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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MADAR (Somalia)

later: Mrs. BOCHECIAMPE DE CROVATI (Venezuela)

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

AGENDA ITEM 92: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/511 and 568; A/C.3/39/6)

AGENDA ITEM 93: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/39/185)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/58 and 566);
- (b) PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN (continued) (A/C.3/39/7);
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AGENDA ITEM 94: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/39/590 and Corr.1)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/39/45, vols. I and II)
- (b) STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/486)

1. Mrs. BAZIYAKA (Rwanda) said that although the United Nations Decade for Women had helped to make public opinion aware of women's fundamental role in society and had been a success from that point of view, there still remained much to be done before women participated fully in all areas of national life. The momentum of the Decade for Women should therefore be sustained and strengthened.

2. Her delegation felt that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women had been the best initiative taken during the Decade and that the technical and financial support provided by the Fund to projects for women was proof of its usefulness. The Fund should therefore continue its activities beyond the Decade and should collaborate more closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while retaining its autonomy. That view was, of course, incompatible with a possible transfer of the Fund. Her delegation therefore supported the third option envisaged by the Secretary-General in document A/39/571, namely, to "administer the Fund as a special fund, in association with UNDP".

3. As for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, her delegation associated itself with the consensus which seemed to be taking shape with regard to its draft statute.

(Mrs. Baziyaka, Rwanda)

4. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, another accomplishment of the Decade, had been ratified by Rwanda in 1981, the year of the Convention's entry into force. The initial report of her country had been considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its third session in April 1984. She expressed her appreciation for the judicious comments which had been made in that regard and said that her Government would take them into account in its next report.

5. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the consensus which was emerging in the context of the preparations for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the Decade and hoped that the same spirit would characterize the Conference. She trusted that the international community would maintain the machinery set up during the Decade.

6. From the outset of its independence Rwanda had been concerned with integrating Rwandese women into the country's development, and it would send representatives to the Nairobi meeting, as it had to that of Mexico City. The United Nations Decade for Women had been very helpful to Rwandese women. Currently, women in Rwanda were represented in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Government. Approximately 13 per cent of the members of the National Development Council were women, and of 64 deputies in the first legislature, which had ended in 1983, four had been women. Many women held posts of responsibility in the administration and in educational institutions. In January 1981, the National Population Office had been established, one of whose tasks was to study the integration of basic health services. Family planning programmes had had a positive effect on the health of mothers who had been exhausted by closely spaced births. National seminars had been organized each year for female cadres to make them aware of the problem of integrating women into development. In the rural areas, the emphasis had been placed on hygiene, nutrition and literacy. Accordingly, craft, agricultural or multidisciplinary groups had been formed to help in the advancement and development of women.

7. Her Government's efforts to promote the advancement of women would not be discontinued at the end of the Decade. Indeed, the third five-year plan for economic, social and cultural development, 1982-1986 contained provisions designed to facilitate women's access to training and employment opportunities and to enhance their role in development.

8. Mrs. Boccheciampe de Crovati (Venezuela) took the Chair.

9. Mrs. SHRESTHA (Nepal), referring to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women, said that her country attached great importance to the expansion of technical co-operation activities to ensure women's advancement and integration in development.

10. Preparations for the 1985 World Conference were progressing satisfactorily. Her delegation hoped that the Conference would consider in detail the recommendations adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its second

(Mrs. Shrestha, Nepal)

session and would propose strategies for the advancement of women in the coming decades. She hoped also that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women would continue its activities beyond the Decade.

11. Although Nepal was not a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it felt that the adoption of the Convention had been a significant step towards the improvement of the status of women. Her Government was trying its best to eliminate any discrimination against women and to promote equality between the sexes.

12. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was working in co-operation with various institutes and agencies and that it had studied the principle of self-reliance, the status of women and their role in the advancement of the developing countries.

13. Nepalese women, particularly in rural areas, had greatly benefited from the assistance which the United Nations and its agencies had provided to improve their living conditions. Nepal hoped that such co-operation would continue and that more Nepalese women would be helped.

14. In Nepal, 49 per cent of the total population of 16 million were women. The Constitution of Nepal guaranteed equal rights to men and women and prohibited any discrimination based on race, sex, caste or religion. During the International Women's Year and the United Nations Decade for Women, many reforms had been legislated in Nepal. Nevertheless, the majority of Nepalese women living in rural areas had not yet been able to enjoy the legal, social and economic rights granted to them by the Constitution.

