



NOV 25 1984

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MADAR (Somalia)

later: Mrs. BOCHECIAMPE CROVATI (Venezuela)

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The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT PEACE:  
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1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Bureau had received a request from the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania to be allowed to take part in the Committee's deliberations. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee authorized the Observer for the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania to make a statement.
2. It was so decided.
3. Mrs. Boccheciampe Crovati (Venezuela), took the Chair.
4. Mr. AGUILAR-HECHT (Guatemala) said that in Guatemala 55 per cent of the population were under 19 years of age and 83 per cent under 39 years. The Government therefore believed that it was young people who had contributed most to the search for respect for human rights and the restoration of democracy in Guatemala.
5. Each year, Guatemala had co-sponsored the draft resolutions submitted to the Committee on the subject of young people. It had also played an active part in the work of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year. A National Youth Council had been set up by Government order No. 858-84. The Government had taken an active interest in the celebration of the International Year and was envisaging various activities in connection with that event.
6. His delegation believed that the holding of the World Assembly on Aging in Vienna in 1982 and the adoption by consensus of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging had helped considerably to heighten international awareness of the situation of the elderly and the aged. The adoption of the Plan of Action had been extremely useful and enabled Governments to address the issue more effectively.
7. His delegation considered it essential that the international community become increasingly aware of the needs of the disabled. The celebration in 1981 of the International Year of Disabled Persons, the adoption of the Programme of Action and the proclamation of 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, had renewed hopes for improving the situation of the disabled. The international

(Mr. Aguilar-Hecht, Guatemala)

community's growing awareness of the situation of the disabled was also very important for the planning and implementation of programmes to improve that situation through education and rehabilitation. In Guatemala, efforts had been made to put into effect programmes that would help to solve the problems of the disabled and integrate them into the productive life of the nation. The Central American Olympics for the Disabled had been held in 1984. In the area of employment, special programmes had been set up based on the premise that the aim of all rehabilitation was the integration or reintegration of the disabled into normal working life. The Ministry of Social Welfare was responsible for developing social programmes and had put into effect programmes for disabled women, set up homes and training centres for mothers and special education centres for learning disabled children. The Ministry was also concerned with the young retarded and, through the early stimulation programme, engaged in preventive treatment of children identified as being at risk and helped them to develop their capacities to the full.

8. In so far as it was able, Guatemala allocated financial resources for the implementation of plans and projects promoting the participation of young people, the elderly and the disabled in national life.

9. Mr. ESSAIEM (Tunisia) said that his Government accorded special priority to the problems of young people. According to the 1984 census, young people under 21 years made up half of Tunisia's population. Education was free and most students in higher education received Government scholarship. Tunisia's university trained young people in various literary, legal, scientific and technical disciplines.

10. The employment of young people was given priority in the sixth development plan (1982-1986). Each year, 50,000 jobs were created to meet the needs of the younger generation. There were also recreational and cultural centres for young people, and youth organizations through which they could make their views known and participate in decision-making.

11. His delegation welcomed the action taken in many countries in connection with the International Youth Year; the Tunisian Government had demonstrated its interest by setting up a national committee. Perhaps it would be possible, at the fortieth session of the General Assembly, to hold a meeting of representatives of those States which were celebrating International Youth Year with a view to evaluating and following up the activities carried out as part of the Year.

12. The preparation of a declaration on the rights of youth should cover the rights of young victims of racial discrimination and those of the young people of Palestine, the occupied Arab territories and South Africa, all of whom were subject to violence and the violation of their rights. Lastly, the situation of young migrant workers should not be overlooked.

13. Mrs. PATHAMMAVONG LATDA (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/262) had shown that the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year had made tremendous progress by advocating various measures and activities that could tap the enthusiasm and creative abilities of

(Mrs. Pathammavong Latda,  
Lao People's Democratic Republic)

young people. In her delegation's view, the primary aim of the International Youth Year was to arouse the interest of young people so that they participated fully and constructively in development activities and to foster in them the ideals of peace. It was a fact that, whenever a war or armed conflict broke out in any part of the world as a result of the war-mongering and expansionist policies of certain countries, it was always the young who paid because they served as cannon fodder. In other circumstances too, young people were the object of exploitation and oppression, particularly in certain vulnerable groups such as the rural poor, refugees and emigrants. The aim of holding the International Youth Year was to put an end to such situations.

14. The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomed the efforts of the Advisory Committee's efforts to draw up appropriate programmes which would guarantee young people a better future, and despite its limited resources, would make its modest contribution to the celebration of the Year.

15. The Lao Revolutionary Youth Organization, of which all the country's young people were members, fulfilled its duty of international solidarity with the young people of the world, supporting them firmly in their struggle for disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security as well as the establishment of the new international economic order.

