

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**



THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records*

THIRD COMMITTEE
74th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 8 December 1976
at 3 p.m.
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 74th MEETING

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

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/31/SR.74
13 December 1976
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 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 and Rev.1, L.49, L.50) (continued)

1. Mr. SHERIFIS (Cyprus) said that, since his delegation together with those of the Philippines and numerous other countries, was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45, it went without saying that it fully supported the content of that resolution concerning the improvement of the status and role of women in education. It would therefore willingly accede to the request of Mongolia and join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45/Rev.1. His delegation, which had always said that lofty words were not enough, now stressed the need for the full implementation of the Declaration and programmes of the United Nations Decade for Women. Each Government should therefore take the necessary steps to bring about complete equality and, where necessary, the elimination of discrimination against women, which was an anachronism incompatible with contemporary civilization.
2. The problem of discrimination did not exist in Cyprus, where women enjoyed the same rights and opportunities as men in all aspects of life. In that connexion, it was sufficient to point out that, after independence, Cyprus had had a woman as Minister of Justice and that she had performed her duties impeccably.
3. Mr. HACHEME (Benin) said that one of the main concerns of the United Nations was to bring about equality between men and women before the law, a principle which was set out in the Charter, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. That concern reflected an awareness in the international community of the extent to which women were still alienated in the contemporary world, even in those societies which were regarded as the most advanced, for instance the bourgeois capitalist societies in which advertising continued to perpetuate and encourage the myth of women as an object.
4. There was thus an urgent need to take steps to enable women to recover their dignity and rights and to improve their status. By adopting resolution 3010 (XXVII) proclaiming International Women's Year, the General Assembly had shown a desire to solve the problems confronting women. However, that important instrument would be of little value unless Governments took strong action at the national level to guarantee its implementation.
5. His country had not merely welcomed the adoption of that resolution but had made every effort to bring about real equality and to encourage a change of attitude so that relations between men and women would be complementary and harmonious. Benin was trying to wipe out the after-effects of the colonial and neo-colonial era, which had tainted the image of Beninese women, and was taking revolutionary measures to enable women to regain their rightful place. Women's participation

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(Mr. Hacheme, Benin)

in activities in Benin was not new. Until the colonial era, Beninese women had always assumed the same responsibilities as men at all levels. They had the right to serve their country on an equal footing with men and, in the nineteenth century, Beninese Amazons had fought alongside men to defend the ancient Kingdom of Benin. Today, their successors were sparing no effort in their daily activities to help to build the Beninese nation. There was no doubt that they represented a considerable force in the struggle for peace and against colonialism, neo-colonialism, foreign occupation, imperialism, racism and apartheid.

6. However, in order to use that force more effectively, the developing countries must first of all solve a major problem which confronted many of them, namely that of bringing literacy to women in rural areas. His delegation therefore approved the recommendations adopted at the Mexico Conference which called for the integration of women in the development process through the education and training of women and girls. It wished, however, to emphasize that such integration should not be at the expense of the essential role which women played within the family, as wives and mothers.

7. Miss AL-ZAYANI (Bahrain) said that her country had always attached great importance to the advancement of women, particularly since its accession to independence in 1971 when women had begun to occupy an important place in the State apparatus and in the public and private sectors.

8. In 1975, her Government had mobilized the active mass information media to give International Women's Year the publicity which it deserved, and the Minister of Posts had marked the event by issuing a commemorative stamp. In addition, a Commission for International Women's Year had been created for that occasion, and on its recommendation, the Minister of Social Affairs had set up a Permanent Advisory Committee on Social Affairs to deal with problems relating to women and the family. Moreover, the Government of Bahrain, which had endorsed the principles proclaimed in the 1967 Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, ensured that women enjoyed complete equality in the fields of education, health, housing and employment. In that connexion, she wished to recall that, in 1970, Mr. Winspeare Guicciardi, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, who had headed a mission of inquiry to Bahrain, had said that the women with whom he had spoken were well informed and clearly expressed points of view which coincided on all points with those of men. There was thus no need to emphasize further the importance which the people of Bahrain attached to the United Nations Decade for Women, and it went without saying that it would participate in the activities planned in that context in the same spirit of co-operation which it had shown during International Women's Year.

9. Her delegation had studied carefully the report of the Secretary-General on the integration of women in the development process (A/31/205), in particular the section concerning the participation of women in agriculture which was particularly relevant to her own country. The Minister for Social Affairs of Bahrain had in fact drawn up a programme designed to promote the development of women in rural areas and to give them an active role in village society.

