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**Chairman: Mrs. Turkia OULD DADDAH**  
 (Mauritania).

**AGENDA ITEMS 62 AND 92**

**Education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms: report of the Secretary-General (A/7603, chap. IX, sect. I; A/7662)**

**The problems and needs of youth and its participation in national development (A/7603, chap. VIII, sect. C and chap. XI, sect. I; A/7680/Rev.1, A/C.3/613)**

1. Mr. SCHREIBER (Director, Division of Human Rights), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (A/7662), pointed out that the report had been prepared in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 2447 (XXIII), paragraph 6. It was at the International Conference on Human Rights, held at Teheran in 1968, that the international community had first taken cognizance of the problems and aspirations of youth and had recognized the ever-growing and active share which youth would have to play in the life and development of society. In its resolution XX, entitled "Education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms",<sup>1</sup> the Conference had called upon States to ensure that all means of education should be employed so that youth could grow up and develop "in a spirit of respect for human dignity and for equal rights of all men and all peoples without discrimination as to race, colour, language, sex or faith". The Conference had affirmed in paragraph 17 of its Proclamation of Teheran<sup>2</sup> that "the aspirations of the younger generation for a better world, in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully implemented, must be given the highest encouragement". The help of young people in forging the future of mankind was urgently needed.

2. In its resolution 2447 (XXIII), the General Assembly had endorsed the appeal made to States by the Teheran

<sup>1</sup> See *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68.XIV.2), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Conference and the Conference's recommendations to States and international organizations. The Assembly had requested the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on Human Rights, in co-operation with UNESCO, to study the question of the education of youth all over the world "with a view to the development of its personality and the strengthening of its respect for the rights of man and fundamental freedoms". In addition, it had requested the Secretary-General to arrange for an exchange of information on action taken by States "to ensure that young people are educated and brought up in a spirit of respect for human rights everywhere and given the opportunity of playing their part in the implementation and protection of human rights". It had also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its twenty-fourth session on action taken in the matter. The information transmitted to the Secretary-General by Member States in pursuance of resolution 2447 (XXIII) was contained in the annex to the report in document A/7662.

3. The Commission on Human Rights, at its twenty-fifth session, had studied the question of the education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2447 (XXIII), operative paragraph 3, and had adopted resolution 20 (XXV).<sup>3</sup> The Commission had noted with interest and satisfaction the conclusions of the Teheran Conference and of the General Assembly and the work of UNESCO and other international organizations relating to the education of youth. It had requested UNESCO to submit to it a report on the question, and it had requested the Secretary-General to supplement that report with information received from Member States, the specialized agencies, the regional economic commissions and non-governmental organizations.

4. Document A/7662 contained a summary of the views expressed in the Commission on Human Rights on the education of youth. As no invitations had been received from Member States, the Secretary-General had not yet arranged for the seminars referred to in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 2447 (XXIII), but some Governments had expressed interest in the possibility of acting as host to seminars at which young people could voice their opinions, and he would inform the Committee of any formal invitations that the Secretary-General might receive and accept during the session. Document A/7662 was an interim report which did not really cover the whole problem; it did not mention the activities of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and non-governmental organizations, or the very useful Inter-Agency Meeting on Youth held at Rome in July 1969.

<sup>3</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-sixth Session*, document E/4621, p. 193.

5. The education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was not a new concern of the United Nations. In 1965 the General Assembly, in its Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (resolution 2037 (XX)), had affirmed, *inter alia*, that young people should be brought up “in the knowledge of the dignity and equality of all men, without distinction as to race, colour, ethnic origins or beliefs, and in respect for fundamental human rights and for the right of peoples to self-determination” (principle III). The information received showed that the International Year for Human Rights had had a favourable effect on the education of youth in respect for human rights, clearly, one encouraging result was the inclusion in educational curricula at the middle and higher levels of courses on United Nations principles in the field of human rights and their implementation. Young people should be helped to express their aspirations with regard to the promotion of human rights and to contribute to their realization; that could be done by encouraging the discussion of such questions at international youth congresses and the transmittal of the conclusions of such congresses to the United Nations, by promoting the holding of seminars and conferences on the problems of youth, by granting study and travel fellowships and by encouraging national and international youth movements. Consideration might also be given to the possibility of enabling representatives of youth organizations to participate in the discussions of United Nations organs dealing with human rights questions.