16. At a time when the international situation was deteriorating as a result of imperialism's policy of aggression and confrontation and the uncontrolled nuclear and conventional arms race, young people throughout the world should join forces in the common struggle to bring that perilous course to an end.

17. Mr. ZADOR (Hungary) said that the cause of youth was the cause of all. There was no denying that the different generations perceived contemporary society and life differently, but, there would not be a serious generation gap if the problems confronting youth were approached by adults in a serious manner. In her introduction to the debate, the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had referred to some of the problems confronting young people in the developing countries. Nobody could disagree with what she had said, but it must be remembered that young people faced difficulties in more developed countries as well; the most serious of those difficulties were unemployment and the prospect of nuclear war.

18. Young people in Hungary had no unemployment problem and lived in a safe society, but they were also aware that, owing to international political and economic conditions, they must prepare for an adult life in conditions which were more difficult than was desirable. Young people were in the forefront in seeking disarmament and on all just humanitarian issues; young people in Hungary were no exception. They were aware of the international problems and maintained close ties with young people of other countries, including those in the countries of the West; they were currently preparing to participate in the World Festival of Youth and Students, scheduled to take place in Moscow in 1985.

(Mr. Zador, Hungary)

19. The Government and youth organizations of Hungary welcomed the General Assembly's decision to designate 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. Although not a member of the Advisory Committee for the Year, Hungary had been represented at its April meeting by an observer, who had co-sponsored a draft resolution on communication. In response to the General Assembly's appeal, the Hungarian National Co-ordinating Committee for the Year had come into being on 2 May 1984 and had adopted guidelines and a plan of action.

20. In accordance with the Co-ordinating Committee's guidelines, educational institutions and social organizations in Hungary would, starting with the school year 1984/85, pay special attention to the activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies; the national programmes would give expression to the desire of Hungarian youth for peace, security and disarmament and to their solidarity with the youth of all other countries. Forums to be organized in 1984 and 1985 would be concerned with the involvement of the young generation in political, economic and cultural life; governmental and social organizations represented in the Co-ordinating Committee would participate in international ventures fostering relations, with youth in other countries, including the development of youth tourism. Pursuant to the Committee's plan of action, questions relating to the youth policies of States would be discussed at a European regional meeting of governmental experts on youth, representatives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and observers; a series of international concerts with the participation of young artistes from European countries would be arranged; an international camp would also be organized for young artists who would create works on the themes of the Year; national tourist organizations would extend the preferential treatment enjoyed by Hungarian youth between 18 and 24 to young visitors from other countries. The plan of action also called for participation, where possible, in cultural programmes for youth organized by the national co-ordinating committees of other countries. The Hungarian Committee would pay particular attention to the celebration, on 4 April 1984, of the fortieth anniversary of Hungary's liberation from fascism, to Hungarian preparations for and participation in the World Festival of Youth and Students and to the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

21. Mr. KALINOWSKI (Poland) said that the three goals of the International Youth Year, namely, participation, development and peace, were closely linked and reflected the universal aspirations of youth. The right to live in peace was the most basic human right, and nobody desired peace more than young people. Although young people in Poland had been living in conditions of peace for almost 40 years, they were aware of the immense suffering which accompanied a war; the memory of the Second World War and its repercussions on the people of Poland were alive in the minds of all Poles, including the young generation.

22. There was no doubt that the acceleration of the arms race meant that young people had fewer possibilities to participate in economic, social and cultural development and to enjoy its achievements. It was for that reason that millions of people representing different political philosophies were participating actively in

(Mr. Kalinowski, Poland)

the movement against nuclear war. In the current international situation, high priority should be given to the struggle for peace during the International Youth Year.

23. It was clear that development could be pursued only in conditions of peace and co-operation among nations. In different regions, youth faced different problems: young people living in highly developed areas might enjoy more material opportunities, but at the same time they faced deep-rooted social problems such as unemployment, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and the negative side-effects of uncontrollable industrialization.

24. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Poland had given active support to the idea of the International Youth Year. His delegation wished to reiterate its view that activities for the Year should be focused primarily on the national and local levels. Regional and international actions, although important, could not replace efforts undertaken at the national level.

25. The XII World Festival of Youth and Students would be held in Moscow, in 1985, the International Youth Year. His delegation considered that the United Nations Conference for the International Youth Year should be devoted, among other things, to the evaluation of the contribution to the main objectives of the International Youth Year made by the Festival and other important international events, such as the UNESCO World Congress on Youth to be held in Barcelona in June 1985. Poland supported the proposal to devote a number of the plenary meetings of the General Assembly in 1985 to questions relating to the International Youth Year and youth policies.

