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THIRD COMMITTEE
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held on
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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MADAR (Somalia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/185, A/39/262; A/C.3/39/L.6)

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1. Mrs. MAITUM (Uganda), speaking on agenda item 85, said that Uganda supported the objectives of International Youth Year - participation, development and peace - which coincided with the aspirations of youth. Peace was a necessary prerequisite for participation and development both of humanity as a whole and of youth. The participation of youth in decisions which affected them and determined their future was of the utmost importance, as was the responsibility of youth vis-à-vis the present and the future.

2. The participation of youth in development had the two-fold advantage of integrating young people in nation-building while developing their character and their potential. The Specific Programme of Measures and Activities adopted by the General Assembly should guide action at the national, regional and international levels. However, certain aspects of the Programme remained contested, particularly the participation of youth in areas other than those that directly concerned them, on the pretext of avoiding any politicization of the International Year and the role of youth. Uganda, for its part, held that the role of youth should not be unduly restricted because young people were an integral part of the society and constituted a valuable human asset.

3. Young people in today's world were witnessing at the same time a serious deterioration in the economic situation and an arms race which threatened the survival of mankind and diverted vast resources from development. They were aware of the escalation of international tensions and the inequities in the international economic system, of which they too were victims. It was therefore right that they should participate in efforts to promote disarmament and the establishment of a new international economic order. Similarly, Uganda believed that it was right that young people who suffered from racist oppression in South Africa and the denial of their rights in Palestine should commit themselves to struggle.

4. Uganda believed, like the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, that programmes at the national level were of paramount importance and the most effective means of promoting the participation of youth; it was concerned at the inadequate funds available for the promotional and information activities provided for in the Specific Programme. The vast majority of the 125 States that had

(Mrs. Maitum, Uganda)

established national co-ordinating committees were developing countries which did not have sufficient resources to implement youth programmes. Uganda therefore urged Member States in a position to do so to contribute to the Trust Fund for the International Youth Year and thanked UNESCO, ILO, WHO and the regional commissions for financing some national programmes. It seemed that because of financial constraints, it would unfortunately not be possible to convene a world youth conference. Uganda therefore supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in its resolution 1 (III) (A/39/262).

5. Uganda had established a National Co-ordinating Committee headed by the Deputy Minister of Culture and Community Development and composed of representatives of 11 youth organizations, 9 ministries, the Uganda Red Cross Society, the Family Planning Association, the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO and UNDP. The Committee had prepared a national youth programme and had undertaken certain activities which, with the assistance of the international community, should benefit all Ugandan youth and enable them to play their role in Ugandan society.

6. Mr. ROSHANRAWAN (Afghanistan), speaking on items 85 and 89, said that, while the enthusiasm and dreams of youth were certainly focused on the future, they were also determined by the present. However, youth today lived in a contradictory world in which the scientific and technological revolution, when placed in the service of mankind by a progressive social system, could eliminate poverty, disease and ignorance, but in which mankind was also threatened with annihilation, in which the establishment of the new international economic order and popular revolutions were opposed by imperialist forces, in which the principles of peaceful coexistence were no longer respected, in which reactionary dictatorships, colonialism, racism, neo-fascism and the lies of the media reigned, a world, finally, in which the crisis of capitalism had brought about unemployment and inflation for the inhabitants of the capitalist countries and an aggravation of the economic problems of developing countries. The future therefore belonged to youth, but the present would determine the future. It was therefore imperative that the present generation should lighten the burden of the legacy it would leave to youth. That meant that young people should participate in the struggle for peace and security in the world and for understanding and co-operation among nations. International Youth Year offered an opportunity to strengthen the role of youth in the national social and economic life and in world affairs and for youth to exercise their rights to education, training and employment. International Youth Year, far from being an end in itself, must mark the beginning of an effort to utilize fully the potential of youth in order to realize their dreams.

