

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
27th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 1 November 1989
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

AGENDA ITEM 104: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (continued)
- (c) IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT (continued)
- (d) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND CO-OPERATION (continued)
- (e) NATIONAL EXPERIENCE RELATING TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned
within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750,
2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/44/SR.27
10 November 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

89-56792 1835S (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/44/409 and Corr.1 and 2-S/20743; A/44/416)

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/44/38, A/44/238 and Corr.1, A/44/342, A/44/409-S/20743, A/44/411, A/44/457, A/44/551)

AGENDA ITEM 104: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/44/511; A/44/551)
- (b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (continued) (A/44/389)
- (c) IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT (continued)
- (d) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND CO-OPERATION (continued)
- (e) NATIONAL EXPERIENCE RELATING TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS (continued) (A/44/516)

1. Mrs. REGAZZOLI (Argentina) said that, despite national laws and policies aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and some qualitative advances in the area of employment, much remained to be done to achieve the full integration of women into society. Educational systems should be changed with a view to eliminating existing inequalities. At the all-important family level, Governments and international institutions should provide social programmes tailored to the needs of women. In that connection, it should be noted that, in the area of women's employment, unequal pay was generally not the result of definite policies but of problems caused by the inflexible hours of the business world which made it difficult for a woman to accommodate both job and family. The equality and advancement of women was also impeded by regional conflicts and tensions.

2. Argentina had been an early leader in upholding the civil and political rights of women. According to the national constitution, written in the last century, men and women were equal under the law. In family law, spouses enjoyed equal rights and obligations, and Argentine labour law had for many years prohibited discrimination of any kind on the basis of sex.

3. Burdened by foreign debt and hindered by a weak world economy and rising protectionism, the Governments of many developing countries were finding it extremely difficult to implement social programmes to improve the social, cultural and economic status of women. For that reason, Argentina believed that the main subject of study at the 1990 extended session of the Commission on the Status of

/...

(Mrs. Regazzoli, Argentina)

Women should be the impact of the economy and the debt burden on programmes in the developing world.

4. It was important to maintain the consensus reached during the negotiations which had culminated in the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The Commission on the Status of Women should play the central role of monitoring, examining and evaluating the Strategies. Her delegation continued to support the holding of annual meetings and the implementation of a long-term work programme to that end. World conferences should also be held for the periodic global appraisal of progress in implementing the Strategies.

5. Argentina supported the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), especially with regard to the plans of action for the advancement and integration of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. In that connection, it was necessary to strengthen or establish national and regional mechanisms so that the Strategies could be appropriately implemented in each society. Argentina also commended the work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), as outlined in the note by the Secretary-General (A/44/416).

6. Mrs. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen Arab Republic), speaking on behalf of her delegation and that of Democratic Yemen, said that both countries gave all possible support to efforts to place women on an equal footing with men. Women had participated alongside men in the liberation struggle, and there was a growing awareness among people of both sexes of the need to promote their interests.

7. A number of laws had been passed giving women the same rights as men, including the right to social security and the right to vote and to occupy political posts at all government levels. Efforts were being made to integrate women in development, and great importance was placed on the education of women. Women were integrated into the social system at the national and regional levels and had their own women's organizations.

8. Both countries supported efforts aimed at the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 and would continue to work for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, in concert with the international community. They wished to express sympathy for the victims of the recent earthquakes in Algeria, China and the United States.

9. Miss SAAD (Egypt) said that it was imperative to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the needs and demands of Governments. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General (E/1989/19) and in resolution 1988/60 of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on the Status of Women had a key role to play in promoting co-operation among the different organs of the United Nations system. Strengthening that role would help it to integrate and consolidate information for such purposes as the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the reactivation of economic growth and development in

/...

(Miss Saad, Egypt)

the developing countries and of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

10. The question of women in development was not merely an economic issue but a social and cultural one as well. In attempting to integrate more women in development, it was the duty of the United Nations as a multilateral forum to respect cultural differences among sovereign States.

11. She wished to propose that the Commission on the Status of Women consider the inclusion of two additional items on the agendas of its extended and thirty-fourth sessions, namely, channelling the input of women through the special session and the International Development Strategy.

12. Mr. SAAR (Mali) said that, although some progress had been made in furthering the integration of women into the development process and in eliminating discrimination against women, it was imperative to move beyond legal guarantees to practical action in everyday life.

13. From the time of its independence, Mali had made the full participation of women in economic and social development a political and economic objective. Mali had ratified various labour-related conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The women of Mali had participated in all political actions in Africa and were founding members of the Pan-African Women's Organization. At the national level, the Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali (National union of women of Mali) was instrumental in ensuring the integration of women through activities ranging from literacy programmes to the creation of rural day-care centres. Mali gave high priority to improving the conditions of women in rural areas through the establishment of women's co-operatives, literacy campaigns and the training of rural midwives in modern birthing techniques in order to minimize the number of childbirth-related deaths.