26. The programme for the International Youth Year in Poland comprised a wide range of activities, including the participation of youth in the decision-making process at the political level as well as in trade unions and school and university bodies. An important role would be played by Polish youth in the implementation of economic reforms currently being introduced in Poland, as those reforms were regarded by youth as a real opportunity for their own professional and social advancement. The programme of activities for the International Youth Year provided for the adoption of the Law on Youth. The draft Law was under consideration by a working group of the Polish Parliament and was the subject of consultations with youth organizations. Every effort would be made to adopt the Law during the International Youth Year. The Law would become a sort of charter of rights and duties of the younger generation in Poland. During the Year, great emphasis would be placed on ensuring equal educational opportunities for young people coming from different social levels. Medical and rehabilitation services for disabled young people would be improved in order to enable them to achieve their full social integration; emphasis would also be laid on sport, tourism, cultural activities and leisure. Participation of Polish youth in activities to promote the maintenance of peace and security, development, social progress, and the struggle against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid would also be strengthened. The International Youth Year coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany. Certainly that anniversary would mobilize Polish youth in the

(Mr. Kalinowski, Poland)

struggle against revisionist tendencies and the resurgence of Fascist and neo-Fascist ideologies, which seemed to be on the move again in a number of Western countries.

27. The main guidelines for youth policies in Poland had been presented in a special chapter of the resolution of the ninth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party held in 1981. In line with the recommendations of that Congress, in early 1982 a report had been prepared, followed by a government programme for the improvement of the living and professional opportunities of young people, covering nearly 200 issues concerning youth, both of current and long term character, up to 1990. The programme laid special emphasis on education, the quality of education, the transition from education to work, and the improvement of working conditions. One of the priority tasks of government policy was to ensure employment for all young people willing to work, in accordance with the socialist right to work guaranteed by Poland's Constitution. A number of preferential rights concerning the employment of young people had been introduced. In order to improve the housing situation of young people, which was still a serious problem, the Government had adopted guidelines for housing construction until the year 1990, with the aim of promoting initiative among young people in that area. His Government provided special protection to young families. A parent who took leave to take care of a child under four years of age was entitled, for a period of 24 months, to an allowance equivalent to the minimum wage. Although the State could not fully mitigate the effects of the current difficult economic situation in Poland, it did alleviate the problems faced by young families.

28. The task of elaborating the guidelines for State policy on youth in Poland had been entrusted to the Committee for Youth Affairs of the Council of Ministers. The Committee consisted of representatives of the Government, political parties, and youth, social and professional organizations, and it advised the Government. The representation of youth on the Committee ensured their participation in policy-making on all youth-related matters. Committees had also been set up at the local level. The participation of youth was not limited, however, to the Committees; it took place primarily through the four major youth organizations and political parties. The youth movement performed two basic functions: firstly, it involved young people in activities for the benefit of their schools, work places and residences; and secondly, it provided them with a platform to identify and articulate their interests through their representatives in the organs of government. As a result of the 1984 elections to the National Councils, 24.2 per cent of the seats in provincial councils and 23.8 per cent in community councils were held by councillors under 35. Moreover, all levels of activity of the local political organs and labour unions were sensitive to the problems of youth, and all of them were open to the participation of young people.

29. Mr. DAWADI (Nepal) said it was estimated that youth comprised one fifth of mankind. With their strength, ability and enthusiasm, young people could contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of their countries and promote world peace and international understanding; but young people, the majority of whom lived in developing countries, faced problems of unemployment, illiteracy

(Mr. Dawadi, Nepal)

and lack of opportunity. The United Nations decision to observe the International Youth Year in 1985 had been guided by the imperative need to harness the energies and creative abilities of youth to the task of building their countries and to participating in national as well as international development and peace.

30. Nepal had established for the International Youth Year a National Committee consisting of 25 high-level members, as well as corresponding co-ordination committees at zonal and district levels. In addition, the Nepal Youth Organization, established under the Constitution within the Social Services National Co-ordination Council, actively participated in welfare programmes in such areas as literacy, afforestation, family planning, and health and sanitation. His delegation wished to express its appreciation to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, ESCAP, UNESCO and UNDP for their co-operation and interest in the activities relating to youth and the observance of the International Youth Year.

31. With regard to the question of aging, he expressed his satisfaction with the progress achieved in the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and with the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/147). He reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to carry out the activities envisaged in the Plan of Action and emphasized the need for continued international co-operation in the exchange of information, research, training and other matters related to aging.