7. In Afghanistan, the Democratic Youth Organization had mobilized some 100,000 young people at the local and national levels. That organization had a long tradition of struggle against despotism and played a growing role in the political, economic and social life of Afghanistan. It enabled young people to be heard and to participate in the building of a new society. It formed part of the National Patriotic Front, in which all nationalities and sectors of Afghan society were represented, participated where necessary in the production process and efforts to eradicate illiteracy, and educated Afghan youth in patriotism and love for mankind.

(Mr. Roshanrawan, Afghanistan)

8. The Afghan Government, attaching great importance to the education of youth, had opened more than 800 new schools, had restored a great number of others and had introduced a system of night courses in schools and colleges and vocational training courses in factories, particularly for young workers, with a view to promoting their training and rapid promotion and helping them to acquire new skills.

9. With respect to item 91, the Afghan Government also attached great importance to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons because the undeclared war being waged by imperialism and the terrorist acts carried out by mercenary bands against the revolutionary order in Afghanistan had left many wounded and disabled among the Afghan patriots. The Government was therefore concerned with providing those persons with the necessary rehabilitation and social welfare services and with guaranteeing them certain privileges. In view of the damage caused to the national economy by the counter-revolutionaries and the legacy of despotic régimes of the past, Afghanistan greatly needed, for that purpose, the assistance of the United Nations and other international organizations. However, his delegation was of the opinion that the full implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and other similar programmes required the establishment of a new international economic order.

10. With respect to item 90, in Afghanistan, aging was not a problem because elderly persons were regarded as an asset to society and had an important place in the family. Furthermore, young people respected their wisdom and experience.

11. Mr. EDMAN (Finland) speaking on agenda item 85, said that Finland had supported the proclamation of the International Youth Year because it believed that there was a need to focus the attention of the international community on the problems and aspirations of young people in all countries. Youth was concerned about the future in a world characterized by international tension, arms build-up and the threat of nuclear war, by economic and social differences, unemployment, human rights violations and environmental pollution. Millions of young people in developing countries lacked even the elementary security of daily meals, housing, health care or adequate education.

12. The preparations for the International Youth Year were well under way. His delegation supported the recommendation that an appropriate number of the General Assembly's plenary meetings in 1985 should be devoted to policies and programmes relating to youth as a part of the International Youth Year. It also supported the proposal that youth representatives should be included in the national delegations at those meetings. In following up the International Youth Year, his delegation wished to avoid the establishment of unnecessary new structures; instead, the existing international human rights instruments, which fully covered the rights of youth, should be implemented more effectively. His delegation emphasized that most of the activities connected with the International Youth Year should take place at the national and local levels, thereby permitting the active participation of youth in those activities.

(Mr. Edman, Finland)

13. In 1982 his Government had established a National Co-ordinating Committee composed of representatives of the Government and the municipal authorities, of the churches, the political parties, the trade unions and of youth organizations. The Committee was about to finish its work on a national programme of action including short-term and long-term measures relating to the employment of youth, their education and leisure, their participation in society, equality between the sexes and international understanding and peace, as well as special measures for disadvantaged youth. The presentation by the Government of its first comprehensive report on Finnish youth policy had recently afforded the members of Parliament an opportunity to give careful consideration to questions relating to youth in Finland. National and local activities were to be supplemented in 1985 by international events designed to increase contacts and understanding among the youth of all countries. Youth should also participate more closely in the work of the United Nations system, particularly within the framework of the Geneva Informal Meeting. Only through an awareness of its international responsibility could youth fully contribute to a world characterized by participation, development and peace.

14. Mr. FIDER (Philippines), speaking on agenda item 90, said that his delegation supported the International Plan of Action on Aging, the main purpose of which was to guarantee older persons their full economic rights and social security, including opportunities to assist in national development, and that he earnestly hoped that the Plan of Action would continue to enjoy the support of Governments. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/39/147), his delegation wished to draw attention to the following points, which might serve as a guide for the periodic assessments of the Plan, the first of which was to be undertaken in 1985: (1) the encouraging co-operation between the national committees and the United Nations; (2) the participation of professional and non-governmental organizations in the activities organized as a follow-up to the world Assembly on Aging; (3) the network established between governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote research and training for the benefit of the aging, with the United Nations as the focal point; (4) the need to continue to promote the United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging as an important device for attaining the goals of the Plan of Action; and (5) the need to integrate the question of aging in women's and youth issues in the activities to be undertaken in 1985.