14. Ms. KING (Director, Recruitment and Placement Division of the Office of Human Resources Management) wished to draw the attention of the Committee to a report on the status of women in the Secretariat (A/C.5/44/17) that was shortly to be issued in accordance with resolution 43/103 of the General Assembly and resolution 1989/29 of the Economic and Social Council. It would be ready in time for discussion by the Fifth Committee on 3 November. Among the issues dealt with in the report was the focal point for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat. In March 1989, Miss Suzan Habachy, had been selected at the D-I level to serve in that capacity in the office of the Assistant Secretary-General of Human Resource Management. Together with the other human resources officers, she was responsible for questions relating to women in the Secretariat and, as focal point, she served as Secretary of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat. In addition, two other director-level women had been appointed, one of whom would work directly with the Secretary-General on women's issues.

(Ms. King)

15. The Secretariat shared the concern expressed by some delegations over the standstill on women's issues resulting from financial constraints, but it was pursuing its objectives in respect of women despite those limitations.

16. In connection with the situation of women in the Secretariat, she drew attention to document A/C.5/44/17. A new system of open bidding for posts had made it easier for women to apply for high-level positions, and their promotion rate was good. Promotion statistics showed gains even at the higher levels, despite many post reductions. There had been gains at the middle and lower levels too, but more remained to be done. There had been significant gains for women in terms of regional distribution, with increasing percentages of female staff for every region, although they were still underrepresented in some regions. There had been a 26 per cent increase in the recruitment of women in the Secretariat, but most had been recruited at low levels and a greater effort was needed to recruit women for higher-level posts, particularly through national competitive examinations. The Secretariat was also giving favourable consideration to extending the contracts of women beyond the age of 60, to extending short-term contracts for women and to give some preference to women who had in the past suffered because they were from overrepresented countries. The Secretariat was also considering earmarking posts for women, particularly at the higher levels; in some United Nations bodies professional women constituted 15 per cent or less of the total.

17. A new development was the participation of women in peace-keeping. Despite retrenchment at the United Nations, 45 per cent of its staff in Namibia were women, some even in key posts, and 42 per cent of its staff in Nicaragua were women. She drew attention to the specific measures referred to in the annex to document A/C.5/44/17.

18. In sum, progress had been slow but steady. The full support of delegations was required to nominate women for available posts and to contact qualified candidates. The Secretariat was making a special effort to recruit women from underrepresented countries in order to meet its targets.

19. Mr. MEHNAT (Afghanistan) said that the goals of equality, development and peace for women were still far from becoming a reality. The economic crisis, particularly in the developing and least-developed countries, population growth, discrimination, oppression and inequality still hampered women's effective participation in their societies. Despite the development of strategies that had provided a legal and moral framework for women's advancement and protection from discrimination, further action was needed to overcome obstacles to implementation. The integration of women in the development process should also be strengthened, with due regard for the objectives of the New International Economic Order, and his delegation appreciated the work being done by United Nations bodies to achieve that objective.

20. In Afghanistan, men and women had equal rights and duties under the law. The progress made by Afghan women showed that modernism did not necessarily mean abandonment of traditional values; Afghan women could wear non-traditional dress without compromising their religious practices, they could work in offices with

/...

(Mr. Mehnat, Afghanistan)

male colleagues while retaining their dignity and could engage in activities traditionally reserved for men while remaining good wives and mothers. Equality of rights for women was anchored in the country's laws, and constructive measures were being taken to promote the social, economic and political advancement of women and to eliminate the causes of the backwardness that had previously hindered their full participation in society.

21. Afghan women had mobilized to defend their rights and were represented at the highest political levels. They paid great attention to the implementation of the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations on women and to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. In the past 10 years Afghan women had made striking progress in employment and education, particularly when compared with their situation at the turn of the century.

22. Mrs. MIRANDA (Chile) said that the participation of the heads of the agencies in the discussion was a sign that the United Nations was according a relatively higher priority to women's issues.

23. Chile had signed the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which constituted the cornerstone of the United Nations Decade for Women, and would be ratifying it in the immediate future. For Chilean women, the ratification signified equality both in fact and before the law. However, the Convention was only a small part of what was needed to bring women into the development process in an atmosphere of peace and equality. The advancement of women also depended upon the women themselves; they had to decide whether they wanted to move into the positions of power now open to them.

24. Unfortunately, instances in which women had succeeded in breaking the traditional barriers to power in past decades were the exceptions. Even in the developed countries, women's participation in political decision-making was limited. In the developing countries women had to be integrated into the development process before they could attain positions of power.

25. In today's world confrontation was giving way to reforms aimed at greater social and economic justice; those were important prerequisites for the advancement of women. At the same time, women in Latin America continued to face the daunting challenge of unemployment, inflation, infant malnutrition and lack of opportunity.