15. Nepal's Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-1990) emphasized the expansion of women's participation in social and economic life and their integration into development. Practical programmes were being undertaken by both governmental sectors and non-governmental organizations. The Women's Services Co-ordination Committee and the Nepalese Women's Organization were working together for the welfare, training and advancement of Nepalese women throughout the country.

16. Nepal was a peace-loving country and had proposed that it should be declared a zone of peace. In a world torn by conflicts, where the arms race was accelerating, Nepalese women hoped to contribute to the promotion of international understanding and peace.

17. Miss RAMOS (Honduras) said she agreed with a number of delegations that the Decade for Women had enabled women to become aware of their status and to claim their basic rights to employment, education and access to managerial functions in the public and private sectors. Honduras therefore looked forward with great interest to the Nairobi Conference, which would provide an opportunity to assess the achievements of the past 10 years and to give new impetus, in a spirit of solidarity, to activities aimed at attaining the goals set.

(Miss Ramos, Honduras)

18. The Constitution of the Republic of Honduras prohibited any discrimination based on sex. Moreover, the National Congress had adopted in August 1984 a Family Code setting forth the legal equality of the spouses, ensuring adequate protection for children and recognizing that men had specific duties towards women. The social security administration and the Honduran Institute for Vocational Training encouraged the participation of women in training activities as well as production. In Honduras, women were represented at all levels of the hierarchy, even as Secretaries of State, and could make their views known in Congress and the courts. That active participation had been made possible by the right to vote, which all nationals of the country possessed.
19. Her delegation emphasized the need to pay special attention, in the documentation which would be submitted to the World Conference, to the situation of women in rural areas and in regions torn by armed conflicts. The Secretary-General should also submit to the 1985 World Conference an updated report on the situation of refugee women and the aid programmes available to them. Her delegation was all the more concerned about that question because a steady stream of refugees, including many women and children, were entering the country. Nor should the World Conference overlook the plight of women who were struggling on the African continent.
20. Honduras welcomed the projects undertaken by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women at both the national and regional levels. Her delegation wished to emphasize in particular project No. 18, which concerned the participation of women in production, and two other projects concerning the participation of women in bee-keeping, because they had been of great utility to her country. Another important project, aimed at facilitating the access of rural women to credit through the organization of co-operatives also deserved mention.
21. Like other representatives who had already spoken on the subject, she supported the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and had noted with particular satisfaction the Institute's programmes concerning the role of women in the utilization of new and renewable sources of energy and the increased participation of women in the agriculture and food sectors.
22. Mr. CERMAK (Austria) said that Austria had shown its interest in the Nairobi Conference by hosting the ECE seminar on the economic role of women held the preceding month at Vienna. The fact that that seminar's recommendations had been adopted without a vote had strengthened the Austrian Government's conviction that the study of certain political problems not directly related to the status of women should be entrusted to the competent political bodies of the United Nations. Although women were often the first to suffer from racial discrimination, apartheid or occupation of foreign territories, those scourges in fact affected all sectors of the population. Such issues must therefore not dominate the deliberations at Nairobi, because the real subject of the Conference was the promotion of women.

(Mr. Cermak, Austria)

23. His delegation had noted the proposal by several delegations that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women should be associated closely with UNDP, while still retaining its autonomous status. That was easier said than done. It was therefore essential that the Fund's activities should continue to be closely co-ordinated with those of the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which was the policy-making unit, and with those of other bodies and entities in the United Nations system dealing with women's issues, such as the Commission on the Status of Women or the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Her delegation was confident that the Voluntary Fund would continue to act as a catalyst, in order to ensure that the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women were fully taken into account by the various United Nations development agencies.

24. Austria considered it necessary to standardize the procedures for the establishment of the reports which countries were required to submit in accordance with international instruments related to human rights. That would enable States parties to save time and avoid duplication, which was particularly important in the case of developing countries with limited administrative and financial resources. It was therefore desirable that the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be invited to participate in future meetings of chairmen of various human rights organs responsible for ensuring the implementation of those instruments, especially in view of the positive outcome of the first meeting of that kind, held at Geneva in August 1984.

25. The first Austrian report had been submitted to the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in October 1983, but it would not be discussed until January 1985. Although it was certainly regrettable that the Secretariat had received only 25 of the 50 reports due in September 1984, the Committee would not have been able to deal with all of those reports during its annual two-week session had they arrived on time. His delegation had therefore noted with interest the Canadian delegation's suggestion that the Committee's annual session should be extended to enable it to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it. Otherwise, the Committee would be confronted with reports containing outdated information.