15. Modern industrialization and the growing need for self-sufficiency created difficulties for the aged. That was why the Philippines had established for that group, which it considered the nucleus of society, programmes and services including the Elderly Volunteer Programme whose task was to show that the aged could contribute usefully to the life of society by teaching adults or by taking care of children in day-care centres, for example, health and dental services, as well as information and education on correct nutrition to reduce disabilities and diseases. The Government had also adopted measures to ensure income security and employment for the elderly. Retirement benefits were adjusted in order to guarantee an adequate livelihood, and those not covered by the social security system were encouraged to participate in productivity projects started by the Government.

(Mr. Fider, Philippines)

16. Turning to agenda item 91, he said that his country, which was committed to the promotion of social justice and the provision of adequate social services for all, and also believed, that it was the responsibility of each country (aided, it was true, by the assistance of donor countries to international institutions) to take measures to help the disabled, had started an educational campaign relating to disability prevention programmes and manpower training programmes in the field of primary health care, rehabilitation, nutrition and drug education. The Philippines had also undertaken programmes to equalize opportunities by providing scholarships, including disabled persons in community services and developing their skills and abilities. The Government was also currently working on a pilot project to explore various types of employment opportunities for the disabled. In that connection, his country regarded as extremely important the continuance of the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons in so far as it would contribute appreciably to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and hoped that Member States would make every possible effort to support the Fund.

17. His country therefore endorsed the activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on behalf of disabled persons, including the recommendations of the Experts Group Meeting on the Development and Utilization of Local Manpower and Technology for Disability-related Services in Rural and Poverty Areas in the the region, and especially the establishment of a regional resource network for technical co-operation. The Commission had also provided advice on the part of the World Programme of Action which related to regional support service in disability prevention and rehabilitation of the Technological Research Centre of the Philippines. His delegation also concurred in the observations of the Secretary-General relating to paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 37/53 on priority areas for action at the national, regional and interregional levels.

18. For all those reasons, his delegation appealed to the Secretary-General to maintain qualified and adequate staff support to deal with rehabilitation matters since any reduction of staff could adversely affect the implementation of the World Programme of Action.

19. Mr. LIGAIRI (Fiji), speaking on agenda items 85 and 89, said that all activities relating to youth were of particular importance because they represented an investment for the future of mankind. In a great number of countries, youth constituted the majority of the population, with all the resources of energy and vitality which that represented. In Fiji, 63 per cent of the population was under the age of 21.

20. Problems relating to youth might vary, of course, from country to country, but a good number of them (unemployment, rural-urban migration, limited educational opportunities and limited access to health care and nutrition) were common to many countries. As stated in various United Nations reports, 300 million young people were in search of work in the developing countries, a situation which posed a threat, if no remedy was found, to the economic growth and social progress of humanity as a whole. Therefore, Fiji urged the United Nations to focus on that

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(Mr. Ligairi, Fiji)

problem during the next several years and to come forward with recommendations for measures to support national and local efforts, incorporating action aimed at solving the problems of youth into the overall strategy to deal with the problems of society as a whole.

21. The Government of Fiji, for its part, had tried to devise programmes to increase the participation of youth in development and decision-making. It took into account the needs of young people themselves in formulating national plans and programmes and attempted to revive the various traditions and cultures of the country which might support youth development. His delegation felt that policies developed in harmony with the traditions and customs of a society were more useful and easier to implement than impersonal strategies which could be applied everywhere.

22. Fiji was devoting its efforts to education in general (which was a large item in its budget) because, in its view, formal education and informal programmes were inseparable and complementary. The International Youth Year, 1985, could indeed be useful if the preparatory work for it adopted an integrated approach and took account of the inseparability of school and out-of-school programmes for youth. The United Nations should also include, as part of the Year, programmes to assist members in linking the two types of education.

