document A/C.6/437, which had been circulated at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly. For example, there was the idea of establishing a United Nations Council for youth problems and that of adopting an international instrument - a charter or a declaration on youth - which would synthesize the principles, conclusions and recommendations so far elaborated and would reaffirm the part to be played by young people in contemporary society.

54. Another idea worth considering was that of proclaiming the year 1980 - or one of the following years - an International Year of Youth, thus providing a good opportunity for debating and presenting new ideas and actions likely to further international co-operation in that field. It might also be possible to convene the second World Congress of Young People during the year.

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(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

55. It would be recalled that the General Assembly, at its thirtieth session had not been able to discuss draft resolution A/C.3/L.2190, which had been sponsored by Romania and 21 other States. He welcomed the fact that the Committee was in a position to deal with the item at the current session and was introducing draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.32, whose long list of sponsors represented countries in all the geographical groupings. The draft resolution was closely linked to the 1965 Declaration. The preamble reaffirmed the principles enshrined in the Declaration and underlined the importance of educating youth in those principles. The main idea was to be found in paragraph 4, which requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session a report on the measures taken to implement the Declaration, with recommendations on how that process might be strengthened. The following new paragraph should be added to the operative part:

"6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-second session a separate item entitled 'Policies and programmes relating to youth'."

The revised version of the draft resolution (A/C.3/31/L.32/Rev.1) would incorporate the new paragraph; he hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

56. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that some of the things called for by draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.32, which had been introduced by the Romanian delegation, would create a number of difficulties. Paragraph 4, in particular, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the measures taken to implement the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session in 1978 through the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council. However, since the Commission for Social Development would be meeting very early in 1977, the report in question would have to be ready immediately so that it could be considered by that body in order to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session. The Commission would not meet again before 1979, which would normally entail deferring submission of the report until the thirty-fourth session. If the sponsors of the draft resolution wished the report to be submitted in 1978, a statement of financial implications would have to be prepared, since additional services and material resources would then have to be provided. She therefore asked the sponsors of the draft resolution to reconsider the question.

57. Mr. NEAGU (Romania) recalled that the draft resolution which he had submitted to the Committee had been prepared at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly. An effort had therefore been made to preserve its original form to the greatest possible extent so as not to create difficulties for the sponsors. In view of Mrs. Sipilä's remarks, the sponsors would study the problems posed by the draft resolution with a view to submitting a text which could be adopted at the current session but which nevertheless would aim at having the report adopted in 1978.

58. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that in that case it was clear that a statement of the financial implications of the draft resolution would have to be drawn up and submitted directly to the General Assembly without going through the Economic and Social Council.

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59. The Reverend HUPP (United States of America) said that by the year 2000 every country in the world would be taken over by its youth of today. He wondered whether the takeover would be orderly or chaotic, whether it would improve upon the human rights and values cherished at present or whether it would enforce an every-man-for-himself philosophy.

60. Youth problems were universal. Unfortunately, adult response to those problems had too often been lacking in effectiveness. However, the action of good men and women could have a positive effect on youth. That was the case with the good works carried out in the private sector by such institutions as the Boys Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brother, Big Sister and many more.

61. In order to illustrate an approach to the problem of disadvantaged children, he described his personal experience with Boys Town, an organization established 59 years earlier for homeless young boys. At Boys Town such boys could develop physically, mentally, culturally and spiritually in a normal atmosphere and become responsible citizens. Boys Town had branches in many countries, and a constant dialogue was maintained with many of them.

62. In addition to caring for disadvantaged children, Boys Town had launched two large projects of trouble prevention. Thus, a Boys Town Institute to be opened in 1977 would seek to diagnose the physical factors related to learning and communication disorders in pre-school boys and girls. A very significant number of young people were problems in society because they had hearing, sight and speech difficulties that were not cared for in early life. The earlier the detection of such difficulties, the greater the possibility of a cure or of at least helping such children to adjust. That was all the more important because nowadays one of the great problems between youth and adults was one of communication.

63. The second project called for the opening in 1977 of the Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development, which would attempt to search out the root causes of such problems as drug addiction, child abuse, parental rejection and youth rebellion and propose methods of prevention.

64. The United Nations could do much to assist young people in their anguished years of growing up. Growing had always posed difficulties, and there had always been a generation gap, even before that expression had been coined to describe it. At the present time, youth problems were complicated by what had been called "future shock", i.e. the stress and disorientation that all individuals suffered when they were subjected to too much change in too short a time. It was therefore encouraging that the General Assembly gave high priority to human rights and especially to the rights and needs of youth.

65. The United States Government was of course concerned not only with such problems but also with ways of communicating with young people, and it therefore gave its full support to United Nations projects in that field. The time had come to go beyond resolutions and studies and to take action, which could best be started within the framework of the United Nations Volunteers and through the efforts of youth and youth organizations which would participate in national and regional development planning.

66. The CHAIRMAN announced that Togo had joined the sponsors of draft resolutions A/C.3/31/L.32 and A/C.3/31/L.35 and that Mongolia was now a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.35.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.