6. In reply to the question “Is there really a youth crisis?”, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. René Maheu, had said in Brussels on 10 December 1968, at a ceremony to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that what was really happening was a crisis of society which youth was forcing adults to recognize. As the Secretary-General had said in the introduction to his annual report to the General Assembly at its twenty-third session, youth’s aspirations towards a better world were in no way opposed to those consistently expressed by United Nations organs.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations could and should be a centre for harmonizing the aspirations of all mankind, including youth.

7. Mr. JANSSON (Secretariat), introducing the note by the Secretary-General (A/7680/Rev.1) and his preliminary report on the problems and needs of youth and its participation in national development (A/C.3/613), pointed out that, although the problems of youth had been discussed on several occasions by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, and although the specialized agencies, particularly the ILO, FAO and UNESCO, had youth programmes of long standing, the present occasion marked the first time that an item on the agenda of the General Assembly was devoted to youth and national development. The Economic and Social Council had been first to call attention to the participation of youth in national development, particularly in the developing countries, in its resolution 1086 J (XXXIX), recommending that Governments should take the needs of young people into account in their development plans and

stressing the need to combat unemployment and under-employment among young people. Since that time, the discussion in the United Nations had broadened to include the whole question of youth in contemporary society. It was to be feared, however, that current literature, by focusing on the problems of an articulate minority living mostly in the economically advanced countries, might obscure the problems of young people in the developing countries, to whom the United Nations needed to give major attention during the Second Development Decade. That had been stressed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1407 (XLVI), which referred not only to the problem of education and employment, but also to the need for Governments to consult young people on their problems and needs and to ensure the active participation of youth in the formulation and implementation of development policies.

8. The report on the problems and needs of youth and its participation in national development (A/C.3/613) did not attempt to provide an analysis of the causes of unrest and discontent among young people or to interpret their aspirations. It was a preliminary report intended merely as a starting-point for a continuing discussion of youth within the United Nations. The report emphasized the need for Governments to take into account the needs and problems of youth in their economic and social policies and to plan adequately for youth participation in development. In terms of national planning, there should be no separate policy for youth: its needs and potentialities should be reflected in all sectors of the plan. Provision should be made for the participation of youth in the formulation of development policies and in the planning and implementation of programmes at all levels. The younger generation should be able to express their views not only on issues which directly concerned them, but also on wider issues concerning social and economic justice and human rights. Because of the inter-sectoral character of the needs of youth, there should be effective co-ordination between the various government departments concerned with youth and youth organizations. Lastly, any national youth policies should encourage the involvement of young people in the promotion of human rights.

9. There were two aspects with which the report did not deal. One was the question of the participation of young people in the work of the United Nations, and the other was international co-operation in youth programmes. It was obvious that many young people were prepared to participate in the work of the United Nations, but such participation would depend on the role young people would be invited to play in the formulation of international policies and in the planning of programmes in which youth was asked to participate. Consequently, some machinery should be established within the United Nations structure for greater contact with youth and for a continuing dialogue with organizations and individuals at the country level. There had been some positive developments in that respect, as evidenced by the meetings with youth organizations held over the past two years and the plans to involve youth in the Second United Nations Development Decade and in the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. A meeting scheduled for 1971 would discuss the participation of young people in the programmes of the Decade, and the Economic and Social

<sup>4</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 1A, para. 131.

Council had asked for a study on the creation of an international corps of volunteers, which would provide opportunities for young people to play a part in the work of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development and human rights.

10. With regard to international co-operation programmes, the United Nations and the specialized agencies were agreed on a concerted programme of action to assist Governments in the formulation of national policies and programmes to help to meet the needs of young people in developing countries. Emphasis was laid on operational activities, in which youth could be involved and from which they would benefit.

11. Lastly, in his opinion, the time had come to tackle the question of information systematically. He recalled that the Economic and Social Council, at its forty-sixth session, had adopted resolution 1407 (XLVI) requesting a detailed study of the world social situation of youth and methods of meeting their needs. He hoped that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research would participate in that study and that the resulting report would give the Third Committee a further opportunity to study the problems of youth and to consider ways of involving youth in United Nations activities at both the national and the international levels.

#### GENERAL DEBATE

12. Mr. SHERIFIS (Cyprus) said that the Third Committee's decision to start its deliberations with the two items on its agenda relating to youth demonstrated the importance that the United Nations attached to the question. The international community had come to realize that it could not hope to create a better world unless it educated the younger generation in the most noble ideals of justice, freedom and humanity.