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10. Miss MELCICKA (Czechoslovakia) said that the United Nations Decade for Women, proclaimed in 1975, could not fail to stimulate progressive forces which were fighting to eliminate the discrimination to which women had all too often been subjected. The Decade should aim to ensure the widespread participation of women in the strengthening of international peace and détente and the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism and racism, and help to integrate them in the process of economic and social development of their society. Those objectives had been set out in the Mexico Declaration, the World Plan of Action and the Programme for the first part of the Decade. Her delegation had listened with great interest to the statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs who, like other representatives who had followed her, had rightly stressed the need to proceed as of now with the implementation of the provisions of those documents and of the relevant resolutions.

11. Two major events had taken place in Czechoslovakia in the past year which could not fail to have beneficial repercussions in the area under consideration: the Fifteenth Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, held in April, and the elections to legislative organs, held in October. On the former occasion, the opportunities open to Czechoslovak women in the first half of the Decade had been outlined. The General Secretary of the Communist Party and the President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic had stated at the Fifteenth Congress that women played a particularly important part in all areas of society and were equal to men in every respect. The Congress had also emphasized that action should be taken to ensure that the number of women in leadership posts in Czechoslovakia was increased. Women represented more than 50 per cent of the economically active population and in some sectors the percentage was considerably higher: 80 per cent in the health services, 60 per cent in cultural services and education, and 50 per cent in justice and administration.

12. The Communist Party and the National Front were working to break down the remaining prejudices with regard to women's abilities in the political and economic fields. Czechoslovak women participated fully in the life of society. The Union of Czechoslovak Women, with a membership of 750,000, was playing an important part in that connexion and, by its substantive activities, was, together with other organizations in the National Front, helping to meet women's needs and promoting their self-realization. Women were thus associated in the work of building a socialist democracy based on the active participation of workers in the government and life of their nation. They played a growing role in the administration of the country and were becoming increasingly numerous in the legislative organs.

13. Until 1935, the proportion of women in the National Congress had been only 2.66 per cent. In the first elections, at the time when a socialist régime was being established, that proportion had increased to 12 per cent and, following the latest elections to the Federal Assembly, was currently 26 per cent in the National Chamber and 29.5 per cent in the Popular Chamber, as against 22.5 per cent and 18.5 per cent respectively in the previous Assembly. One quarter of the deputies on the national committees were women. Through those committees,

(Miss Melcicka, Czechoslovakia)

thousands of women participated in the management of villages, towns and regions and supervised the implementation of the national economic development plans. Moreover, the Czechoslovak Communist Party attached particular importance to the activities of those committees. At the Fifteenth Congress, it had, inter alia, emphasized the need for a further improvement in women's living and working conditions, which were already the best Czechoslovak women had ever known.

14. Czechoslovak women had a feeling of solidarity with those women throughout the world who had joined in the struggle for independence, and they were ready, with the whole of Czechoslovakia, to contribute to any action at the international level to advance the status of their sisters.

15. In that connexion, Czechoslovakia had already supported General Assembly resolution 3521 (XXX), the aim of which was to promote equality between men and women and the elimination of discrimination against women. It welcomed the fact that the Commission on Human Rights had reacted favourably to the appeal for the elaboration of a convention on the elimination of discrimination against women. On that point, her delegation stressed the importance of education, instruction and vocational training in combating discrimination against women. Women should have free access to such activities if they were to be fully integrated into the economic life of their country.

16. Her delegation supported draft resolution A/C.5/31/L.45 on the improvement of the status and role of women in education.

17. Mrs. HADDAD (Iraq) said that, although the status of women had improved considerably, particularly in both socialist and capitalist developed countries, women's role in society was still restricted. That problem had been under discussion in the United Nations system since 1945, but, with the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women, a crucial stage had now been reached. Her delegation, which had carefully studied documents A/31/220, A/31/310 and E/5894, subscribed to the provisions of the Programme for the Decade and the measures taken to implement the World Plan of Action and the decisions of the Mexico Conference. It was following closely the efforts being made within the Commission on the Status of Women to draft a convention on the elimination of discrimination against women, and it considered that any progress in that direction would contribute to the realization of the political, economic and social aspirations of women.

