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Wednesday, 11 October 1989  
at 10 a.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (continued)  
(A/44/3, A/44/84, A/44/139, A/44/187, A/44/188, A/44/235, A/44/254, A/44/260,  
A/44/409 and Corr.1, A/44/499)

(c) CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF STATES (continued) (A/44/266 and  
Add.1 and 2, A/44/379)

(d) EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (continued)  
(A/44/290; ST/CSDHA/6)

(h) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued) (A/44/8 and Add.1, A/44/534)

1. Mr. RAHEEM (United Nations Development Programme) observed that after more than a decade of international and national effort the question of how to integrate women in development remained to be answered. It was now known, of course, that a number of conditions had to be met, largely at the national level: an appropriate institutional and legal framework, access to the labour force without discrimination, the provision of services and education. UNDP was playing an active role in that respect, first in its advocacy role, sharing information and experiences with interested countries and also as a model, since the percentage of women professional staff was now almost 24 (compared with 16 per cent in 1979) and about 25 per cent of the officers recruited at the national level in its field offices were women.

2. It was also now known, however, that while those conditions were necessary they were not sufficient, as was shown by the deterioration in the status of women as compared with men. It was UNDP's view that two further integrative factors were essential. Firstly, it was necessary for women to participate in each stage of the development process, whether at the level of national planning or of projects. Secondly, account must always be taken of women's actual and potential roles and contribution so that use could be made of them for the benefit of all, and that required proper assessment of the situation and needs.

3. The Division for Women and Development in UNDP had been established precisely in order to improve the implementation of those integrative factors and worked closely with UNIFEM for that purpose. It was time for the international community to reflect on the causes of its successes and failures in order to work more effectively for the participation of women in development.

4. Turning to the question of human settlements, he emphasized that rapid urbanization in developing countries during the past four decades had been accompanied by deteriorating human settlement conditions, and an alarming increase in the incidence of urban poverty and a degradation of the environment. To improve those conditions and meet the needs of urban populations in the areas of housing and services was imperative, particularly in the light of the role played by the urban economy in development, and that created an immense challenge for Governments and international assistance and non-governmental organizations.

(Mr. Raheem)

5. In co-operation with UNCHS and other international organizations, UNDP had for years been helping Governments to plan and implement human settlements and urban improvement projects, and would continue to do so. It was now doing so within the framework of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, by providing technical assistance in support of national strategies and contributing to the preparation of regional shelter and services projects. Urbanization was, moreover, at the centre of many of its activities. Lastly, he emphasized the need to strengthen urban institutional capabilities, given the extent to which the impact of urban programmes depended on the quality and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for project planning and implementation.

6. Miss McLENNAN (United States) said it should not be forgotten, in dealing with regional and national problems, that the global economic situation had universal effects such as the increasing number of women in poverty and of women heads of households. Real progress in development required that women be recognized as equal partners in the economy since they comprised more than half of the world's population and performed two thirds of the world's work.

7. Her delegation considered the Secretary-General's report (A/44/290) very useful and, while taking note of the wide range of activities carried out by the United Nations development system to further the integration of women in development, would point out that much more work remained to be done. It concurred with the view that the need to train all United Nations staff members in how to incorporate women in development should be a primary concern and applauded UNDP's efforts to expand the geographic scope of training events and to ensure the participation of national counterparts and agency representatives in training and workshop seminars on women in development.

8. In connection with the 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, her delegation agreed that the negative effects of the economic crisis affecting some developing countries must be redressed by public policies intended to facilitate women's full participation in the public and private sectors. The various approaches devised to deal with debt problems might help to create a more favourable environment for the advancement of women. The Survey failed to mention, however, that the downturn of indices of the integration of women in development was due essentially to structural and political problems as well as natural phenomena which exacerbated inadequate domestic economic policies.

9. In order to contribute to the integration of women in economic development, the United States, in which 30 per cent of all small businesses were owned by women and women constituted 46 per cent of the work force, had in 1988 enacted the Women's Business Ownership Act, which authorized the establishment of training and counselling centres for women business owners and set up the National Women's Business Council. A number of other public training facilities were available to women entrepreneurs. Her Government also applauded the Declaration of International Partnership recently signed by the World Association of Women Entrepreneurs.

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(Miss McLennan, United States)

10. As regarded the problem of housing, her delegation would emphasize the importance of the role that could be played by the private and non-governmental sectors in achieving the goal of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. It believed that Governments should pursue strategies in which they undertook those activities which private organizations, entrepreneurs and individuals could not undertake themselves.