26. Austria approved the draft Statute for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, to which it would continue to provide financial support.

27. Mrs. FARRA-FROND (Central African Republic) said that Central African women had been helping to build their country since its accession to independence in 1960. Despite the persistence of ancestral taboos, they had access to education and employment in the public or private sector. Women occupied 13.27 per cent of the posts in the Central African Administration, where they specialized in sectors such as education, health and social affairs. They represented 40 per cent of the active population in the agricultural sector and ran over half the small businesses.

(Mrs. Farra-Frond, Central
African Republic)

28. The advancement of women was one of the major concerns of the Central African Government. The measures it had adopted included the establishment of a Directorate for the Advancement of Women and of a national family-planning service at the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs, the improvement of the regulations aimed at strengthening marriage ties, compulsory education for girls until they attained their majority, the abolition of excision and the institution of a mothers' day. It was well known that the Central African Republic was currently governed by a military committee of national reconstruction, which had had to suspend political and trade union activities provisionally. The Union of Central African Women was the only mass organization authorized to pursue its activities and took full advantage of that freedom.
29. The Central African Republic had given shelter to thousands of refugees, including many large families. No refugee woman was subject to discrimination. The Central African women sympathized with their black, coloured and Indian sisters from South Africa and Namibia who were suffering from double discrimination, that encountered by all women in the world because of their sex and the odious discrimination imposed by the shameful apartheid régime because of their colour.
30. Much remained to be done to achieve the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and to that end existing means of pressure must be employed judiciously.
31. Mr. RATHORE (India) said that much more attention had been paid to the status of women since the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women. However, despite the legislative steps taken, prejudices and discriminating practices persisted. Awareness of the needs of women had not always been accompanied by concrete measures, and in general, the world was still far from the objectives that had been set.
32. The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women would be an opportunity to take stock and prepare for the future. It was therefore extremely important that it should be based on well-prepared documentation which should clearly delineate areas in which progress had been made and those in which progress had been slow, bringing out the obstacles and their causes. A qualitative review of achievements would be useful when defining strategies. Already, the review and appraisal to be carried out in 1984 and 1985 of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the proposals regarding the new international economic order would provide important inputs, particularly since they recognized the need to eliminate structural imbalances, which discriminated against women, and contained specific strategies directly concerning them. With regard to strategies, however, generalizations should be avoided, because the situation of women was extremely diverse. For example, women in cities did not have the same needs as women in rural areas. He welcomed the fact that the preparatory body for the World Conference had recognized the need to place special emphasis on the plight of the latter. The approach to the problems of women also varied according to region and careful consideration should be given to the recommendations made by the regional and subregional preparatory meetings.

(Mr. Rathore, India)

33. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women was currently endeavouring to establish the methodology for placing women at the centre of any development effort. However, it would also be desirable for the Institute to take into account the methodological aspects of research and training and action-oriented programmes that would increase technical co-operation activities benefiting women. Besides, the recommendations resulting from research on the role and status of women in the economy should be studied at the highest level.

34. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, as could be seen from the Secretary-General's report (A/39/569), was increasingly in demand. It played a catalytic role, promoting innovative activities by Governments, and the forward-looking assessment of its activities was most instructive. It should therefore be continued beyond the Decade. At present, however, its resources were far from adequate and it was to be hoped that countries would continue to make contributions to it. It would indeed be desirable for the Fund to become an autonomous body associated with UNDP, as that would permit it to maximize its activities by drawing on the technical means, field network and delivery system of UNDP. It should, however, retain its freedom of action and an intergovernmental consultative committee should continue to advise on the implementation of policies set by the General Assembly. The Fund should also be able to choose its partners and executing agents, in association with other bodies whose activities were clearly identified with development.

35. For their part, the non-aligned countries, firmly committed to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, would hold a ministerial meeting in April 1985 to co-ordinate their action with that of the developing countries.

36. Mrs. IDER (Mongolia) said that the United Nations Decade for Women had contributed much to increasing recognition of the role which women could play in the socio-economic development of their countries. It had also been noted that it was necessary to solve the major problems affecting women by, in particular, averting the threat of nuclear war, curbing the arms race, abolishing colonialism and racism in all their forms, establishing a new international economic order and eliminating hunger and illiteracy.