32. Turning to agenda item 91, he said that the work of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and Governments on behalf of the disabled had been encouraging. Nepal itself had launched various programmes for treatment, rehabilitation, education and training, as well as other welfare activities for disabled persons, and was ready to continue its efforts. He wished to stress the importance of strengthening the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons so that the developing and the needy countries could further implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

33. Mr. CERMAK (Austria) said that the modest aspiration of 500 million disabled persons was to live as normal a life as possible, in other words, to be fully integrated into, and participate in society. Once society learned to appreciate the abilities and contributions of the disabled and to recognize their usefulness, it would change its attitude; what was involved was not an act of charity but rather an obligation to guarantee disabled persons their human rights. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons constituted a landmark decision in the social field, particularly with its concept of "equalization of opportunities", which demanded for disabled persons the social justice, dignity and way of life enjoyed by all other members of society.

34. With respect to the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons, he referred to the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/191) and to the statement of the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which gave an impressive account of the Fund's activities.



(Mr. Cermak, Austria)

Austria had favoured the continuation of the Fund for the duration of the Decade and, while agreeing that each international body should implement those parts of the World Programme of Action which fell within its competence, it did not believe that the mere existence of a Trust Fund for the disabled diminished the responsibility of international bodies in that context. UNDP, for example, should increase its activities on behalf of the disabled, but in the planning and execution of projects in accordance with the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, it was essential to take into consideration other aspects which went beyond the scope and competence of the various specialized agencies and other international bodies. Some projects could be executed only by the Secretariat unit dealing exclusively with the problems of the disabled. For that reason he felt that the Trust Fund must continue to be managed by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. He pointed out in that connection, the need to provide the Centre with adequate financial resources as well as personnel so that it could perform its task.

35. Mrs. MENICO (Cyprus), referring to agenda item 91, said that the question of mankind's responsibility towards persons who had been disabled since birth or were disabled as a result of disease or an accident or combat in defence of their countries, deserved special study and planning if societies were to achieve a better quality of life for their members.

36. Within the context of the International Year of Disabled Persons, Cyprus had entrusted the overall responsibility for the implementation of and follow-up to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to a ministerial committee composed of the Ministers of Labour and Social Insurance, Finance, Education and Health and the Secretary of the Interior. The Ministerial Committee had appointed a national committee comprised of representatives of all the governmental bodies concerned and of organizations of the disabled, workers and employers, the Church, local municipalities and minority groups. The National Committee was in charge of planning and co-ordinating the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and submitting suggestions to the Ministerial Committee for concrete measures aimed at solving the problems of the disabled.

37. The National Committee was responsible for initiating such measures as the census of disabled persons carried out in 1982 and the publication of a handbook on schools, institutions and organizations for the disabled and a leaflet on social services for the disabled. Regarding the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled and their integration into society, Cyprus had institutions for the blind and the deaf and for emotionally disturbed and retarded children, as well as other specialized vocational rehabilitation centres. Furthermore, through its Department of Social Welfare and various voluntary organizations, the Government provided services for the disabled. Under Social Insurance Law No. 45/80, partial or total disability pensions were granted to persons whose disability was due to an accident or an occupational disease. Prosthetic centres had been established, as well as a centre for paraplegics which furnished wheelchairs, haemodialysis units in the hospitals of Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos, physiotherapy departments and a clinic for children with cerebral palsy. Efforts would continue to be made to resolve the difficulties of the disabled.

38. Mr. ABDULKAKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the documents relating to agenda items 85 and 89 reflected the efforts the international community had made on behalf of young people and their participation in development. Libya supported the International Youth Year and hoped that all States would take part in the activities aimed at achieving better social and economic conditions for young people throughout the world and eliminating unemployment, social injustice, crime, alcoholism and drugs.

39. His Government did not have to contend with youth unemployment, but was concerned about the problems of the young in other countries. Young people were the foundation of development and must be helped to realize their aspirations by means of education and training plans and programmes. To achieve those objectives, Libya was endeavouring to change the educational structure and to place adequate emphasis on vocational training so as to facilitate the transition from school to everyday life. Youth encounters were being organized, such as the Festival of Young People of Africa in 1983, in which 37 countries of the region had participated and which had had the struggle against imperialism as its slogan; sports and cultural centres were being set up, as well as vacation centres and scientific research centres for young people.

40. At a time of violence throughout the world, it was appropriate to remember the young people of occupied Palestine, South Africa and Namibia, who were having to fight to free their countries from injustice. On the occasion of the International Youth Year, an appeal should be made to the international community to help those young people, by force if their goal could not be achieved by peaceful means. He expressed his solidarity with the young people of Western Europe and Latin America who were demonstrating against nuclear arms.