18. Her Government, which had always been in favour of decentralizing the organs of the United Nations, could only welcome the transfer of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to Vienna and thank the Austrian Government for taking the necessary steps to provide accommodation for it in the Donaupark. Similarly, it welcomed the establishment of the Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and paid a tribute to the Iranian Government not only for having conceived the idea of establishing such an Institute but also for having proposed that it be established in its own capital.

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(Mrs. Haddad, Iraq)

19. Despite the efforts made by the United Nations to improve the status of women, it was to be feared that many of the measures recommended by the United Nations would not have any practical effect in the foreseeable future unless action was taken at the national level. In order to form an exact idea of the status of women in present-day Iraq or in the Arab world in general, it was essential to consider it in a historical context. In the past, Arab women had played an active role in society and had left their mark on the worlds of politics, the arts, literature and science. They had gone into combat when it had been necessary to take up arms, while continuing to perform their duties within the family and to occupy the place reserved for them in society at the side of men. For instance, while literary salons had first made their appearance in Europe in the eighteenth century, they had existed in the Arab world since the eighth century. Islam had not restricted the freedom of women, but had given them the same rights as men, and the Prophet himself, who had preached respect for women, had devoted many hours of his life to their education. Arab women could use their past as a yardstick in measuring how far they had come and how far they still had to go along the path to equality.

20. The Eighth Regional Congress of the Ba'ath Party, held in Baghdad in January 1974, had considered the problems of women and had made it a priority to free women from all the legal, economic and social constraints which restricted their freedom, since it had recognized that the emancipation of women, one of the exploited elements in society, could not be dissociated from the building of true socialism. It had undertaken to promote the education and training of women, to improve their conditions of employment and give them free access to professional life and, finally, to give them complete equality with men before the law. The Council of the Revolution, for its part, had requested the Iraqi Commission for International Women's Year to draw up a comprehensive programme designed to advance the role of women in the building of Iraqi society. In October 1975, that Commission had submitted a number of recommendations on education, the aim of which was to alter programmes of study in order to adapt them more closely to women's needs, to broaden the scope of the law on literacy, and increase the number of women in universities and scientific and technological institutes. In the social sector, the Commission had recommended the full application of social and professional legislation to women, the adoption of measures to guarantee maternal and child welfare, the opening of kindergartens and schools, and the organization of a vast information campaign on maternal and child health. Finally, the Commission had recommended the adoption of progressive legislative measures to enable women to participate fully in all fields of activity.

21. In her opinion, the emancipation of women must be seen in a global, historical and dialectical perspective, for it was intimately linked to the national liberation movements and liberation struggles in the world. Moreover, it would be to do a disservice to that cause to dissociate it from the other struggles being waged on the economic, political and social front. Conversely, no society would be able to

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(Mrs. Haddad, Iraq)

throw off the triple yoke of colonialism, racism and alien domination if women were not able to take an active part in the revolutionary struggle.

22. The struggle of Arab women had begun in 1922, when they had first gone unveiled, in Egypt. It had continued in Palestine, in 1929, with the organization of the first women's meeting, and in 1933, with a demonstration in Jerusalem of women's opposition to the Zionist movement, which had then enjoyed the support of the administering Power. In the 1950s and 1960s, women had risen up in Iraq and Syria, and had since been in constant revolt against oppression, colonialism and the occupation of Arab lands by the forces of Zionism.

23. The Iraqi Government inspired to peace, but to genuine peace based on justice between not only the peoples of the Middle East, but also the peoples of the entire world. In that respect, she asked how the Zionists dared to speak of peace when, in violation of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, they had driven an entire people from its lands and deprived it of its most legitimate rights. Peace entailed certain requirements, the first of which was to renounce all policies of annexation by force and to permit a scattered people to return to its homes. She referred in that respect to resolution 32, concerning Palestinian and Arab women, adopted the previous year by the World Conference of International Women's Year. The fifth preambular paragraph of that resolution stated that international peace and co-operation required the elimination of colonialism, fascism and Zionism. Like so many others, that resolution had remained a dead letter. There was therefore no other recourse than to bring together all the vital forces of the Arab nation, of which women were an integral part, in the struggle for liberation and the building of a socialist society based on justice, progress and peace.

24. It was in that spirit that, at its eighth Regional Congress, the Ba'ath Party had drawn up a programme aimed at ensuring the active participation by Iraqi women in militant action at the national, regional and international levels. The measures planned at the national level were intended to mobilize women in the Arab nation's struggle for the liberation of Palestine and the occupied lands. At the international level, Iraqi women would strive, together with the progressive women of the entire world, to support the national movements struggling against colonialism and imperialism and to defend the cause of the Arab nation before the various women's organizations, with a view to eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and alien exploitation and domination in the world.

