



Chairman: Miss Maria GROZA (Romania).

AGENDA ITEM 55

Youth, its education in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, its problems and needs, and its participation in national development: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/7921, A/8003, chap. IX, sect. K, A/C.3/L.1764)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syria), speaking on a point of order, said that the authoritative and illuminating statements made at the previous meeting by the Director of the Division of Human Rights and the Director of the Social Development Division could prove extremely useful to the members of the Committee in the preparation of their statements on the item under discussion. He therefore suggested that they should be reproduced as fully as possible in the corresponding summary record and that that record should be distributed as soon as possible.
2. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would take due account of the suggestion by the representative of Syria.
3. Mrs. DAES (Greece) stated that the action taken by the Government of Greece to ensure that young people were educated in respect for human rights and given the opportunity of playing their role in the implementation, promotion and protection of those rights was described in the information which that Government had sent to the Secretary-General in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2497 (XXIV) and which appeared in the annex to document A/7921. She would like to stress, however, that the Government of Greece was convinced that, in the present age of great scientific, technological and cultural achievements, the energies, enthusiasm and creative abilities of youth should be devoted to the material and spiritual advancement of all peoples. In order to win youth to the cause of human rights, it was necessary to reconsider the educational systems by which young people were prepared for the future.
4. Her delegation wished to suggest some basic measures at the national and international levels. Firstly, the competent authorities of each State should draw up a national programme of education on human rights, designed to mobilize the energies and resources of the universities and other institutions of higher education, both private and public. Indeed, the primary task of those institutions should be to shape the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into a vital instrument for international action, enabling them to devote themselves to the study of the philosophy, jurisprudence, politics and implications of international concern for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to the teaching and dissemination of those subjects. It was also necessary to instruct the teaching staff of primary and secondary schools in the matter of human rights, in order to ensure the success of the school curricula for the promotion of fundamental rights. That aspect of the training of teachers was the initial and essential condition for all action directed towards education in the matter of human rights. Special attention should be paid also to the teaching of young workers and youth in rural areas.
5. In order to promote respect for human rights it was also essential to make appropriate use of mass information and communication media, including the press, radio and television. Encouragement should be given to the convening of conferences for journalists and representatives of radio and television broadcasting services, to consider how they could contribute to the national effort to make young people aware of their obligations in the matter of human rights. Similarly, the efforts of the non-governmental organizations concerned in the question could be mobilized.
6. With regard to the action taken by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in relation to youth, she expressed her delegation's gratitude to the Division of Human Rights of the Secretariat and to UNESCO for the various seminars which they had successfully organized, one example of which was the seminar held at Belgrade in June 1970 on the role of youth in the promotion and protection of human rights. It was to be hoped that more meetings of that nature would be organized, including seminars for teachers and educators, within the framework of the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights. Furthermore, she wished to endorse the action taken by the International Labour Organisation to promote respect for human rights among young workers, in particular through its technical co-operation programmes, for that helped countries to draw up vocational training programmes, to draft labour laws and to establish norms for labour relations. Her delegation also supported recommendation 6, regarding the creation of an international youth centre,¹ in the section of the report of the World Youth Assembly dealing with the role of the United Nations in education, and considered that the task of the Centre should be to promote human rights through youth organizations, exchanges of information and research, to train youth leaders in world affairs and to provide a forum for discussion of the important issues which were of concern to youth and of the way in which young people

¹ See *World Youth Assembly*, document 56/WYA/P/10, p. 32.

could participate in the political, economic and social life of their country.

7. Her delegation endorsed the views expressed on that subject by the Secretary-General in his introduction (A/8001/Add.1, paras. 169 and 170) to the report on the work of the Organization. It was essential that young people should be given the opportunity of participating fully in the formulation of all policies affecting them, and that further efforts should be made at the national and international levels to educate youth in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as a means of progressing towards an era in which primary importance would be attached to human values.