41. In connection with agenda item 90, it should be noted that Libya had complied with all the recommendations of the World Assembly on Aging aimed at ensuring the economic and social well-being of the elderly, including the Vienna Plan of Action. In Libya, elderly persons did not have the same social and economic problems as in other countries, because of the close family ties that were part of the Islamic tradition. Beyond that, however, the elderly could rely on social security to meet all their economic and social needs. They also took part in development plans especially conceived for them.

42. A relationship existed between the political climate in the world and social well-being, especially in the developing countries. If the resources currently being devoted to the arms race were directed instead towards development plans, the living conditions of all the people, including the aging, stood to benefit enormously.

43. Mr. CHAYABONGSE (Thailand) said that his country had always attached great importance to issues relating to youth. In 1981, there had been approximately 11 million young people between the ages of 14 and 25 in Thailand. It was projected that in 1986 their number would rise to 12.5 million, or nearly 20 per cent of the entire population of 50 million. The Constitution of Thailand made reference to the significance of youth in development and, accordingly, the

(Mr. Chayabongse, Thailand)

National Youth Bureau planned and co-ordinated the Government's policy on children, youth and youth development. Thailand was also working closely with United Nations agencies in that area.

44. His delegation fully supported the objectives of the International Youth Year, namely, Participation, Development, Peace. It was gratified to learn that 125 countries had already established national co-ordinating committees for the International Youth Year; among them was the National Committee of Thailand, presided over by a Minister, which had been established in 1981. The National Committee of Thailand had recently approved 12 programmes which were in line with the plans of action for the Asia-Pacific region adopted at the regional preparatory meeting for the International Youth Year held by ESCAP in Thailand in 1983. His delegation had co-sponsored a draft resolution on the question (A/C.3/39/L.6) because it was convinced that the preparation and observance in 1985 of the International Youth Year under the motto "Participation, Development, Peace" would offer a useful and significant opportunity for drawing attention to the situation and specific needs and aspirations of youth, for increasing co-operation at all levels in dealing with youth issues, for undertaking concerted action programmes in favour of youth and for involving young people in the study and resolution of major national, regional and international problems. His delegation also supported the decision whereby the General Assembly would devote an appropriate number of its plenary meetings at the fortieth session in 1985 to policies and programmes relating to youth and those meetings would be designated as the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year.

45. Turning to agenda item 90, he said that Thailand, like other Asian countries attached special importance and attention to the question of aging. In Thailand, the aging were accorded the highest respect and the Government had declared 13 April, which was the traditional New Year's Day, the Day of the Aging. To cope with the problems of the aging, several governmental and non-governmental agencies, co-ordinated by the National Committee on the Aging, had been established. The National Committee was responsible for putting into effect the support given by Thailand to the United Nations through its active participation in the World Assembly on Aging held in Vienna in July 1982.

46. With regard to agenda item 91, the Thai Government had given priority to programmes to prevent disabilities, promote rehabilitation and provide equal opportunities for the disabled, and had incorporated a long-term programme for the rehabilitation of the disabled into its economic and social development plan. Thailand, like other developing countries, believed that the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons should be maintained in order to continue to provide support to activities and programmes for the disabled in developing countries with limited resources.

47. Mr. GHANEM (Democratic Yemen) said that he was in total agreement with the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/39/191). He considered that, in accordance with the priorities established for the use of the United Nations Trust Fund for

(Mr. Ghanem, Democratic Yemen)

the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Democratic Yemen National Committee would be able to collaborate in the implementation of the World Programme of Action by undertaking a nation-wide statistical study to determine the needs of disabled persons, thereby facilitating the provision of the necessary medical and social services. In the case of blind persons, three institutions in Democratic Yemen were implementing training programmes in appropriate artisanal crafts, enabling that category of the disabled to become integrated into the general educational system. Cultural and recreational activities for blind persons were also being fostered as an important complement to their general education. In the area of medical care for the disabled, special emphasis was placed on health care for mothers and children. As a result of those activities, it had been possible to eradicate smallpox and various campaigns to eradicate other diseases were under way. A survey had been carried out in Aden in 1974-1975 to determine the most common categories of disabled persons. The results of that survey, which could be generalized to apply to the rest of the country, showed that the largest categories were inter alia, the mentally ill, paraplegics, the blind and the dumb. With adequate economic aid, which Democratic Yemen would be able to obtain from the Trust Fund, the rates for those disabilities could be greatly reduced, since in almost every case, they were acquired disabilities.

48. With regard to the item on aging, he pointed out that persons over the age of 65 constituted only 4 per cent of the population of Democratic Yemen, although that percentage was growing steadily as a result of advances in health care. In Democratic Yemen the aged had no serious problems in society because of the free assistance granted by the State and the protection they traditionally enjoyed within their own families. However, a home for the aged had been established in which they could pursue activities without being isolated from their social context, and it was envisaged to continue to develop in social programmes for the elderly, who deserved to enjoy the last years of their lives after having actively contributed to society.