25. Mrs. BEN-AMI (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it would seem that certain delegations had not heard what she had said the previous day and had seen fit to indulge in their favourite pastime and to mention resolutions which allegedly pertained to the Mexico City Conference and concerning which her delegation had expressed its opinion at the appropriate time. It was clear that aggression and armed conflicts did not lead to the liberation and progress of the human spirit. But it would have been preferable if the delegations concerned had showed some degree of restraint and avoided politicizing the debate on the Decade for Women, instead of once again grasping the opportunity to digress

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(Mrs. Ben-Ami, Israel)

unduly from the extremely important subject currently before the Committee. Her delegation rejected the allegations made against Israel and refused to dwell on the question; it would merely invite the members of the Committee to refer to the previous statements by the representative of Israel on the subject.

26. Mrs. HADDAD (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that such insidious allegations as might be made within the Commission were the work of the Zionist entity, and that she had already been listening for 25 years to the lies of its representative, who, the previous day, had once again made a hypocritical attempt at a proposal by appealing for peace and dialogue and for understanding among women in the Middle East. But how could there be a dialogue when the Arab territories were occupied, and the indigenous population of Palestine was dispersed or in prison and subjected to torture? Her delegation was in favour of peace, dialogue, and understanding among all the peoples of the world, provided that they were placed on the same footing and that their destiny was not dictated to them by force of arms. The Israeli delegation never ceased hypocritically to distort the truth and to make lying allegations. To find proof of that, it sufficed merely to read the resolutions on Israeli practices which had recently been adopted by the Special Political Committee.

27. Mrs. SEMICHI (Algeria) said that the Mexico City Conference which had crowned International Women's Year had enabled Governments truly to take stock of the current status of women in their respective countries. In both the developed and the developing countries, and in urban and highly industrialized as well as in semi-rural societies, women continued, to varying degrees, to be the victims of discriminatory practices. Their status was still somewhat ambiguous. The United Nations action would therefore be decisive if it provided Governments with a means of tackling a problem for which a true solution would be found in the long term. Study of the documents concerning the Programme for the Decade showed the progress which must be made at the national and international levels in order to eliminate discrimination against women and to promote their integration in development. In that respect, her delegation considered it wise to have planned for progressive action in two phases and welcomed the policy proposed in particular in the spheres of education, public health and employment in both urban and rural areas.

28. The Algerian Government was endeavouring to correct the inequalities which had characterized the situation of women in society. To that end, it had tried to restore a certain social equity with regard to women: that action was necessarily linked to a process of modernization of Algerian society as a whole, which would nevertheless retain its most noble traditions in order to ensure that it did not suffer the fate of societies which, having rejected all traditions, had nevertheless not succeeded in achieving freedom or in eliminating economic and social inequalities. The problem of women in Algeria should be viewed as part of a very broad logical social framework, which was currently benefiting from the results of extensive scientific research. The measures for the restructuring of Algerian society included, in particular, free and compulsory education, the establishment of health facilities accessible to all and designed particularly for mothers and children, access to all jobs without discrimination on grounds of sex, and equal pay.

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(Mrs. Semichi, Algeria)

29. In addition, the Algerian Constitution stated in article 39 that "all discrimination based on prejudices regarding sex, race or profession shall be prohibited", and guaranteed in article 42 "all political, economic, social and cultural rights of Algerian women". In addition, all the measures taken by Governments for the economic and social advancement of their peoples should be part of an international trend reflecting real willingness to co-operate for the benefit of all countries.

30. The Algerian delegation therefore supported the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and considered that the Institute should be located in a developing country, such as Iran. It also supported the exchange, at the regional level, of national experience in close co-operation with the regional economic commissions and intergovernmental organizations, such as OAU.

31. Mrs. BIRIUKOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in proclaiming the United Nations Decade for Women, following the recommendation of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, the General Assembly had raised one of the major problems which it was incumbent upon the international community to solve, by reminding it that the first of its duties was to eliminate discrimination of all kinds: against women, men or communities. The proclamation of the Decade was an important milestone, because it demonstrated an awareness of the role and responsibilities of women in the modern world in the development of their countries, the maintenance of peace, the strengthening of international co-operation, the defence of freedom, national independence and the social progress of peoples. It was therefore important for the Decade to be marked by action at both the national and international levels, and for it to promote throughout the world the participation of women in the economic, political and cultural life of their societies. That goal was attainable, because of the improvement in the international climate following the end of the cold war and the establishment of co-operation between States, regardless of their social system and régime. That co-operation had been made possible by the untiring efforts of the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and all peace-loving States.