37. A number of important international instruments defining the rights of women had been adopted during the Decade, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a document that was binding and which represented a milestone. While a number of States had already become parties to that Convention, it was necessary that others should make every effort to sign it before the World Conference was held. Constructive dialogue had already been established between some signatory States and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women. Mongolia had already submitted a report to that Committee and it supported the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolutions 1984/8 and 1984/10 concerning the role that the Committee would play at the World Conference.

(Mrs. Ider, Mongolia)

38. However, despite the efforts made, the objectives of the Decade were still far from being achieved. Throughout the world, women continued to suffer from the effects of regrettable situations - the deterioration of international relations, the arms race, aggression by imperialist and reactionary forces against various peoples, the apartheid policy of the Pretoria racist régime, the occupation of Arab territories by Israel, unequal economic relations between developed capitalist countries and the developing countries - all of which should be given attention at the World Conference because there was no distinction between the problems of women and general political problems.

39. The two basic documents, the preparation of which had been recommended by the Commission on the Status of Women, acting as the preparatory body for the World Conference, in its report (A/CONF.116/PC/19 and Add.1) would be very useful. The Mongolian Government had already replied in detail to the questionnaire which should serve as the basis for the preparation of the report on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy.

40. Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas was a very important issue. At the thirty-seventh session, her delegation had submitted a draft resolution on that subject which had been adopted as General Assembly resolution 37/59; it had resulted in the holding of a seminar on national experience in improving the situation of women in rural areas, the report of which would be a very useful reference document for the World Conference.

41. Well before the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Mongolian women had already enjoyed in all areas the rights set forth in that instrument. All conditions were provided to enable them to take an active part in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country. They were represented in parliament and in local bodies and, in great proportions, in most sectors. They received the same pay as men for the same work, were fully protected by a social security system and received free medical services. There was also a wide network of women's clinics and maternity homes, which enjoyed a number of advantages, and a broad gamut of services for young children. In addition, much was being done to alleviate women's household chores. All those measures had enabled Mongolian women to become a major social force in the country.

42. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that, despite the efforts made in the world to emancipate women and ensure their quality, prejudices and discriminatory practices were still firmly entrenched. Only struggle would liberate women of all races who were subjected to a system of exploitation imposed by men and who must attain their rights. Burkina Faso attached great importance to the advancement of women in all economic and social development, because it was essentially in that way that they would come to be recognized as equals. Women were represented at all levels of the State machinery and social life: three of them held ministerial portfolios, another had been appointed Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, four occupied the post of provincial high commissioner. Women from all social strata also played an increasingly determinant role within

(Mr. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

the framework of the revolutionary defence committees. In the countryside and in the cities, women were little by little becoming aware that they must struggle for their liberation and for their human dignity and to that end must work to change their outlook radically. In general, the Government of Burkina Faso was doing everything to eliminate the last obstacles to the full integration of women in political, economic, social and cultural life. It had also participated in many regional and international meetings for the advancement and emancipation of women.

43. During the United Nations Decade for Women, action taken at the national, international and regional levels to design and implement policies for women had made some progress possible, of course; however, much remained to be done. It was, for example, deplorable that problems caused by poverty had not yet been solved and that a great many developing countries - including Burkina Faso - still suffered severely from the economic recession, famine, war and desertification. Stress should be laid on the gravity of the widespread and persistent scourges of desertification and drought in countries three quarters of whose territory was rural, and his delegation hoped that a special study would be devoted to the deep-rooted causes of those phenomena. Special attention also needed to be given to the fate of the women of those regions, and the preparatory body for the World Conference should be congratulated for having fully understood that need.

44. There could be no equality or development without peace, and the tragic situation of women in regions undergoing conflicts or political difficulties was deplorable. The arms race, colonialism, racism and apartheid were some of the major obstacles to the realization of the peace objectives of the Decade for Women. In particular, there could be no discussion of self-determination and advancement of women as long as not all peoples were free from the colonial yoke and racism was not eliminated.

45. The United Nations Decade for Women had sensitized world opinion and had greatly favoured the introduction of strategies for the advancement of women. The World Conference, in turn, would supply the data needed to review, at national, regional and international levels, the progress made during the past 10 years and, on that basis, to prepare new strategies for the future.