49. Mr. PERUGINI (Italy) said that by designating 1985 as the International Youth Year in its resolution 34/151, the General Assembly had recognized the importance of youth, both as the recipient of governmental policies and as an active force capable of playing a role in shaping the world's future. His delegation was convinced that the main objective of the International Youth Year should be to make public opinion aware of the needs and aspirations of youth. In that context, Italy had taken a number of initiatives in order to implement the relevant resolutions and recommendations of international organizations and the General Assembly.

50. In order to implement fully the three main goals of the International Youth Year - participation, development and peace - it would be necessary to make every effort to overcome the principal problems which, in varying degrees, affected the young in the majority of countries: unemployment and underemployment, access to education and training, prevention of alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse, equality for young women, crime prevention and difficulties faced by migrant workers. Italy had already adopted measures to guarantee the fundamental rights of young people, especially the right to work and the right to health and culture, training and

(Mr. Perugini, Italy)

education. His Government had passed a special law whose aim was to create jobs for the young and, in the context of public aid to development, it was financing an associated experts junior professional officers' programme, offering opportunities for international job training to graduates from Italy and from developing countries.

51. Turning to agenda item 91, he said that his delegation had carefully studied the Secretary-General's interesting report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/39/191). Article 38 of the Italian Constitution stated that disabled and handicapped persons had the right to education and to vocational training. His Government had therefore given priority to issues concerning disabled persons in its National Health Plan, which included a section envisaging the maximum possible integration of disabled persons into society through health care, professional training and the planning of adequate infrastructures for disabled persons.

52. The National Co-ordinating Committee on Disability and its subregional working groups, established during the International Year of Disabled Persons, had continued their activities aimed at the full integration of disabled persons into Italian society, while also paying attention to the prevention of disabilities.

53. Mr. ABDELMAHMOUD (Sudan) said that his Government attached great importance to the items currently under consideration in the Committee. Those items were interrelated since young people, the aged and disabled persons all formed part of the fabric of society. Both Sudanese tradition and the principles of Islam were respectful of those groups. With a view to implementing the Plan of Action, the Sudan was interested in co-ordinating the activities of its National Committee for the International Youth Year with those of other countries. In that connection, the important role of young people in the struggle for peace, against racial discrimination and for the new international economic order should be emphasized.

54. The Sudan had set up a National Council for Sport and Youth Welfare, as well as cultural and recreational institutions. The Government hoped that the Year would offer the opportunity for an exchange of views.

55. Referring to the item on aging, he said that his Government was particularly concerned with the elderly, who represented society's past, but also constituted an independent social institution. He considered that the Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging should be strengthened through global activities.

56. With respect to the declaration of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, his country had drawn up social welfare plans and programmes to guarantee disabled persons a decent life. Those programmes included a centre for the prevention of childhood illnesses which caused disabilities, and training and medical and health information projects. The Sudan also supported the World Programme of Action and appealed for contributions to the Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

57. Miss Kim XUAN (Viet Nam) said that youth, and she herself as a young person, were greatly concerned at the sharp deterioration in the international situation, the arms race and the danger of a nuclear war that could totally destroy life on Earth, as well as at the deepening world economic crisis. Peace, for young people and for the coming generations, was a synonym for the future. The International Youth Year should therefore serve to intensify the struggle for peace, to prevent a nuclear catastrophe and to curb the arms race. The role of young people in promoting peace and understanding among nations had been demonstrated by their active participation in campaigns for peace and disarmament.

58. It was deplorable that in a number of countries lack of opportunities for work and lack of faith in the future were leading so many young people to become social outcasts. Young people were those most harmed by the allocation for military purposes of resources that could have been used for the good of society. The young generations must act in order to introduce changes into their society, placing themselves at the service of the noble ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and co-operation.

59. Young people could not be defined solely as the agents of the future nor as the heirs to the world; they should also be identified as a vital element in present-day society. The problems of youth were therefore closely linked to the problems of society and Governments should create the necessary conditions to enable young people to participate in the development of society.