32. In order to achieve those goals, the Soviet Union had drawn up a programme of action for peace and international co-operation, freedom and independence of peoples, which had been adopted by the twenty-fifth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. In accordance with that approach, women participated actively in the development of the USSR and enjoyed real equality in every respect, with regard to political, economic, cultural and social life. That equality of women had been achieved because of the triumph of the socialist structures, in which women were recognized to be the equal of men, not only formally and from the legal viewpoint but in actual fact. Educated in socialism, Soviet women were imbued with the feeling that their creative participation and their talents were indispensable for the improvement of the life of the community.

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(Mrs. Biriukova, USSR)

33. A large number of women were therefore participating in the building of socialist democracy and in the implementation of impressive economic development plans, designed to improve the standard of living of all citizens without distinction. In the Soviet Union, all jobs were open to women, who received the same pay as men for the same work and had the same opportunities for training. They were thus free to use their talents in the area of their choice. It was considered that the decisive factor in the advancement of women was their participation in socially useful work, so that they could combine complete economic independence with recognition of their legal status.

34. In the Soviet Union, women accounted for 51 per cent of the labour force; more than 90 per cent of the women able to work were employed or were pursuing studies. The number of women was constantly growing in the highly specialized sectors: precision engineering, radio, electricity. There were 12 million women engineers and technicians, accounting for 59 per cent of the total labour force in that sector. Women also made a very considerable contribution to activities in the cultural sectors, health services, education and social services.

35. More than 30 per cent of the deputies in the Supreme Soviet were women; that percentage was higher than that found in all the principal government branches of the United States and the countries of Western Europe taken together. Seven out of 10 regional trade unions were headed by women. The growing political activity of women was a feature of Soviet socialist democracy.

36. Those very positive results could be attributed to the existence of free general education, provided without any discrimination. There were as many women as men at the secondary and higher levels of education. Of every 1,000 women who worked, 739 had received secondary or higher education and many of them had followed in-service courses to improve their qualifications.

37. Soviet legislation contained numerous provisions concerning women: special leave, special social security benefits. Attention was given to maternal and child health, and women were granted maternity leave with full pay and the possibility of returning to their jobs. They received free medical care, and special arrangements had been made to help mothers with large families and unmarried mothers. For the benefit of children, there was a whole network of establishments which could accommodate 11 million children of pre-school age.

38. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Mr. Brezhnev, had emphasized in his report to the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Party how indebted the USSR was to Soviet women for the gains of socialist democracy. It was a constant concern of the Communist Party to improve even further the status of women as active members of the community, as mothers and educators and as housewives. The Five-year Plan for 1976-1980 - which aimed at improving, materially and spiritually, the standard of living of the Soviet people - provided for a whole series of measures relating to women. In October 1976, the two houses of the Supreme Soviet, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, had adopted

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(Mrs. Biriukova, USSR)

a joint resolution establishing a Committee on the Status of Women, thus evidencing the importance which the Soviet Union attached to the question. Her Government accordingly intended to do all it could to ensure that the United Nations Decade for Women achieved its objectives.

39. In many countries, of course, women were still subjected to discrimination. The instruments adopted during International Women's Year - the Declaration of Mexico, the World Plan of Action and the various resolutions aimed at the advancement of women and improvement of their status - were a good starting-point, since they gave a clear indication of the directions which the international activities to be carried out during the Decade should take. What was needed was sustained action to eliminate any trace of discrimination against women, in the interest of promoting development, working for the maintenance of peace and doing away with all vestiges of colonialism, exploitation and oppression, which afflicted both peoples and individuals.

40. The United Nations could make an important contribution to that noble cause, provided that the resources it allocated to the task were used rationally and for specific purposes. Her delegation had noted with interest the comments made by delegations on that point. It had also considered the arguments of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management in favour of the transfer to Vienna of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which it had found very convincing. It did seem that such a transfer would be beneficial to the Centre's activities and would make them even more effective.