11. Mr. BUDRUDDIN (Pakistan) said it was encouraging to note that the United Nations system continued to give high priority to the effective mobilization and integration of women in development. It was also satisfying to note the system-wide medium-term plan for women in development, which demonstrated the serious interest of the United Nations in translating into specific actions the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The promotion of their role in the development process at the national level, supplemented by international support and co-operation, was indispensable for achieving the objectives set forth in the Strategies.

12. Since assuming power in 1988, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, had vigorously pursued the goal of enhancing female participation in the country's economic and social life. Under her dynamic leadership, a number of new programmes had been instituted for that purpose and a series of national conferences and grass-roots seminars had been organized on themes such as education, health, scientific and technological development, mass media and the environment. Pakistan's Seventh Five-year Plan contained a categorical commitment to create awareness among policy makers and the public of the discrimination suffered by women in Pakistan and its economic and social costs. The Government had also launched schemes for providing interest-free loans to women who wished to establish their own enterprises; special attention was also being given to familiarizing rural women with appropriate agricultural technologies and to female literacy.

13. At the political level, women had participated actively in the general elections of 1988, both as voters and candidates. They had also made valuable contributions to the national development effort as teachers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, etc. The principle of the equality of men and women was enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, which also prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex and guaranteed women equality of opportunity in respect of employment.

14. The efforts of national Governments to strengthen the role of women in social and economic development would be considerably facilitated with the creation of an environment conducive to growth and development. The backwardness of women in developing countries was largely attributable to the poverty that pervaded their societies, which were confronted by a whole range of problems (debt burden, increasing protectionism, and denied access to modern technology). Concerted international action to restore growth and development was essential for creating conditions that would strengthen the developing countries' efforts to pursue plans for the advancement of women effectively.

(Mr. Budruddin, Pakistan)

15. In keeping with the objectives of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, Pakistan was formulating policies at the national level to seek lasting solutions to problems in the areas of human settlements, urban growth and housing. It had also launched a number of short-term initiatives, such as the upgrading of slums, the development of small plots of land for free distribution among the shelterless rural poor, and the initiation of a special five-year programme under which 1 million shelters would be either constructed or upgraded for the benefit of the needy throughout the country.

16. Pakistan, one of the founding members of the Commission on Human Settlements, had sponsored General Assembly resolution 37/221, which had designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. It was fully aware of its responsibilities arising from the Year and was making every effort to improve shelter for its people.

17. Mr. KUECK (German Democratic Republic) said that his Government had replied to the questionnaire on the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States distributed to all Member States by the Secretariat, and had, together with other socialist countries, submitted a joint statement on the subject (A/44/266/Add.1 and A/44/379).

18. The German Democratic Republic had followed with satisfaction the activities of the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 was of particular importance, since its goal was to meet a basic human requirement, namely, to provide housing, particularly in regions where housing conditions were currently highly unsatisfactory owing to social, ecological and sanitary problems. In that connection, the German Democratic Republic noted with interest the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/190, on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories.

19. Such a tremendous task could be carried out only on the basis of national development strategies. It was the sovereign right and responsibility of every State to solve its housing problems in a manner that was in keeping with its national conditions. External material, financial and intellectual resources should be tapped within that framework.

20. The German Democratic Republic had now devoted almost two decades to the implementation of a comprehensive housing programme, with the declared aim of providing every household with a flat of an adequate size, equipped with appropriate sanitary facilities and whose rent should not exceed 5 per cent of family income. In the future the German Democratic Republic would also participate actively in international co-operation with a view to developing human settlements.

21. The effective mobilization of women and their integration into the development process had become an important United Nations activity. The German Democratic Republic had always fully supported implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Since its foundation it had been pursuing

(Mr. Kueck, German Democratic Republic)

the fundamental goals of the Forward-looking Strategies - equality, development and peace - with a view to enabling men and women to develop their abilities under increasingly equal conditions. Equal rights for women were a concrete expression of social progress, a principal objective in any society. The immediate task was therefore now to translate further the Nairobi Strategies into plans of action at the international, regional and national levels in order to achieve their goals throughout the world. It was also necessary to overcome the obstacles to achievement of those goals, such as armed conflicts, the waste of resources in the arms race, racial discrimination and apartheid and, not least, economic and social underdevelopment.

22. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which had always recognized the vital role played by women in the social and economic life of both the agricultural sector and non-agricultural sectors, had adopted the Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development, which adapted and expanded the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. In order to support women in their role as agricultural producers, FAO was implementing a strategy designed to bring about a complete change in traditions, economies and societies with a view to meeting the specific needs of women, particularly by enabling them to carry out income-generating activities, by making available to them technology to lighten their work-load and to increase their productivity, and by offering them education and training opportunities.

23. With regard to the integration of women into development in general, the FAO endeavour had four different focuses. Firstly, FAO was endeavouring to create a legal environment that would enable women both to contribute to development and to benefit from development. It planned, for example, to draw up a list of national legal instruments concerning the role of women in agriculture, the provision of food and rural development, and to identify the areas in which improvements were required. Secondly, FAO aimed to strengthen the role of women in agriculture and the rural economy, particularly the role of female heads of household, who were steadily increasing in number in many regions of the world. FAO considered it necessary to implement in respect of all categories of women specific and effective policies in the areas of land-tenure systems and access to loans, agricultural inputs, technology, training, and agricultural extension services. In addition to agricultural production, FAO intervention covered both upstream and downstream operations, particularly food processing and the marketing of foodstuffs. Furthermore, FAO was contributing, together with the other relevant United Nations agencies, to the study of the impact of the crisis and of structural adjustment on women. Thirdly, FAO was endeavouring, where social matters were concerned, to make political leaders and planners aware of the interrelationship between population issues and development programmes. FAO would also change the focus of home-economics programmes so as to emphasize the role of women as agricultural producers and to make future male and female extension workers who would work directly with rural women aware of such important issues as energy and the environment. Fourthly, recognizing that women had always been confined to the role of producers, FAO planned to promote their participation in decision-making and to

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

facilitate access for them to responsible posts both at the level of family farms, public services, the local women's organizations and organizations with both male and female memberships that were to be set up (such as co-operatives and savings-and-loan associations) and at FAO itself.

24. With a view to taking global action in the four major areas of intervention just mentioned, it would be necessary to improve the instruments used for such intervention. For example, the statistical concepts and methods used in the fields of agriculture, food and rural development must be refined so that women would no longer be "invisible" in development plans and as recipients of the benefits of development. FAO would help to establish international standards for the integration of women into rural development and would step up its technical assistance to Member States. It would encourage Governments to set up a special department both for the design and for the planning and implementation of programmes and projects involving women, and to prepare a handbook on ways to involve women.

25. FAO would carry out an inter-sectoral analysis in order to have on an ongoing basis a relatively complete picture of the integration of women into development and to maintain the multisectoral cohesion and balance of its programme. At the international level, the aim would be to improve the presentation and content of reports on the integration of women into development to inter-agency bodies. Lastly, the success of the Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development depended to a great extent on the level of the extrabudgetary resources that Governments were willing to contribute.

26. Mr. DINU (Romania), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (A/44/266), pointed out that the objectives set forth in that Charter - in the drafting of which Romania had been actively involved - remained as important in 1989 as they had been at the time they were formulated. His delegation believed that the Secretary-General had carried out an objective, balanced and concise assessment of the situation and fully agreed that the Charter remained by and large unimplemented. In order to understand why that was so, it sufficed to compare the objectives and principles of the Charter with the realities confronting the developing countries. The concerns that had motivated the great majority of Member States to adopt it had far from disappeared. Underdevelopment and poverty remained very widespread, protectionism and other trade restrictions impeded the economic and social progress of numerous countries, the economic and technological gap between developed countries and developing countries was widening, the international monetary system suffered from chronic ills and the developing countries were still being kept out of the international decision-making process. In addition, the serious threat of foreign debt placed a burden on the developing countries, which had an impact on their economic, social and political stability and was linked to the net transfer of resources from those countries to the developed countries. Other problems, such as the degradation of the environment, further complicated the world economic situation.

(Mr. Dinu, Romania)

27. The implementation of the Charter had always been controversial and had caused difficulties. His delegation was concerned, in particular, to see that some basic principles of the Charter, such as the right of every State to choose its own socio-economic system in accordance with its political, social and cultural values and the will of its people, without outside interference, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever had yet to be observed. The Charter required States to refrain, in international economic relations, from any attempt to subordinate the development of trade and economic co-operation to politically motivated factors such as the privatization of the means of production and the adoption of the free market system. Lasting solutions to economic problems could only be found through a dialogue between States, regardless of their size, population or economic might. The United Nations system could do much to promote economic co-operation among all countries on the basis of full equality and mutual advantage and to bring about recognition of the diversity of national development programmes.