60. For 40 years, Viet Nam, engaged in the struggle against foreign aggression for national independence and freedom, had not known peace. That meant that its people in general, and its youth in particular, loved peace and freedom. Young people in Viet Nam had participated in all peace movements and disarmament campaigns and had contributed to the development and consolidation of the international democratic youth movement through co-operation, and the exchange of youth delegations, with numerous national, regional and international youth and student organizations. Vietnamese young people were participating in the public, political, social and economic life of the country, thus contributing to their own development. Mention must be made of the tree-planting project, which had been under way in Viet Nam many years before the International Youth Year, in which 14 million students and 500,000 teachers were currently involved and which was of great importance to a country like Viet Nam which had been ravaged by war, particularly chemical warfare, during the 1960s and 1970s. Viet Nam had established a national co-ordination committee for the International Youth Year with a long-term plan of action and intended to issue a law on youth in the near future.

61. Her delegation was happy to note that much progress had been made in the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities adopted by the General Assembly in 1981, and supported the recommendation that in 1985 some of the General Assembly's plenary meetings should be devoted to the United Nations World Conference of the International Youth Year.

62. Her delegation also welcomed with satisfaction the organization of the forthcoming World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1985, which would

(Mr. Kim Xuan, Viet Nam)

constitute an important contribution to the observance of the International Youth Year. It should be noted that festivals of that kind had been held long before the declaration of the International Youth Year and that at the beginning of the 1950s Vietnamese youth delegations had often been invited to take part in them, which had provided them with an opportunity to integrate themselves into the outside world and consolidate their solidarity with young people in other countries in the common cause of peace and national independence.

63. In the opinion of her delegation, the United Nations should co-ordinate all activities for the International Youth Year and other anniversaries, such as the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations. The success of the Year depended greatly on practical measures at the national level, which meant that action taken by Governments would be the decisive factor in the achievement of the goals of the Year. Achievement of those goals - peace, participation and development - should form part of the regular activities of the United Nations. Accordingly, the main goal of national co-ordinating committees should be not merely to organize activities during 1985 but to engage in long-term work to satisfy the needs and interests of youth at the national level.

64. Mr. JALBANI (Pakistan), referring to the report of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, annexed to document A/39/262, said that Pakistan shared the interest of the international community in helping to save youth from negative influences and channel its energies towards more meaningful pursuits. One of the main problems confronting youth in Pakistan was unemployment, in both urban and rural areas, resulting from the low literacy rate, lack of opportunities and insufficient guidance for enhancing youth's capabilities. His Government had undertaken various programmes through community development and social welfare schemes. Those programmes included functional literacy centres for youth, the purpose of which was to lower the high rate of illiteracy in the country, estimated at 78.3 per cent; vocational training units for men and socio-economic centres for women, the purpose of which was to equip young people with skills which would enable them to raise their standards of living; and the organization of youth into functional groups, the purpose of which was to make young people aware of the country's social problems. With a view to implementing the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the Preparation and Observance of the International Youth Year, Pakistan had prepared a study on youth activities and had established a national co-ordination committee. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs was preparing a national plan of action for the observance of the Year, which included functional literacy programmes, training and employment programmes and youth councils, youth camps and hostels, youth exchange programmes and rehabilitation programmes for juvenile delinquents and young drug addicts. Young people were also encouraged to participate in such activities as the United Nations tree-planting campaign.

65. His Government considered that ESCAP, in co-operation with other United Nations bodies and agencies, should increase its efforts to provide training facilities for young workers and youth leaders and develop curricula which would enable young people to participate in development.

(Mr. Jalbani, Pakistan)

66. Turning to the question of aging, he said that strong religious convictions, traditions and social structure in Pakistan had not allowed the problem of aging to become a national issue. In Pakistan, it was incumbent on younger generations to assist the aging with a sense of pride and honour. However, the growth in population, in both absolute and relative terms, carried with it serious social and economic implications for various societies. Pakistan implemented programmes for the aging, such as programmes on the strengthening of health facilities in rural areas, the promotion of activities to prevent rural migration, assistance to parents whose children had emigrated abroad or to big cities, and programmes of preparation for a meaningful life after retirement. The Ministry of Health, Special Education and Social Welfare was responsible for implementing those programmes.

67. His Government was also interested in the welfare of the disabled. That interest was manifest in the various measures adopted at the national level such as the promotion of awareness of the rights of disabled persons, increased budgetary allocations, revitalization of existing services for the disabled, the establishment of a special fund for the disabled and the promulgation of an ordinance on the employment of disabled persons. The Government had also formulated a plan for the special education, welfare and development of disabled children. Moreover, it had declared the period 1982-1991 as the decade of disabled persons in Pakistan.

68. In conclusion, he expressed Pakistan's support for the continuation of the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons and the hope that it would provide Governments with much-needed assistance in the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

69. Mr. NGKAH MENG (Singapore) referring to agenda item 91, said that the full integration of disabled persons into the economic activities and social life of their communities could be achieved only if they knew that they had been accepted and were respected as rightful members of those communities. Education and the provision of sufficient financial resources had a vital role to play in achieving that end. The task was much more difficult for developing countries, which were unable to meet the basic needs of their population in general, and therefore urgently required international co-operation.