41. Her delegation whole-heartedly supported draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45, and was prepared to consider any proposal that would contribute effectively to the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

42. Mrs. SIIPIIA (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said she would like to reply to the representative of Denmark, who had asked at an earlier meeting what effects the transfer of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to Vienna might have on the course of the United Nations Decade for Women. Before going into that particular aspect of the question, it might be helpful if she first provided some background by reading out paragraphs 1 and 13 of document A/C.5/31/34, now before the Fifth Committee, on the utilization of office accommodation in Vienna. The implications of the proposals in paragraph 13 (a) were set out in detail in annex III to the previous year's report to the General Assembly (A/10348), and the implications of those in paragraph 13 (b) appeared in annex I to the current report (A/C.5/31/34).

43. Since the possibility of a transfer of some units, including the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which would be transferred in phase I of document A/C.5/31/34, had given rise to a great variety of rumours, it should be made clear that in any event the decision rested with Governments and that she

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(Mrs. Sipila)

herself could do nothing about it. She would therefore confine herself to a statement of the facts as matters stood at present, so that delegations could judge for themselves what would be the most economical and rational course.

44. The point at issue was, therefore, the transfer of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which consisted of the Social Development division and the Promotion of Equality of Men and Women Branch. Her reply would be limited to the effects which a transfer might have on the programme of the Branch, since the question had been confined to that aspect of the Centre's programme.

45. With regard to the effects which transferring the Centre would have on the course of the Decade, she said that a move to Vienna by the Secretariat unit responsible for the women's programme would undoubtedly have consequences, the seriousness of which would vary according to the date on which the transfer took place, the number of staff involved, and whether or not the essential support services would be transferred at the same time - all points which were not yet known.

46. What must be realized, however, was that the advancement of women and their integration in the development process could only be dealt with through a multisectoral approach involving political, economic, social, cultural and human rights elements. It was by no means certain that the "functional groupings" referred to by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management were best suited to serve the purposes of the Decade effectively. What was essential, regardless of the course decided on, was that the Promotion of Equality of Men and Women Branch should maintain its close working relationship with key Secretariat departments as well as with operational agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF.

47. The Centre had an important role in motivating and monitoring relevant departments of the Secretariat to integrate women into all their programmes, both as participants and as beneficiaries. Ideally, with the necessary leadership and guidance from the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, each and every United Nations programme would be carefully scrutinized to evaluate the extent to which the needs of women were taken into account, thus directly promoting the goals of the Decade. In that connexion, it was indispensable that the Centre should collaborate closely with the Committee for Development Planning. For further details on the question of collaboration among departments and units, she would refer members to General Assembly resolutions 3490 (XXX) and 3505 (XXX), adopted at the preceding session. It would certainly be difficult to maintain such close contacts as were necessary if the Centre was transferred to Vienna. Another question was relations with other organizations or agencies, some of which, it must be noted, were in Europe. The success of the programme of the Decade depended on the effective implementation of an interagency programme which was at present being formulated. There would of course be a serious problem with regard to the crucial co-ordinating role entrusted to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

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(Mrs. Sipila)

48. Another factor was the accessibility that the Centre must have to as many delegations as possible, particularly those from developing countries. The limited number of developing countries represented in Vienna would inevitably inhibit the implementation of the work programme. It should also be borne in mind that the Decade programme included a significant information component which required for its successful implementation access to the mass media on an international scale. The widely representative press corps at Headquarters in New York would be an important asset in that respect.

49. Non-governmental organizations would also have a vital role to play during the Decade, and the Centre would no doubt be adversely affected by a move to Vienna.

50. The important event that was to take place during the Decade for Women was the World Conference to be held at the mid-point of the Decade, in 1980, to assess the progress made in implementing the World Plan of Action. Preparations for the conference would involve intensive negotiations with all Member States and the holding of regional preparatory conferences in each of the developing regions. That preparatory work, which was already beginning, would be in full swing in 1978-1979, and obviously a physical relocation during that time would have serious negative consequences for the success of that important conference.

51. Finally, of course, the successful implementation of the Programme for the Decade would depend on the continuous support of the staff of the Centre, and particularly those Professional staff who had accumulated experience in the substantive work of the Centre. Although Professional staff members were required, under the terms of their contract, to accept assignment in any part of the world, early indications suggested that a considerable number of such staff members would be faced with insurmountable problems and they might well choose to resign rather than be forced to move. It was not merely a question of General Service staff, as might be supposed. Obviously, no one was irreplaceable, but the loss of experienced Professionals was bound to affect the smooth execution of the programme. There was therefore good reason to consider the problem from the human standpoint as well.