46. Mrs. QIZILBASH (Pakistan) said that her country drew its dynamic force from Islam, which was the religion of the overwhelming majority of the people of Pakistan, and which did not in any way discriminate between the sexes. Although some distortions in customs had been introduced over the years, they were disappearing with the fading legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. The current resurgence of Islamic societies was greatly facilitating efforts to ensure that women's welfare was fully protected, and her Government was doing everything possible, within the limits of its resources, to that end. Not only did the women of Pakistan enjoy political rights on equal terms with men and could be elected to the Senate, National Assembly and other State bodies, but some seats had been expressly reserved for them in those bodies to encourage their participation in the legislative process. In fact, the women of Pakistan increasingly participated in planning, decision-making and the implementation of

(Mrs. Qizilbash, Pakistan)

various projects. That was a major breakthrough in a country which still had a high illiteracy rate, particularly in rural areas. Her Government was making a great effort not only to reduce illiteracy but to develop vocational and technical training for women, and it was supported in its action by various non-governmental and intergovernmental bodies. The sixth five-year plan of Pakistan, for the period 1983-1988, contained specific provisions in that regard. Moreover, a network of multi-purpose centres where women would be trained and encouraged to participate in income-generating activities was being set up in Pakistan. Lastly, seminars and conferences dealing with the status of women were being organized to ensure further integration of women in the development of the country.

47. Her delegation was particularly concerned about the position of women refugees in various parts of the world. Pakistan was doing its best to carry the extremely heavy financial burden represented by the three million refugees currently on its soil. However, it felt that there was an urgent need for action to avert new flows of refugees and to ensure their return to their homeland in conditions of safety and honour.

48. Her delegation attached special importance to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and hoped that it would not only be continued but be strengthened beyond the Decade, while maintaining its autonomous status. As for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, she supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the Institute's draft statute should be endorsed by the General Assembly. In 1984, Pakistan had contributed 62,000 Pakistan rupees to the Trust Fund for the Institute and intended to make a similar contribution in the near future. It was to be hoped that the affluent developed countries would make long-term financial commitments to the Institute to enable it to perform its functions satisfactorily.

49. Lastly, her delegation supported the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory body for the World Conference of 1985 and hoped that the Committee would adopt those recommendations by consensus.

50. Mrs. MIGNOTT (Jamaica), speaking on items 92, 93 and 94, said that at the end of the Decade the future did not look very propitious. Indeed, although the activities of the Decade had had positive results, they had been minimal compared with the weight of discrimination against women, which was still rooted in the institutions and the social, economic and cultural reality of most countries, combined with the economic recession and warmongering which further limited possibilities for change. The image of so many women still exploited in their work and living in poverty was not one that encouraged optimism. Jamaica was convinced that, in those conditions, the Nairobi Conference and any future action should emphasize the theme of integration and examine the question of women in the light of all the factors which influenced their status.

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

51. Jamaica had established a national preparatory committee, within the Bureau of Women's Affairs, to assess the economic, social and legal accomplishments of the Decade and to gather data on the problems of women and their potential in Jamaican society. Jamaica had responded with great care to the Secretariat's questionnaire, describing in detail the programmes which it was setting up, within the limits of its resources; it also hoped to be represented at the intergovernmental Latin American regional preparatory meeting. Generally speaking, the conclusions of such preparatory meetings should allow for a realistic approach to the assessment of the Decade by the Nairobi Conference.

52. With regard to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, her delegation felt that the existing relationship between UNDP and the Fund should be formalized and strengthened. However, measures to that effect should respect the original approach of the Fund, giving priority to community projects with the potential both to help the most disadvantaged women and to make an impact on national planning. Moreover, the Fund should be provided with administrative and operational flexibility to allow it to grow with its needs, and it should retain its autonomy within UNDP. Her delegation had participated in the drafting of a document defining the operational modalities of the Fund, and it hoped that the Third Committee would give it serious consideration. Document A/39/569 showed clearly that the Fund, despite limited financial and human resources, had done a good job which deserved to be better publicized.

53. Jamaica felt that the programmes of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women were a useful complement to United Nations activities in that field. Moreover, Jamaica had just deposited the instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the Secretary-General and was committed to enacting reforms in areas where there was evidence of discrimination against women. Her delegation was ready to do everything necessary to ensure that the measured successes of the Decade were not eroded and that women could hope for a world where they would be better treated.

54. Mrs. PARRALES (Nicaragua), speaking on agenda items 92, 93 and 94, said that the Decade had made Governments and peoples aware of the need to improve the status of women and integrate them in the development process. Her delegation approved of the network method of operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and was in favour of continuation of the Voluntary Fund after the end of the Decade. It considered that when the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women became truly universal and was fully applied by States a great step would have been taken towards achievement of the goals of the Decade. Her delegation welcomed the results of the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women but questioned the geographical composition of the Committee which by no means reflected the fact that the great majority of States parties to the Convention were Latin American countries. It hoped that States parties would reconsider the composition of the Committee and make the representation of each region proportionate to the number of States of the region which had signed or ratified the Convention.