70. Singapore supported United Nations activities concerning the disabled. It might be recalled that Singapore was the venue for the inaugural congress of the Disabled Persons International, held during the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981. Since then, Singapore had made much progress in recognizing the problems, the needs and the potential of the disabled. Architects and designers had been urged to incorporate design features for the disabled when designing new buildings. A training programme based in the home had been launched with the objective of helping parents to rehabilitate their disabled children. In the economic and employment field, more employers recognized that the disabled had marketable skills or could be trained to acquire them. The Social Affairs Ministry maintained a computerized register of all disabled persons in Singapore to



(Mr. Ngkah Meng, Singapore)

facilitate vocational guidance, job placement and follow-up services for the disabled. The Government worked in close co-ordination with the Singapore Council of Social Service, which had 137 member organizations providing a wide range of social services to the disabled, the aged, the destitute and other under-privileged groups. The previous year, the Council had established the Community Chest of Singapore to encourage the big business world and the man in the street to contribute towards a central revolving fund to finance voluntary social organizations.

71. Mr. EDON (Benin) said that the People's Republic of Benin, 60 per cent of whose population consisted of young people, attached great importance to the problem of youth. That could be seen from the establishment, during the previous year, of the Benin Revolutionary Youth Organization, which consisted of young peasants, intellectuals and workers. Two of the basic principles of that organization were organizational autonomy and the mobilization of young people on the basis of their own interests. Putting into practice the conviction that the future belonged to the youth, the Government of Benin was devoting more than a third of its national budget to education and vocational training. The participation of the young people of Benin in economic and political life was considerable, as was their dedication to the development of their country and to the cause of international peace and security.

72. In reponse to General Assembly resolution 34/151 of 17 December 1979, in which 1985 was designated as International Youth Year, the National Preparatory Committee for International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, presided over by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, represented the different sectors of the youth of Benin and had established a programme of activities in keeping with the General Assembly's recommendations.

73. He appreciated the efforts made by various United Nations agencies in preparation for the observance of the International Year, in particular by UNESCO, which intended to hold a World Congress on Youth in June 1985 in Barcelona (Spain), to review the situation and role of youth in society.

74. Mrs. WARD-OSBORNE (Guyana) said that the unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 34/151, in which 1985 was designated International Youth Year, was an indication of the international commitment to the involvement of youth in all spheres of activity in today's world. In keeping with that decision, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/28 of 13 November 1981, Guyana had embarked on a programme for the dissemination of information to governmental and non-governmental youth-oriented departments, to encourage the elaboration of specific programmes prior to and during 1985. As a result of that programme, a National Committee for Youth had been established. That Committee, chaired by a Member of Parliament who represented youth, and which drew representation from governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations, was planning to hold out-reach workshops for young people in both urban and rural areas, and seminars with various government and public agencies concerned with sensitization programmes intended to benefit both youth and youth representatives. In August 1984, Guyana

(Mrs. Ward-Osborne, Guyana)

had been host to a Planning Meeting of Caribbean representatives of the Young Women's Christian Association, which had been a preparatory meeting for the International Youth Conference to be held in Jamaica in April 1985, in which Guyana intended to actively participate.

75. More than half of the population of Guyana consisted of young people. The Government of Guyana had taken legal steps to ensure that young people were represented on the boards and councils of leading corporations, banks and other public institutions. Since September 1975, education had been free at all levels, from nursery school to university, and technical and vocational education were available to both sexes in national technical schools and through apprenticeship schemes with public corporations, all free of cost. The work study programmes facilitated the natural introduction of students to the working world, through a system whereby students were attached to various government and private institutions during the holidays.

76. Turning to agenda item 90, she said that in Guyana, public and private food services existed to cater to the everyday needs of the aged. Pension schemes for retired workers were constantly being updated, and the social welfare system provided pensions to persons who had not been engaged in regular employment.

77. On agenda item 91, she said that Guyana had so far been able to undertake a modest programme of activities for the disabled, which was largely implemented through institutions such as the Institute for the Blind, the School for the Handicapped and a Centre for the Physically Handicapped.

78. Lastly, she said that Guyana was not exclusively concerned with the well-being of its own young, aging and disabled persons, but also with their counterparts in Namibia and South Africa, for whom, given the prevailing situation, 1985 would hardly be a year to celebrate. Guyana looked forward to the day when youth, the aging and the disabled in South Africa and Namibia would be free to exercise their right to participation, development and peace in their own country.

79. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Malaysia had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/39/L.6.

The meeting rose at 9.15 p.m.