23. In Fiji, formal training programmes in urban areas and informal training schemes in rural areas were being undertaken to promote self-reliance and self-sufficiency, to promote community awareness and to develop a sense of responsibility. The Government's policy was to encourage youth organizations and to urge them to re-examine their role in society. Activities for the International Youth Year, 1985, would be co-ordinated by the Fiji National Co-ordinating Committee, under the chairmanship of the Director of Youth and Sport, who would organize youth rallies, community services, income-generating projects, training programmes, seminars and workshops.

24. In conclusion, his delegation supported the suggestion that certain plenary meetings of the General Assembly the following year should be designated, in so far as Assembly policies and practices permitted, as the World Conference for the International Youth Year.

25. Mr. CYRII (Sri Lanka) said that only the participation of youth at all levels and in every sphere could lead to a better world, in which peace was found through development. It was therefore fitting that the themes chosen to celebrate the International Youth Year were participation, development and peace.

26. His delegation supported the idea of holding a fourth session of the Advisory Committee in 1985 to consider further planning of activities in the field of youth, and it also welcomed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee to allocate a certain number of plenary meetings at the next General Assembly session to policies and programmes relating to youth. His delegation felt that it was also necessary to improve the channels of communication between the United Nations and youth organizations, as the Advisory Committee had recommended.

(Mr. Cyrii, Sri Lanka)

27. The suggestions made at the regional preparatory meetings for the International Youth Year, held the previous year under the auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, had been followed by Sri Lanka, which had already established, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs, a committee to co-ordinate activities in 1985 for the Year. Those activities were very varied. In particular, his Government planned to develop vocational training for youth, to create youth clubs at the village level, to organize seminars on issues such as environmental pollution and drug abuse, to launch island-wide tree-planting campaigns and to set up educational and informative programmes aimed at promoting understanding among different religious, ethnic and cultural groups in the country. The youth of Sri Lanka, who accounted for more than half the population of the island, were closely associated with those activities.

28. The importance which Sri Lanka attached to youth had not caused it to lose sight of two vulnerable groups, the aging and the disabled. The recent survey in Sri Lanka had shown that, by the year 2025, persons over the age of 60 would represent at least 14 per cent of the country's population. His Government had adopted policies, in accordance with the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, to guarantee to the aging a decent standard of living in all spheres.

29. As for the disabled, they represented approximately 0.8 per cent of the population of the country. Not only was the Sri Lankan Ministry of Social Services, with the assistance of non-governmental organizations, trying to rehabilitate and integrate that group into the life of the nation, but the Government was considering setting up a national committee to draw up, in liaison with various ministries and departments, a national plan of action for disabled persons. That plan would cover all aspects of the rehabilitation of the disabled and the prevention of disabilities. In Sri Lanka, disabled children were placed in residential homes, where they received an education suited to their needs. Access to higher education and vocational training was open to them. Sri Lanka expressed its thanks to the many intergovernmental agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organization, as well as to non-governmental organizations, such as NORAD, Interlink and the Helen Keller Foundation, for their valuable assistance to the country in the rehabilitation field.

30. Closely linked to the problems of the disabled was the problem of indigent people in urban areas. For those people, who depended solely on public charity, Sri Lanka had launched various training projects designed to lift them out of poverty and restore their dignity. All those projects were extremely costly, and his delegation expressed its hope, in that regard, that careful consideration would be given to the proposal of the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs that debtor nations which pursued family planning, environmental and social welfare programmes should be made eligible for credits and discounts against their debt.