(Mrs. Parrales, Nicaragua)

55. Without underestimating the importance of the legal, social and economic goals set for the Decade, it must be recognized that one of the most important was peace. It was often said that political arguments had no place in discussions on the question of women. Yet the problems of women were, in fact, of a political nature since they could not be dissociated from their living conditions, which were characterized by poverty, hunger, uprooting and racial discrimination, which had been inherited from colonialism and imposed by an unjust international economic order. It was legitimate, therefore, that as responsible members of society women should concern themselves with those problems and that the Third Committee should examine them.

56. The women of Nicaragua, having learnt from the experience of their struggle against foreign oppression and exploitation, knew that peace and freedom had to be won before the legal status of women could be changed. Immediately after victory, the Government had adopted a series of decrees protecting women from exploitation and discrimination. Since the reform of the civil code, Nicaraguan women had shared parental authority and the law upgraded household work, describing it as "socially necessary", in an effort to educate the public and guarantee the well-being of children.

57. Women had participated in several capacities in the literacy campaign and were very active in the "Health Days" which were organized at regular intervals. Moreover, in order to ensure the integration of women in productive work, which alone could bring them full emancipation, her Government encouraged the establishment of agricultural production co-operatives and handicraft collectives.

58. The women of Nicaragua were fully aware that that progress had been possible only as a result of the Sandinist popular revolution and that that revolution was the guarantee of future progress. They were therefore prepared to defend that future, whatever the cost, against the acts of aggression and the threats of destabilization of President Reagan's mercenaries.

59. Mr. QASIM (Oman), after paying a tribute to the efforts made by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and its contribution towards achievement of the goals of the Decade, said that the policy of the Sultanate of Oman consisted in raising the living standard of the population while at the same time preserving its values and cultural heritage, which derived from its religion and history. In the context of that policy, his Government attached paramount importance to women, because it was convinced that they constituted the main element of the family and society. Advancement of the status of women could only stimulate progress and the development of society as a whole. The Omani Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour was therefore taking steps to ensure that the advancement of women formed an integral part of the country's social development plans. That Ministry had, inter alia, launched the pilot training project for the development of local communities which had been implemented in co-operation with the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, and the Economic Commission for Western Asia. In that connection, Oman could not but pay a tribute to the role of the League of Omani Women, a recently established non-governmental organization which reflected the sincere will of Omani women to contribute to the country's development and social progress.

(Mr. Qasim, Oman)

60. The year 1970, which had been marked by the access of women to education, was a landmark in the advancement of Omani women. Since then, the situation had steadily improved in that sector. At present, Omani women students were being sent at Government expense to Arab, European and American universities, where they were pursuing advanced studies with great success. In addition, Oman had in 1977 inaugurated a pedagogical institute which should enable Omani women to make a major contribution in the field of education.

61. His Government was not only interested in the education of children and young people. It was also endeavouring to provide education for adults, and had established a large number of adult literacy and training centres. In addition, Oman had set up social services to help Omani girls and women in such fields as hygiene and home economics.

62. His Government had attached very particular importance to the project for the establishment of training centres for young girls, the main purpose of which was to provide assistance to rural women in such fields as child care, nutrition, hygiene, health and measures to combat hereditary diseases. The training of rural action leaders had made it possible to advance the status of rural women and, thereby, to improve the situation of the population as a whole and, in particular, of women.

63. Omani women played a major role in the field of health. They were conspicuous for the services they performed in hospitals and in various health centres. In that connection, the inauguration of a nursing school would certainly improve the quality of care given by Omani nurses.

64. The efforts at modernization recently made in Oman had had a considerable impact on the situation of women, to the extent that they had encouraged recognition of their rights and shown the importance of their role in society. Currently, that role was no longer limited to family life; it extended to sectors as varied as education, health services, social services, the police, the diplomatic corps, the civil service, government institutions and the private sector.

65. In conclusion, his delegation wished to pay a tribute to the organizers of the World Conference to be held at Nairobi, and to the Kenyan Government, for their efforts to ensure the success of the Conference.