52. The pros and cons and both the material and human factors should therefore be carefully weighed when considering the generous offer of the Austrian Government, and the negative and the positive effects of any decision should be envisaged. She recalled that a similar problem had arisen when UNEP had been established with the necessary supporting services in Nairobi, and that the move had not prevented the Programme from expanding and assuming its universally recognized importance. Again, therefore, she believed that everything depended on the way in which the contemplated move was effected, and particularly on the way in which supporting services were provided.

53. Mrs. GONZALEZ-MARTINEZ (Mexico) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs for the information she had just provided. It would seem that the members of the Third Committee had some reason

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(Mrs. Gonzalez-Martinez, Mexico)

to be concerned. Without necessarily being detrimental to the work of the Centre, the move would nevertheless involve delays. Her delegation was not opposed to the transfer but felt that the Committee should consider the date on which it should take place.

Draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45/Rev.1 and amendment A/C.3/31/L.49/Rev.1

54. Mrs. IDER (Mongolia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45/Rev.1 on behalf of the sponsors and said that the realization of the right to education at all levels was a decisive factor for the achievement of full equality of women with men, which would enable women to attain complete self-fulfilment and participate on equal terms in the social, economic and political life of their countries. That progress would be beneficial not only for women but would benefit human society as a whole. It would result in the harnessing of vast productive resources that had hitherto too often remained unemployed. The tasks in that field were enormous when one considered that of the estimated 800 million illiterates in the world 500 million, or 60 per cent, were women. Between 1960 and 1970 the number of women illiterates had increased by 40 million as compared with 8 million in the case of men. That was why the sponsors of the draft resolution had found it necessary to draw the attention of States to the extent of the measures necessary to improve the status and role of women in education. The draft called upon States to double their efforts and undertake all possible measures to eliminate illiteracy among women, especially during the Decade. It also invited Member States, as well as UNESCO, ILO and other organizations of the United Nations system, to submit their observations concerning the improvement of the status and role of women in education to the Secretary-General and, lastly, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session a report on the question. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

55. Mr. NOTHOMB (Belgium) introduced, on behalf of his delegation and the delegation of the United Republic of Cameroon, a draft amendment (A/C.3/31/L.49/Rev.1) to the draft resolution under consideration. The draft amendment was a somewhat stronger version of draft amendment A/C.3/31/L.49, relating to operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution under consideration, which would be divided up and expanded into three subparagraphs, of which the last two would stress two important points: the notions of coeducation and of equal access to scholarships and other study grants.

56. As to the first point, it would be noted that in many countries the system of separate schools for boys and girls had worked for centuries to the detriment of girls, since some areas of education had been reserved exclusively for boys, who alone were prepared for higher careers. That backward-looking system had provoked reactions, and girls' schools had thus been established for the purpose of providing an equally comprehensive education. Consequently, coeducation was by no means essential in order to achieve equality in education, but it could play a major role in that respect since it automatically eliminated any differences between the sexes. It had therefore been felt that the draft resolution should mention that important aspect of the question.

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(Mr. Nothomb, Belgium)

57. As for the second point, it was as well to make specific mention of the principle of equal access to scholarships and other study grants to enable talented students to do advanced studies without having to worry at the same time about their source of income. That problem did not only arise at the national level. The system of scholarships, in fact, played a major role in international co-operation. Belgium, for its part, provided a great many scholarships to third-world students. It would be extremely unfair and contrary to the aims of the United Nations Decade for Women, if only men were allowed to benefit from the system.

58. Belgium was particularly convinced of the need for that amendment since it was known that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, that was currently being drafted in Geneva, would specifically take account of those two factors. The proposed amendment would therefore reflect the provisions of paragraph 10 of that Convention, whose adoption would be a milestone in the promotion of the cause of women in 1976. Realizing that the principles embodied in the draft amendment, particularly as regards coeducation, could present problems for some delegations, the Belgian delegation would ask them to take into consideration the fact that States were only asked "to consider undertaking all appropriate measures".