31. Mr. KALINOWSKI (Poland), speaking on agenda items 90 and 91, said that his country subscribed fully to the objectives of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and would spare no effort in achieving them. In view of its current economic difficulties, his Government's fundamental task was to provide special protection to the most vulnerable groups, which of course included disabled and elderly persons. Activities carried out under the World Programme of Action and the International Plan of Action on Aging were co-ordinated by the Council for Elderly and Disabled Persons, an advisory body to the Council of Ministers set up in 1982 by a decision of Parliament. Recent programmes emphasized rehabilitation, especially vocational rehabilitation, of disabled persons. Particular attention was given to disabled children to meet their needs with regard to medical treatment and rehabilitation, education, culture and recreation, as well as in the area of social benefits and assistance. Attention was also paid to the employment of disabled persons; in that connection, various co-operatives used technologies suitable for disabled persons with different disabilities. Poland was ready to share its experience in that field with the developing countries and to supply them with equipment for small industrial enterprises. Orthopaedic and rehabilitation equipment was also being modernized. Special emphasis was placed on the design of toys to stimulate the development of children with visual dysfunctions. Firms manufacturing orthopaedic and rehabilitation equipment enjoyed special privileges granted by the Government, which controlled the quantity and quality of those products. His country had also launched information activities to increase awareness of the problems and needs of the disabled, the elderly and aging persons and a television programme using sign language was broadcast throughout the country. His country did not formulate any policies regarding those vulnerable groups until it had consulted with the organizations representing their interests. Their rights were guaranteed and protected by law, and the Council for Elderly and Disabled Persons had undertaken a systematic review of existing legislation in order to adapt it to their current needs. Despite all those measures, however, much remained to be done.

32. In conclusion, his delegation drew attention to the need to take into account the rights and special requirements of disabled persons when drafting international human rights instruments.

33. Mrs. MARCOULLIS (Cyprus), speaking on agenda items 85 and 89, said that young people were the main victims of the violence which characterized the modern world. Thousands of young people were currently in prison and thousands more had become refugees because their countries had been invaded and occupied by foreign forces. It was always young people who were asked to sacrifice their lives for freedom and national defence and, unfortunately, it was very probable that thousands of young people would no longer be alive in 1985 to celebrate the International Youth Year. Little wonder then that young people in all countries were demonstrating against war and the arms race and demanding freedom, justice and peace.

34. International Youth Year must be marked not only by festivities, but also by specific measures aiming at improving the lives of young people. Every effort must be made to provide young people with free education, equality of opportunity in all spheres and the opportunity to participate actively in economic and political life at the national and international levels.

(Mrs. Marcoullis, Cyprus)

35. Her Government had hosted two meetings in 1984 in preparation for International Youth Year: a meeting of the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council, held from 4 to 19 May, in which 30 Commonwealth countries had participated, and a meeting of the International Union of Students, held at Nicosia on 5-7 August to study the role of the student press in the promotion of peace, international solidarity, democracy and social progress. Cyprus hoped that 1985 would see the promotion of those ideals all over the world. The youth of Cyprus looked forward to celebrating International Youth Year in a Cyprus that was free, united and peaceful for all population groups, whether they were Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Maronites, Latins or members of other groups. The young people of Cyprus believed in peace for they had witnessed war and destruction and were convinced that only respect for fundamental human rights could result in the establishment of a world of peace. World leaders bore responsibility for translating those aspirations into reality.

36. Mr. NYAMUDAHONDO (Zimbabwe), speaking on agenda item 85, said that it was regrettable that young people were so conspicuously absent from a debate which concerned them primarily and that there was no justification for such an omission.

37. Development and peace, two of the themes of International Youth Year, were something in which the youth of Zimbabwe, who had sacrificed themselves by the thousands to liberate their country and continued to struggle to free the national economy from foreign domination, were not without experience. Realizing that youth had a role to play, his Government encouraged the participation of young people in a wide range of national projects, which included tree planting, the establishment of co-operatives and the building of schools and hospitals in rural areas. They also took part in paramilitary activities to defend their country from South African aggression.

38. International Youth Year was intended to stimulate awareness of the situation of young people throughout the world. Accordingly, in conjunction with the Year, Zimbabwe was organizing seminars and conferences to which it had invited young people from other countries and from national liberation movements. The solidarity of youth organizations was of vital importance to those movements and special attention should therefore be given to the needs of young people who were fighting oppressive régimes in southern Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

39. In his country, young people themselves submitted projects to the Government, which integrated them into the national development programme. Those projects related primarily to education, employment, and recreation, but the Government was also involved in resettling young refugees and young Zimbabweans returning from exile. The authorities were also actively engaged in the fight against crime and drug abuse. Although those two phenomena involved only a minority of Zimbabwean youth, the Government encouraged young people to combat them, since youth must be in the vanguard of national transformation, a transformation which was being pursued in Zimbabwe through scientific socialism.