66. Mr. YEDID (Israel) said that the Nairobi Conference should adopt practical measures with a view to fully integrating women into the development of society, an essential goal in today's complex and changing world. Education and training should be designed to enable women to make use of their skills in all fields, including science, industry and technology. Special attention should be paid to regions where girls had limited opportunities to learn. Finally, illiteracy must be eradicated.

67. His delegation suggested that the role of women in agriculture, thus far overlooked, should be given special attention at the Nairobi Conference.

(Mr. Yedid, Israel)

68. It was not a simple task to achieve equality of the sexes, owing to the persistence of deeply-rooted prejudices. In Israel women had complete equality under the law. Women had the right to vote and could be elected to the highest office, including the offices of Prime Minister and President. Furthermore, a national commission established in 1977 to examine the status of women had already submitted no less than 246 recommendations, which would be considered by the Knesset. A special office had been established to deal with women's affairs and an adviser on the status of women had been appointed in the office of the Prime Minister. Lastly, the establishment of women's clubs for the advancement of undereducated women, and the establishment of councils which supported legislation concerning women and offered free legal aid to needy women, were among the many activities carried out by non-governmental organizations in Israel.

69. Israel fully supported the draft agenda for the Nairobi Conference, and hoped that the Conference would not be sidetracked from problems of direct interest to women into considering extraneous issues. In that connection, his delegation had reservations regarding draft decision II of the Commission on the Status of Women (A/CONF.116/PC/19) in so far as it dealt with problems falling within the competence of various United Nations bodies. The Arab-Israeli conflict was neither on the agenda nor within the terms of reference of the Conference. Furthermore, Israel's Ambassador in Vienna had already refuted in considerable detail the partial and baseless allegations contained in document E/CN.6/1984/10 concerning the administration of Arab territories by Israel. It was readily overlooked that it was Israel that had given Arab women the right to vote and that social security measures adopted by Israel had immeasurably improved the living conditions of women and of the population as a whole.

70. His delegation had chosen not to exercise its right of reply each time the representative of an Arab country, referring to the status of Arab women in Israel, had made slanderous accusations against Israel. Instead, he invited those representatives to visit Israel to observe the situation for themselves.

71. Ms. GORDON (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on items 92, 93 and 94, said that the Decade had done much to sensitize societies to the need to integrate women into their economic, political, social and cultural life and to increase the confidence of women in their own abilities. It had also facilitated the adoption of legal instruments to combat the discrimination and exploitation to which women fell victim. None the less, the Decade had not been able to eliminate certain prejudices, or the idea that women's activities were peripheral to the development process, or the tendency to exclude women from the planning and implementation stages of the industrialization process. It was to be hoped, moreover, that the global economic crisis would not lead to a hardening of old prejudices and undermine past achievements or future progress. Vigilance, determination and unity would be needed to prevent that outcome. While the preoccupations and perspectives of women differed according to their societies, such diversity need not be a source of conflict. It was to be hoped that the spirit of co-operation which had prevailed in the Commission on the Status of Women would carry over to the Nairobi Conference and that a consensus would emerge on the course to be charted.

(Ms. Gordon, Trinidad and Tobago)

72. The Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women had demonstrated its effectiveness as a mechanism for technical co-operation specifically devoted to women's needs. Her delegation therefore believed that the activities of the Fund should continue after 1985. It should remain in New York, maintain its autonomy in its association with UNDP, and have the flexibility to interact with United Nations agencies engaged in activities relating both to development co-operation and the status of women.

73. Ms. AYORINDE (Nigeria), speaking on agenda items 92 and 94, said that agriculture was one area in which women played a critical role in the world. That was particularly true in Africa, where women represented over 80 per cent of the population engaged in one form or another in agricultural production. The Nairobi Conference should thus provide a point of departure for positive action designed to improve the status of women in agriculture and in general.

74. Indeed, more and more women were assuming their rightful place in society, a positive development to be attributed to the Decade. Her delegation called on women everywhere to organize themselves at national levels and present programmes to their Governments which accorded with the aims set out in the programme of activities for the second Decade.

75. Nigeria eagerly awaited the Nairobi World Conference and had sent to the meeting at Arusha a delegation headed by the Permanent Secretary at the Nigerian Ministry of Information, Social Development, Youth, Sports and Culture, the agency responsible for questions relating to women.