13. His delegation hoped that out of the debate there would come concrete results making it possible to win the confidence of the young, which was a prerequisite for progress. In the opinion of his delegation, the concern of youth for world peace and social and economic justice should be recognized, and young people should be allowed to offer their views on issues of paramount importance. For example, ways should be sought to establish a direct dialogue between the United Nations and youth organizations, from which both parties could benefit. His delegation was prepared to endorse the idea of holding a world youth assembly on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

14. During the Second Development Decade, youth should be given the opportunity to play an increasing role in the formulation and implementation of development plans on both the national and the international levels, since national development could not advance without taking into account the youth factor. However, it was not enough that the rights of youth should be acknowledged; young people must also fulfil their duties. In that connexion, his delegation wondered whether the Commission for Social Development should not be invited to draft, in co-operation, *inter alia*, with the Commission on Human

Rights, a declaration on the rights and duties of youth. He would like to know the views of other delegations on that point.

15. When formulating their national youth policies, Governments might well adopt a more co-ordinated approach, while, of course, taking into account the specific circumstances, conditions and needs of their own countries. His delegation did not believe that the Third Committee should conclude its consideration of the problems of youth at the current session; it might request the Secretary-General to study what measures could be taken to establish channels of contact with youth and to involve it further in the process of socio-economic development.

16. His delegation intended in due course to submit, probably along with other delegations, a draft resolution to the Third Committee.

17. Mr. ENE (Romania) recalled that for the past nine years his delegation had been attaching special importance to the question of youth; in 1960, it had requested the inclusion in the agenda of the fifteenth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Measures designed to promote among youth the ideas of peace, mutual respect and understanding between peoples". The Assembly had needed another five years to adopt the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. During those nine years the problems of youth had become increasingly urgent, and the United Nations should now take the prompt and forceful action that was needed.

18. Romania was very sensitive to the problem of youth, not only because 40 per cent of its population was under twenty-five years of age, but also because it recognized that the younger generation was a great source of progress for humanity. As had already been pointed out, young people could be catalysts for change precisely because of their refusal blindly to accept the established order and because of their desire for innovation. To that end, they should be offered opportunities for development. There were more such opportunities today, owing to the extremely rapid advance of science and technology, increased productivity and the creation of new nations. The experience of many countries showed that it was possible to channel the enthusiasm and vigour of youth into constructive activities.

19. In the establishment of youth policies and programmes, it was necessary to harmonize the policies of the national institutions concerned with such matters and to involve young people themselves in the formulation of programmes intended for them. Responding to those demands, Romania provided a multidisciplinary and balanced education which took into account both the moral, intellectual and physical development of the personality and the requirements of national development.

20. In its resolution 1353 (XLV), the Economic and Social Council had recognized that young people had a "feeling of world solidarity and a sense of common responsibility for the achievement of peace and economic and social justice". Consequently, it was an obligation of every State to educate young people in a spirit of international co-operation and to stimulate friendship

among the youth of all countries. That was what the Romanian Government was trying to do.

21. Youth everywhere always showed a keen interest in activities designed to promote co-operation and understanding among peoples. In that connexion, he noted the success of two international meetings for which Romania had acted as host and at which extremely important recommendations had been formulated for action on the national and international levels to promote international understanding.

22. The United Nations should promote among youth its ideals and goals in the field of economic and social progress. His delegation was considering submitting, in co-operation with other delegations, a number of proposals which might expand and develop United Nations activities relating to youth. Attempts might also be made to mobilize youth for participation in the implementation of the goals of the Second Development Decade, and consideration should be given to the possibility of convening an international youth conference on that subject.

23. Mr. TEPAVICHAROV (Bulgaria) said that the two items of the agenda relating to youth covered only two aspects of the whole problem of youth, a problem which extended into every field of human activity. The concept of youth was wider or narrower depending on the different criteria applied regarding age of majority, maturity, etc.

24. If the problems of youth were becoming more and more important and pressing, it was because social ties were changing. Vertical ties were tending to give way to horizontal ties. A feeling of international solidarity, which was stronger than national barriers, was emerging among young people. Likewise, the stand taken by youth against the evils of society was becoming more and more clearly defined; and that was a positive element that fostered international solidarity. Moreover, young people were tending to question established values and to prefer creative rather than gainful activities.

25. The interval between the time when an individual achieved physical maturity and the time when he attained economic and social independence was also increasing. That was not due to a refusal on the part of young people to participate in their country's affairs, but rather to obstacles created by society. Every country should therefore copy Bulgaria by granting young people electoral rights at the age of eighteen. Youth would thus be able to respond to the confidence placed in it, and to express in official forums the ideas that it was now obliged to propagate on the streets.