(Mr. Nyamudahondo, Zimbabwe)

40. Zimbabwean youth stood in solidarity with all peoples opposed to wars of aggression. They aspired to world peace through nuclear disarmament and believed that a new international economic order was needed to fight the three enemies of mankind, namely, ignorance, hunger and disease.

41. Mr. GOKTURK (Turkey), speaking on agenda items 85 and 89, said that, in its development efforts, his country had highlighted two aspects of problems relating to youth, namely, the well-being of young people and their readiness to assume their role in development. The 1980 census in Turkey had shown that 23 per cent of the population were between 15 and 25 years of age, a relatively high proportion which had prompted the country to undertake youth programmes aimed at eradicating illiteracy (particularly in rural areas), providing better education, living and working conditions and curbing unemployment, crime, violence and terrorism. In that context, he noted the growing threat to world youth posed by drug trafficking and drug abuse, problems to which he would return at a later stage in the Committee's debates. His country had always participated resolutely in activities undertaken by the United Nations to improve the situation of young people. A national committee had been set up in 1979 to co-ordinate activities and preparations for International Youth Year. His delegation noted with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities and the regional meetings, which had created a fresh awareness of the situation of youth.

42. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, which had met at Vienna in April 1984, constituted a sound basis for the activities to be carried out during the Year. The events that would take place in 1985 at the international and regional levels should serve to support the programmes launched by countries in observance of the Year. Similarly, the guidelines for plans and programmes relating to youth should be of a practical nature which would make it feasible for every Member State to participate in follow-up activities.

43. Mr. KOROLEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the themes of the International Youth Year - participation, development, peace - should be seen as being organically linked. The preservation of peace could prove to be a determining factor in improving the situation of young people. The historic role and place of youth in society depended on the real opportunities open to them to develop their potential and achieve their aspirations.

44. The participation of youth in public and social life was one of the foundations of socialist democracy. In the highest legislative body of the Byelorussian SSR, one out of five deputies was less than 30 years of age (one out of three in the local Soviets of People's Deputies). The Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR and the local Soviets also had youth committees. Over 70,000 young workers held posts in trade unions and other mass workers' organizations. Over 60 per cent of all young people participated in the activities of public organizations for the management of production and organs of popular control in enterprises, institutes and farms.

(Mr. Korolev, Byelorussian SSR)

45. Soviet youth had never known unemployment, for the Constitution guaranteed them the right to work. In the Byelorussian SSR, over a million young men and women were employed in the production sector. All necessary steps were taken to permit the continuous education and cultural development of youth. Over 350,000 young Byelorussians were enrolled in the country's 33 higher education and 138 specialized secondary education establishments, where courses were offered free of charge. Each year, nearly 90,000 young people graduated from 244 vocational institutes which provided training in 310 disciplines. All those students were given scholarship and housed in dormitories. Many educational establishments had direct links with the main enterprises and with collective and State farms, thereby ensuring the highest possible level of secondary and higher education and training for young industrial and farm workers. It was not surprising therefore that 90 per cent of all employees under 30 years of age had completed all or part of their higher education or specialized secondary or general secondary education. The "Znaniye" society had created over 200 popular universities where young people, particularly those who already had higher and secondary education, could follow courses of continuing education.

46. Socialist society attached great importance to fostering the younger generation's creative potential. The Byelorussian SSR had over 6,500 cultural centres and clubs where over 130,000 young men and women took part in the activities of over 4,500 artistic associations for young people and more than 15,000 workshops, circles and groups. Many Byelorussian artists who had achieved national and international recognition had started out in those clubs and cultural centres. The various sports clubs and athletic organizations had a membership of 2.5 million young people of both sexes. All cultural and sports activities were free and funded by the State.