76. Commenting on item 94, relating to discrimination against women, she said that Nigeria was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and appealed to all those countries which had not yet done so to ratify it. There was no institutionalized discrimination in Nigeria, where women competed in all walks of life. The fact that many Nigerian women were engaged in agriculture should not obscure the fact that Nigeria also had women judges, engineers, bank executives, university professors and diplomats, all professions which had formerly been the exclusive preserve of men.

77. Her delegation considered that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women had, through its projects and programmes, contributed substantially to improving the quality of life of the women beneficiaries. It was unfortunate that, because of administrative problems, funds for the execution of projects could not always be released quickly. Having studied with interest the options for the future of the Fund, her delegation believed that it should continue its activities beyond the Decade in close co-operation with UNDP, while maintaining its operational autonomy. It was also important to ensure constant co-ordination between the Fund and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna.

78. Her delegation welcomed the work done by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and was confident that, in future, the Institute would devote more time to establishing a link between the advancement of women and development as a whole.

(Ms. Ayorinde, Nigeria)

79. Lastly, her delegation considered that urgent attention should be paid to the fate of women who were denied their right to existence under the apartheid racist régime, those who suffered under colonialist domination in Namibia, and those who lived in the war-torn countries of the Middle East and Central America.

80. Mr. EL FAYEZ (Jordan) said that, as a result of its current economic recovery, Jordan would be able to increase its national income and hence the income of its inhabitants and thus raise the overall standard of living of the population. That development would also make it possible to extend to the entire Kingdom the various services offered by the State. To achieve that, an increasing proportion of the population would have to participate in the country's political, economic and social life.

81. Jordan's working population still included only a relatively small number of women, although that number was increasing steadily. The desire to assist the family, the dissemination of social values through education, and the development of the economy had prompted an increasing number of women to find jobs. Furthermore, Jordanian laws such as the employment act and the social security act encouraged them to do so while guaranteeing the application of constitutional provisions stipulating that men and women had equal rights and obligations. The increased participation of women in the life of Jordanian society had prompted the authorities to set up an organ responsible for women's questions and to harmonize the various programmes and activities introduced for women. It was thus that a Department of Women's Affairs had been set up in 1977.

82. It was important that women should participate in all development-related activities, as well as in efforts to achieve the objectives of the new international economic order. It was essentially for that reason that 1975 had been proclaimed International Women's Year and that the World Conference of the Year, in which a Jordanian delegation representing the public and private sectors had participated, had been held at Mexico.

83. In recent years, the status of Jordanian women had improved considerably. Women's presence had increased in all sectors: education, training, industry, etc., and women now had the right to participate in the election of the Council of Deputies and of municipal councils.

84. His Government had adopted an unequivocal policy with regard to women's participation in national life and had taken account of that policy in its plans for the development of the public and private sectors. Realizing the importance of women's arrival on the labour market, the Government had taken a number of steps, the main one being the creation of a Department of Women's Affairs within the Ministry of Labour. That Department, which had come into being in 1977, had drawn up a comprehensive plan for women's participation in development, enlisted the co-operation of women and established contacts with the competent Ministries and official departments and with local and international women's organizations. Moreover, in April 1978, the Department had participated in the establishment of a group of experts responsible for ensuring the integration of women into development

(Mr. El Fayez, Jordan)

in the countries of Western Asia. It had then, in co-operation with the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Economic Commission for Western Asia, convened a regional conference on Arab women to consider the same issue.

85. In Jordan, there was no separation between men and women in education. Education was compulsory for everyone until the end of primary school. It should also be noted that an increasing number of girls had access to technical education and that many girls received higher education in order either to become teachers or to specialize in various fields such as commerce, engineering or medicine.

86. The equal participation of men and women in development had also always been one of Jordan's main objectives. In that connection, the 1976-1980 and 1981-1985 development plans, which emphasized such equal participation, had already yielded positive results.

87. His delegation had thus implemented the resolutions and recommendations of the conferences on women and also taken account of the reports of the Secretary-General requesting that woman be given the same opportunities as men to participate in development.

88. With regard to the statement by the representative of Israel, he wondered why, if the Israeli Government was so concerned about the welfare of Palestinian women, it did not allow them to exercise the fundamental right to self-determination.

89. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Mozambique and Nigeria had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/39/L.12, Liberia, France, Hungary and Nigeria had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/39/L.18 and Burkina Faso had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/39/L.19.

90. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) observed that, in her view, documents A/39/590 and A/39/581, which had been distributed under item 102, bore no relation to that item.

91. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) explained that the two documents in question had been distributed under item 102 at the express request of the delegations of the Sudan and Nicaragua.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.