8. Mr. MOUSSA (United Arab Republic) said that the international community was paying increasing attention to the problem of youth. Evidence of that was to be found in the activities undertaken during the current year for the purpose of ensuring that young people were brought up in a spirit of respect for the dignity and equality of all men and given the opportunity of playing their part in the implementation of human rights throughout the world. The World Youth Assembly and the Belgrade Seminar on the role of youth in the promotion of human rights were among those activities. Moreover, the General Assembly had repeatedly recognized the importance of the contribution of youth in the promotion of peace, justice and progress. In the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples, the General Assembly had affirmed, among other things, that the new generation should become conscious of their responsibilities in the world they would be called upon to manage (see General Assembly resolution 2037 (XX)). The Proclamation of Teheran² had stated that the aspirations of the younger generation for a better world, in which human rights and fundamental freedoms were fully implemented, must be given the highest encouragement.

9. The Third Committee, too, had devoted itself year after year to considering the problems of youth. In general, the discussions in the Committee and in other United Nations organs had concentrated on what had been called "the crisis of youth". It had been said over and over again that the rapid development of contemporary society was widening the generation gap and making dialogue more difficult. He was not fully in agreement with that, for he saw no difference between young people and adults when it came to the need for peace and justice. If there was a gap, it was between the forces of peace and progress on the one hand and the forces of retrogression and reaction on the other hand.

10. Young people expressed their concern for contemporary problems in many ways, some of which were positive and others negative. The most positive were active resistance to all forms of oppression, participation in liberation struggles and determination not to intervene in wars of aggression. The way in which young people expressed their desires and concerns differed radically from that of the organs of the United Nations. Young people

preferred action to the mere formulation of principles. United Nations organs had formulated beautiful declarations and enunciated high principles, but in many cases they had not led to action.

11. It was not enough to educate youth in respect for human rights as an integral part of their daily lives; they should also be encouraged to defend those rights wherever they were threatened. The central point of the Third Committee's debates, which it should reiterate in any resolutions it might adopt, should be to encourage youth to take all the necessary steps to achieve the liberation and self-determination of all peoples and territories under foreign rule.

12. Young people were witnessing wars of aggression being waged against certain nations to satisfy expansionist designs. They were witnessing the suffering of thousands of human beings through racial discrimination. They were witnessing a world divided into rich and poor, strong and weak. Fortunately, all those injustices had not plunged youth into helplessness or negativism; on the contrary they had awakened in youth a spirit of struggle and revolution. In their message to the General Assembly,³ the youth of the world had expressed their firm determination to take a stand against aggression, imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. They had expressed the hope that the twenty-fifth anniversary would mark a turning point in the history of the United Nations and provide it with an opportunity to increase its effectiveness in the field of human rights. They had also expressed a desire that the United Nations should reaffirm the fundamental principles of the Charter; take appropriate action to accelerate decolonization, abolish racial discrimination and ensure the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; support the development efforts of all peoples; promote scientific advances that would benefit all mankind; and work towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

13. Youth had thus made its position clear. It was a tribute to the Third Committee that youth's message to the General Assembly had incorporated almost every concept laid down in the Committee's resolutions and declarations on human rights. That important message deserved serious study and analysis. In addition, it might be appropriate to establish continuous contact with youth through one of the United Nations organs, existing or to be established, which would consider and follow up the problems and needs of youth. That idea should be borne in mind, especially if the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Belgrade seminar to the effect that the General Assembly should designate one of the next few years as international youth year (see A/C.3/L.1764, para. 3, recommendation 14). Moreover, the time had come to entrust the study of the problems of youth to an organ of the United Nations. That organ, which could be, for example, the Commission on Human Rights, would report regularly to the General Assembly. The Commission for Social Development could study the social aspects of the subject. The Commission on Human Rights might wish to entrust to whatever body it considered appropriate the task of contacting youth organizations in order to acquaint the Commission with their ideas and aspirations. It would thus be able to propose to

² See *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68.XIV.2), p. 3.

³ See *World Youth Assembly* document 56/WYA/P/10, p. 5.

the General Assembly the steps it deemed necessary. The General Assembly, in turn, might wish to consider the possibility of discussing the item on youth every two years, so that the functional commissions would have the necessary time for further research and analysis.

14. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that the problem of youth was of concern to many countries and, as had been pointed out during the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights, involved not only youth but society as a whole. She was therefore surprised that no observer or delegate from the World Youth Assembly was present in the Committee room who could report on the Assembly, an event which, she hoped, could take place every two years, as the participants had suggested.

15. After reading the conclusions of the World Youth Assembly her delegation agreed with those who had stated earlier in the Committee that it was necessary to make a distinction between the crisis of youth in the developed countries and that of youth in the developing countries. The report of the Assembly answered the many questions that could be asked about youth, the most important of which was: "What do they want?". The Assembly's report gave a clear and vivid picture of modern youth, its anguish, its protests and its needs, which were reflected in the resolutions of its various committees, as was also the intensity of the rebellion of young people, who refused to accept the injustice, slavery and oppression suffered by many peoples of the world.

16. Those young people, who had come from the four corners of the earth and who represented all civilizations, all political and economic systems, all creeds and philosophies, had not hesitated to inveigh vehemently against colonialism, aggression, racism, injustice, ignorance and poverty. They had not hesitated to take a stand on such problems, thus affording an opportunity for serious reflection on them and on the crisis through which youth was passing and the causes of that crisis. The question now was not so much what youth wanted but what adults could do for them and what they could do for their parents' generation. It was of course easy to demand that young people should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and should take part in the development of their countries. To that demand young people would reply that to associate them in the work of development should not simply mean that their physical energies would be used. Young people wanted complete participation, and that was true of both the developed and the developing countries.

17. The recommendations of the World Youth Assembly clearly reflected the passion of young people for the independence of nations and the priority they gave to the solution of political problems. All world leaders and those responsible for world policies should examine their consciences before demanding that youth should promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The previous year her delegation had laid great emphasis on the duty of adults to set an example to the rising generations and she now emphasized once again that only in that way could fruitful results be achieved. Youth had made its voice heard and it now lay with politicians, legislators and leaders in general to blaze a trail for the future, enabling young

people to play a full part in the cause of peace, justice and progress.

18. There would no doubt be some who, reading the conclusions of the World Youth Assembly, would dismiss them as utopian. Others, however, would consider that their authors had simply been idealistic and anxious to change the modern world radically in order to eliminate all its distressing and negative aspects.

19. It was to be hoped that all leaders who had a decisive influence on the course of history would heed the appeal of youth and make every effort to ensure that their dream, and the dream of millions of adults, the dream of a world in which human rights and fundamental freedoms were fully respected, became a reality.

20. Mr. DIAZ (Colombia) expressed his delegation's satisfaction that the item on youth was the first to be taken up by the Committee. His Government gave high priority to the problems of youth and its participation in the economic and social development of the country and it therefore took a keen interest in ensuring that youth occupied strategic positions in policy-making and administration. His Government considered that the active participation of the young generations was a factor of major importance in any attempt to bring about a more egalitarian society and it therefore repudiated any humiliating paternalism that professed to solve the problems of youth without permitting young people to take any part in the national life.

21. It would be unpardonable if the States Members of the United Nations failed to support youth's desire to take its share of responsibility. He would like to know what action States had taken to give effect to the General Assembly resolutions designed to achieve a better harnessing of the energies of youth in the development of world peace, social justice and economic progress. Good intentions were futile if Governments were not prepared to institute social reforms to enable youth to take part in development programmes. It was to be hoped that the cause of youth would not meet the same fate as the cause of peace, which, although it was the primary objective of the United Nations Charter, still did not prevail in various parts of the world.

22. Referring to young workers, he said that, having been closely connected with the trade union movement for many years, he was aware of the tremendous difficulties faced by young people who had to abandon their studies at an early age because of economic difficulties or because they had to assume family responsibilities. Special attention should be given to that group, so that they could continue their training in their working environment and so that those who wished to continue their studies could do so without difficulty. Unemployment among young people could be combated by increasing the number of years devoted to basic education.

23. The United Nations should bear in mind the aspirations and desires of youth as they had been expressed in the message by the recent World Youth Assembly. The time had come to work effectively for the rising generation, who today constituted the majority of mankind, if the peace and progress of the world was to be ensured.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.