47. Byelorussia's young people were making a laudable contribution to the struggle for peace and to eliminate the threat of nuclear disaster. They were taking an active part in the campaign launched by the World Federation of Democratic Youth under the slogan "World Youth Activities for Peace and against the Nuclear Threat", in the "Soviet Youth March for Peace" and in all the peace demonstrations organized by the United Nations and Soviet social organizations. In 1983 alone, over 5,000 peace demonstrations had been organized by young Byelorussians, 1.7 million of whom had taken part in the "I vote for peace" campaign conducted throughout the entire Soviet Union.

48. It was unfortunate that, in many countries, young people suffered from social inequality and injustice, discrimination, inadequate overall education and training, poor health conditions and malnutrition. In numerous countries, particularly those which most tended to preach to others about human rights, young industrial and farm workers did not really have the right to participate in the management of public and social affairs. Young people represented 40 per cent of the work force in those countries but, because of rampant unemployment, they were the last to be hired and the first to be fired. The spiralling arms race and the growth of military budgets simply aggravated unemployment, particularly among the young. Most of them were unable to receive a proper education because the material and financial difficulties which they had to overcome in order to study were growing steadily worse.

(Mr. Korolev, Byelorussian SSR)

49. His delegation was convinced that States and Governments held the fate of young people in their hands and must solve youth problems within the framework of their political and socio-economic development programmes. Furthermore, organizations representing young people, particularly those in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, must play an important role in international co-operation on youth problems. There were more than enough bodies within the United Nations system in which youth problems were examined from every angle, and UNESCO would be dealing extensively with those problems in 1985. His country believed that the holding of a special meeting devoted to youth during the fortieth session of the General Assembly would provide the opportunity to review the progress made in achieving the objectives of the International Youth Year and to formulate plans for the future.

50. Preparations for International Youth Year were in full swing in the Byelorussian SSR. Byelorussian youth would participate actively in the Twelfth World Festival of Youth and Students, to be held in Moscow in 1985. The success of International Youth Year would make it possible to unite further the efforts of the world's young people in their struggle for their fundamental rights and for peace, disarmament and social progress. Byelorussia's young people, for their part, were ready to contribute constructively to achieving the Year's objectives.

51. Ms. EMARA (Egypt), speaking on agenda items 90 and 91, said that Egypt attached special importance to the situation of elderly and disabled persons and strove to promote their integration into society. It had launched various comprehensive plans for that purpose.

52. A social insurance system had been introduced for the elderly who received a monthly pension enabling them to lead a normal life. They also received appropriate medical care and could be admitted to institutions which had specially trained staff. The State granted various benefits to the elderly, including reduced rates for public transport, sports clubs and theatres.

53. With regard to the protection of disabled persons, Egypt was implementing a plan designed to give equal opportunities to all its citizens. Egypt's disabled persons were mainly the victims of the long wars waged by the country in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973. Rehabilitation and retraining centres had been set up for those national heroes and other disabled persons, and they also benefited from special insurance schemes and various other facilities. In that connection, the Egyptian "Light and Hope" society, which was in the forefront of the protection of disabled persons, carried out activities which might serve as an example to the entire Middle East. Steps were also being taken to integrate congenitally disabled persons into society and provide them with an education. A priority plan for protection against industrial accidents was also being worked out. In sports, Egyptian teams participated in international tournaments for the disabled.

54. Egypt reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging and the World Plan of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

55. Mr. WANGDI (Bhutan), speaking on agenda items 85 and 89, said that Bhutan had sponsored the draft resolution "International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace" introduced by Romania. His delegation supported fully the various recommendations contained in the relevant Secretary-General's report (A/39/262).

56. While adequate attention must be given to activities undertaken at the regional and international levels, International Youth Year must continue to focus chiefly on national, local and community activities. Since the major portion of the world's youth came from developing countries, regional and international entities should take specific action to reinforce national initiatives, particularly in the third world countries.

57. His delegation believed that all the themes of the Year (participation, development, peace) should be given equal attention prior to and during the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities, and was convinced that, until and unless the peoples of the world joined hands in eradicating colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, apartheid and foreign aggression, the Year's objectives would remain unfulfilled.