59. Miss GELBER (Canada) drew the attention of the sponsors of the draft resolution and of the proposed amendments to the fact that a number of international instruments which could strengthen the text were not mentioned in it. She therefore proposed an oral amendment which would add to operative paragraph 1 the words "to the 1958 ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention and to the 1975 ILO Convention on Human Resources Development and would add to operative paragraph 2 (b) the words and the provisions of the 1958 ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, of the 1975 ILO Convention on Human Resources Development and of the appropriate ILO recommendations concerning discrimination (employment and occupation), the employment of women with family responsibilities and human resources development". Her delegation had chosen those instruments because they specifically stated that women should have access to all vocational training without discrimination of any kind on the basis of sex.

60. Mrs. IDER (Mongolia) said that those amendments posed no problem for her delegation, which was glad to accept them.

61. The CHAIRMAN, replying to Mrs. BIRIUKOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), who had asked that the amendments be submitted in writing and that delegations be given some time to study them, said that a decision on the draft resolution would be deferred until the next day.

62. Mrs. IDER (Mongolia), said that, after consultation with the representative of Canada and with the ILO representative in the Committee, it had been agreed to make two changes in draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45/Rev.1. The new operative paragraph 1 would now read: "Appeals to all States which have not yet done so to become parties to the appropriate UNESCO and ILO Conventions for combating discrimination in vocational training and guidance", and operative paragraph 2 (b) would end with the words "... 1960, and the appropriate UNESCO and ILO recommendations".

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63. The CHAIRMAN announced that Cuba, Hungary and the Upper Volta had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.45, since the People's Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Cameroon had become sponsors of the revised text, A/C.3/31/L.45/Rev.1; the United Republic of Cameroon had also joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.49/Rev.1.

Draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.50

64. Miss SHAHKAR (Iran), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.50, announced that Ghana, Italy, Nepal and the Upper Volta had added their names to the list of sponsors. Referring to the preamble, she read out operative paragraph 9 of resolution 3520 (XXX), in which it was decided in principle to establish an International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and operative paragraph 10, which referred to the Group of Experts on the establishment of the Institute; the Group had met in February 1976, had recommended that the Institute should be established as soon as possible and had made recommendations concerning its structure and activities. In Economic and Social Council resolution 1998 (LX), to which reference was also made in the preamble, the Council had taken note of the Group's report and had decided to establish the Institute not later than 1977. He pointed out, in that connexion, that under paragraph 3 (a) of the Council's resolution the Institute was to work in close collaboration with various organizations and institutes which had similar objectives and that under subparagraph (c) it was to give special attention to the needs of women in developing countries. The preamble of the draft resolution also referred to document A/31/310, which described the progress achieved towards the establishment of the Institute.

65. With regard to the operative part of the draft resolution, some delegations had suggested adding to paragraph 2, after the word "Institute", the following text: particularly the essential close collaboration with regional centres and institutes having similar objectives"; her delegation was glad to accept that change, but it had not yet been able to consult all the sponsors. Under paragraph 3, the General Assembly would accept the offer of the Government of Iran; that was pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998 (LX), which had taken note of Iran's offer, and followed the visit to that country by members of the Secretariat, who, as the report of the Secretary-General indicated, had found the location to be suitable. The urgent importance of taking a decision on the matter was obvious, since there was at present no international institute which engaged exclusively in research for the advancement of women. Furthermore, the World Conference would meet in four years, and the Institute would be expected to make a major contribution to it. It was therefore urgent to take a decision on its location, which should not be difficult, since Iran was the only candidate; she therefore hoped that draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.50 would be adopted by consensus.

66. Mrs. GONZALEZ-MARTINEZ (Mexico) said that she supported the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Iran but suggested inserting two words in operative paragraph 3, which would now read: "3. Accepts with satisfaction the offer ...".

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67. The CHAIRMAN announced that the United Republic of Cameroon had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.50; he suggested that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

68. Mr. LAMB (Australia) said that his delegation withdrew the reservations it had originally expressed regarding the proposal to establish the Institute in Iran and would be glad to join in the consensus.

69. Draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.50 was adopted by consensus.

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 and L.35) (continued)

70. The CHAIRMAN announced that Sweden and the United Republic of Cameroon had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.32 and that the German Democratic Republic, Jamaica, the Libyan Arab Republic, Nepal, Romania and the United Republic of Cameroon had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/31/L.35.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

71. After an exchange of views on limiting the length of further statements, in which Mr. BUTEIKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mrs. GONZALEZ-MARTINEZ (Mexico), Mr. SOBHY (Egypt), Mrs. IDER (Mongolia) and Miss BEAGLE (New Zealand) took part, the CHAIRMAN suggested that statements on the remaining items should be limited to 10 minutes.

72. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.