28. As to human settlements, the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements had cogently described the goals to be achieved in that field and the means of doing so. The effective implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 should be the main objective for the human settlements activities of the United Nations system during the following decade. He welcomed the resolutions that had been adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements at its twelfth session, which highlighted, inter alia, the correlation between the development of human settlements and equitable social progress. In the 1960s Romania, which had invariably pursued a policy that was consistent with the Global Strategy, had embarked upon a new housing programme that was designed to meet the demand for housing and to upgrade existing facilities. It could be said that, after two decades, the national programme had achieved its objectives: over 80 per cent of the urban population lived in new houses and apartments. Under the following five-year plan, particular attention would be paid to fully solving the housing problem in towns and to substantially improving housing and living conditions throughout the country.

29. However, the question of housing and human settlements could not be isolated from its context of economic and social development and, in particular, resource potential. The significance of the Global Strategy stemmed from the fact that housing was an urgent need for the population, one that could not await the solution of broader economic problems. While the main responsibility for implementing the Global Strategy lay with Governments, the United Nations system could play an important role in supporting their housing programmes.

30. Mrs. MATHURIN-APPLEWHAITE (Jamaica) said that the picture of the socio-economic situation of women that was given in the 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development might prompt the international community to support a more integrated approach to development.

31. The economic crisis of the 1980s had obliged numerous developing countries to adopt the orthodox adjustment measures advocated by the donor countries and the multilateral financial institutions; those measures stressed short-term



(Mrs. Mathurin-Applewhite, Jamaica)

stabilization at the expense of fundamental, longer-term objectives, including the integration of women into the development process - an objective that the world community had reaffirmed in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. In other words, women in the developing countries had slipped backwards - a sad situation given the inequalities already confronting women in those countries.

32. That situation challenged the assumptions underlying adjustment programmes designed to promote growth and development. It was difficult to imagine how growth and development could be achieved if the essential elements, namely, human resources of which women represented at least one half, were left out in the cold by a process that was supposed to promote those objectives. Massive cuts in "social" expenditures in the 1980s, that were allegedly necessary for macro-economic stability, had halted or reversed the progress that women had achieved in health, nutrition and employment in the preceding decades.

33. The United Nations had played a key role in making the international community aware of the impact of adjustment on women and children, who often comprised the most vulnerable and poorest groups in many developing countries. Adjustment with a human face was a phrase which was frequently heard. Some countries were trying to take steps to alleviate the suffering; however, what was needed was measures to ensure sustained growth and development and the effective integration of women in development. Until solutions were found to such problems as the debt crisis, the deteriorating terms of trade and the negative transfer of resources, which considerably restricted the resources available to the Governments of the developing countries, those Governments would be unable to intensify their efforts to monitor closely the situation of women.

34. As to human settlements, in accordance with the guidelines of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, the Government of Jamaica was implementing a national shelter strategy aimed, *inter alia*, at mobilizing the necessary resources so as to increase the housing supply, accelerate the upgrading of the housing stock, make housing programmes more accessible to the poor and encourage increased private sector participation in the implementation of priority programmes in that field. The world community, including Habitat, had given assistance to Jamaica to repair the damage wrought by hurricane Gilbert, which had destroyed nearly 50 per cent of the housing stock. However, the efforts that Jamaica and other developing countries were making to mobilize resources for the implementation of human settlement programmes had been hampered by the external economic crisis. There again, the adjustment measures that Jamaica had had to implement had reduced the amount of resources available to the housing sector. It was thus necessary to strike a balance between economic and social development, so as to meet such basic needs as housing and to establish sustained growth and development on that basis.

35. The situation of the environment also showed that, as long as people were not adequately housed, they would turn to the natural resources around them to meet those needs.

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

36. The CHAIRMAN, referring to agenda item 82 (f) (Environment), said that on 12 September 1989 his predecessor had received a letter from the President of the General Assembly stating that the General Assembly had decided to discuss in plenary the matter of the United Nations conference on environment and development it being understood that decisions on that subsidiary item would be taken by the Second Committee. However, the officers believed that that arrangement should not prevent the delegations and representatives of United Nations organizations, which did not make a statement in plenary, from expressing their views on the proposed conference during the general debate on item 82 (f) that would take place in the Second Committee on the morning of 23 October 1989. He was submitting that proposal for adoption by the Committee.

37. The proposal was adopted.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.