58. With regard to holding a world conference on youth in 1985, the delegation of Bhutan was of the view that holding a separate international conference would not only use up considerable financial resources, as was evident from the Secretary-General's report (A/AC.209/L.47), but would also be contrary to the national-level emphasis of the International Youth Year. The recommendation, therefore, to devote a sufficient number of plenary meetings in 1985 to policies and programmes concerning youth and designating those meetings as the United Nations World Conference for International Youth Year was sound and viable.

59. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was giving emphasis to the implementation of the regional plan of action for youth which had emanated from the regional meeting devoted to the International Youth Year, held in Bangkok in July 1983. His delegation wished to reiterate its support for ESCAP's plan to concentrate, inter alia, on the organization of national youth leadership training programmes, support for national co-ordinating committees and the publication of information sheets on the Youth Year.

60. His delegation, in the firm belief that effective channels of communication were a prerequisite for the success of the International Youth Year, reiterated its support for the strengthening of existing channels of communication and the development of new ones.

61. In Bhutan, youth was playing an ever-increasing role in the socio-economic development of the country. Young people had responsibilities in government and were actively involved in decision-making processes. The Government gave high priority to the development of its education policy aimed at equipping young people with the necessary professional skills. In spite of budgetary constraints, education was free in Bhutan. In 1980-1981, World Bank statistics showed total public expenditures on education to be 4 per cent of the gross domestic product; recurrent expenditures accounted for 15 per cent of total public recurrent expenditures - both the highest percentages in the region.

(Mr. Wangdi, Bhutan)

62. The Government of Bhutan attached great importance to inculcating in its young people an awareness of their national responsibilities. Young graduates devoted six months to social services in the rural areas, where they were engaged in the promotion of health, sanitation and community development. After passing the public service examination, they received on-the-job training for one year as trainee officers.

63. The National Council for Social and Cultural Promotion would co-ordinate activities in Bhutan connected with International Youth Year.

64. Mrs. ZACHAROPOULOS (Greece), speaking on agenda item 85, said that Greece had been one of the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 34/151, designating 1985 as International Youth Year, and had co-sponsored all subsequent resolutions on that item.

65. The Government of Greece subscribed to the view that activities for the International Youth Year should remain focused at the national or local levels, with regional and international action supporting national initiatives. That approach was in keeping with the specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the Preparation and Observance of International Youth Year, as well as with the conclusions of the European Regional Meeting, held at Costinesti in 1983, in which Greece had actively participated.

66. Greece's Ministry of Youth and Sports had launched a special programme for the creation of 20,000 jobs for unemployed young people. Two parallel programmes for the employment of disadvantaged youth had also been undertaken.

67. The Ministry of Youth had undertaken a thorough study of the problem of the spread of drugs in Greece. It was also carrying out a special programme ("Youth and Health") with a view to studying the basic factors affecting the health of young people, and making recommendations. Among other initiatives, mention should be made of a programme of free tourism for 20,000 young people in 1983 and 40,000 in 1984, the establishment of 22 youth centres, numerous cultural clubs for young workers, and approximately 100 research groups in the fields of environment and development, an information centre and other facilities.

68. International activities should supplement national activities. The three themes: Participation, Development and Peace were interdependent. The third theme, peace, was a prerequisite for the realization of social and economic development through participation of the younger generation. The Greek Ministry of Youth had, in co-operation with UNESCO, designated Chalki, a small island in the Aegean Sea, as "Island of Friendship and Peace for all the Young People of the world". The first Forum on Peace and Friendship had taken place there in October 1983, with 60 participants from international organizations, cultural and social associations and peace movements from Europe, the Mediterranean and the Balkan region. The second Forum on "Peace and Friendship of Youth" had been held on the islands of Rhodes and Chalki from 17 to 24 October 1984. It had been attended by more than 120 participants, including representatives of the United Nations, UNESCO and OECD.

(Mrs. Zacharopoulos, Greece)

69. The Greek Government had already set up a National Co-ordinating Committee to prepare for the International Youth Year, and it was organizing festivities devoted to the three themes of the Year.

70. Greece had made a contribution to the Trust Fund for the International Youth Year for 1984 as well.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.