26. His country was planning to introduce certain reforms in its educational system, with a view to reconciling the aspirations of youth with national development needs. Training periods for specialists would be shortened; the number of technical schools would be increased; schooling would be made compulsory up to the high school graduation stage, and finally, curricula would be modified in order to place greater emphasis on the exact sciences.

27. He agreed with the representative of Cyprus that the protection of youth was the duty of Governments. The

Bulgarian Government had created a Youth Committee, which had the rank of a ministry and was responsible for co-ordinating the activities of youth organizations, with a view to ensuring the participation of young people in the management of national affairs and especially in technical progress. The Committee's decisions were binding on all ministries.

28. In conclusion, he said that young people must be given the opportunity to associate themselves with the adult world instead of engaging in a futile struggle against society.

29. Mr. AFOLABI (Nigeria) said he was particularly glad that the United Nations was now giving youth the attention it deserved. The General Assembly had adopted the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. More recently, by its resolution 2447 (XXIII), it had endorsed resolution XX of the Teheran Conference, on the education of youth in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and had also requested the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on Human Rights, in co-operation with UNESCO, to study the question of education of youth.

30. The education of youth did present some problems, but responsibility for those problems rested with adults as much as with young people and, in his delegation's opinion, the problems of youth were the problems of the adults themselves.

31. His country was doing a great deal on behalf of youth. There was a National Commission of Nigeria for UNESCO, which was trying to educate youth in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; UNESCO and other United Nations publications on the subject of youth were widely distributed among youth organizations throughout the country. Other agencies created for the same purpose included the UNESCO youth clubs, which were to be united in a federation of youth clubs, and the All Nigeria United Nations Students Association with branches in all Nigerian universities. Grants were given to the youth organizations, enabling them to participate in international youth conferences both in and outside Nigeria; exchanges of books and films were organized to enable Nigerian youth to communicate with the youth of other countries.

32. Everyone talked about bridging the generation gap. In that regard, his delegation noted that attention was being given by the United Nations to the organization of seminars to be attended not only by specialists in youth problems but also by members of youth organizations themselves, thus allowing for an exchange of ideas between the generations. He hoped that the United Nations would continue to give close attention to the problems of youth and the education of youth, since the future of the world depended on the solution of those problems.

33. Mr. MOUSSA (United Arab Republic) said that the problems of youth, which had long been exploited by the press and other mass information media, had always been approached superficially by those media. United Nations agencies should avoid making the same mistake and should try to get beneath the surface of the problems. The Committee should from the very outset address itself to the

essential questions, especially the rebellion of young people. It should ask itself whether that rebellion was directed only against school programmes, for example, or against established institutions or the injustice of human society as well. Was it a single rebellion common to youth throughout the world, or were there quite different rebellions in different countries, societies or socio-economic contexts? Even before asking those essential questions, it would be necessary to define the scope of the term "youth", and to determine what category of human beings it described. In short, the Committee should first seek to identify what was meant by "youth"; next, it should try to identify its problems and needs, and only then would it be able to deal with the question of education.

34. The new generation was beset by contradictions. On the one hand, the modern age was the age of television, jet aircraft, computers and the conquest of space; but it was also the age of the atomic bomb, wars of aggression, famine, refugee camps and extreme wealth side by side with extreme poverty. Was it surprising that the younger generation was disoriented? When young people learned about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they discovered at the same time that those who had adopted it did not respect it. Was it surprising that they were rebelling? They should be told of the efforts made by the United Nations to remedy that state of affairs, and they should be shown why the Organization was sometimes powerless. If that were done, they might some day succeed where their elders had failed.

35. He felt that in examining that question due regard should be paid to the very great diversity of the problems facing different countries. Before taking any decisions, the Committee should learn about the needs of youth throughout the world, and six meetings were certainly not enough for that. The Director of the Division of Human Rights had pointed out that the studies were far from being completed; it was not possible at the present stage to envisage either a declaration on the rights and duties of youth, or the establishment of a dialogue between youth and the United Nations, or the organization of a world assembly of youth.

36. For all those reasons, and because bodies such as the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission for Social Development had devoted only a very few meetings to the question, his déléation felt that an organ representing both the developed and the developing countries should be set up to examine the question in the interval between sessions. That organ which should also include experts among its members, could hear representatives of youth, study the work of UNESCO and report to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session. Such a solution would be in keeping with the importance of the task.

*The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.*