26. In Chile, profound reforms in the economic and social sectors had benefited the entire population, women and children in particular. Significant social progress, including a decline in the infant mortality rate and in malnutrition and an increase in school attendance by children from the extreme poverty sector, had been achieved in tandem with the consolidation of a stable and strong economy resulting in a decline in unemployment and inflation, reduction of the foreign debt and enhanced ability to meet international commitments. Like all Latin American women, Chilean women were closely tied to their families and that factor would have a decisive influence on the manner in which they were incorporated into the development process.

(Mrs. Miranda, Chile)

27. According to the Secretary-General's report (A/44/511), only 55 of the national reports concerning the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies had been received to date. That poor response had led her delegation to consider that another information-gathering method, relying on public and private sources, should be sought. In addition, new questions relating to women's issues should be incorporated in the existing reporting system. Lastly, she wished to emphasize her country's interest in contributing to the review of the Forward-looking Strategies.

28. Mrs. MENZHERES (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that she attached great importance to the priority that the international community was now giving to women and the machinery that had been set up to monitor observance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Commission on the Status of Women had become the pivotal organ for co-ordinating United Nations efforts on behalf of women, and she hoped that it would produce specific recommendations to remove the most serious obstacles to progress for women at a time when, according to the Commission, the situation of women in the world had deteriorated and the level of their participation and development remained unsatisfactory.

29. Radical social transformations in the Ukrainian SSR were propelling the Government towards a policy that laid particular stress on strengthening legal guarantees for the social protection of women. Wage, health and social benefits had been instituted to benefit working people in categories where 70 to 80 per cent were women. Special measures had been instituted to provide for the specific needs of working mothers and pregnant women and to free women from jobs that could be harmful to their health. National and local organs of Government were engaged in major efforts to improve the machinery for monitoring the improvement of the situation of women and ensuring compliance with labour laws. At the political level, 16.3 per cent of the deputies in her country's parliament were women, as opposed to 9.7 per cent on the average for parliaments world wide.

30. She commended the efforts of the United Nations to improve the situation of women and particularly the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which were the main bodies for collecting national experience and generating ideas and recommendations on women's issues. Flagging interest on the part of many Governments in the 1990 review of the Commission's progress, however, was a sign of certain deficiencies in its work. In future it should focus attention on the qualitative parameters for analysing the problems under discussion and on tighter links with national mechanisms for monitoring improvements in the situation of women in order to produce more valuable recommendations on specific problems. Further improvements in the co-ordination of international efforts would also have a positive effect. The potential of regional co-operation, particularly in the European region, was far from being fully exploited. It had been suggested that participation of the European Economic Commission in implementing the Nairobi Strategies should be more active and she felt that a regional forum for discussing the problems of women in the European region would be very useful.

31. Ms. DU YONG (China) said that since its adoption in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had played an important role in helping women to achieve equal status under the law by encouraging the States parties, now numbering 99, to enact the necessary national legislation. China would mark the Convention's tenth anniversary by a series of commemorative activities designed to increase public awareness of that Convention. As a signatory that had ratified the Convention in 1980, China hoped that more countries would ratify it so as to strengthen its influence.

32. Her delegation appreciated the efforts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to rationalize its working procedures and to simplify its consideration of second reports and endorsed the Committee's suggestion to hold a pre-session working group before its ninth session. Her country had submitted its second periodic report and was awaiting its consideration by the Committee.

33. The mid-term review of the Forward-looking Strategies, to be carried out at the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, would undoubtedly benefit from the constructive proposals and suggestions regarding the review and appraisal put forward at recent working group meetings within the Third Committee. In that connection, she wished to express special thanks to the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna for providing a comprehensive document on the progress made and difficulties encountered since the adoption of the Strategies and for offering suggestions for future implementation. She hoped that by incorporating the working group's suggestions, the Division could submit a more accurate and realistic document to the Commission.

34. Women in China had in the past four years made some progress in achieving equal rights and in becoming participants in the development and peace processes. Recent reforms had opened up new opportunities for women to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Projected reforms in the urban and rural production structures and expansion of the commodity economy would result in an even greater role for women. Their participation in social progress spurred improvements in legislation safeguarding their rights. However, they still suffered from neglect, discrimination and the persistence of the feudal notion of male superiority. They lagged behind men in education and were thus at a competitive disadvantage in society. They were also faced with a host of new challenges as a result of the expanding commodity economy. The Chinese Government, women's organizations and Chinese society as a whole would continue to take measures to overcome those problems.

35. Her delegation wished to express its satisfaction with the work done by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). It found the Institute's increased level of training activities highly valuable. In co-operation with Chinese organizations, INSTRAW had held a statistical workshop in June 1988 at Beijing aimed at improving data collection on women in China, after which some workshop participants had conducted similar training courses in their own regions. Her country stood ready to explore with INSTRAW means of strengthening their mutual co-operation.

(Ms. Du Yong, China)

36. The report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had the merit of being efficient, getting quick results and concentrating on women in developing countries, so it was gratifying that in recent years the Fund had expanded its activities and increased its resource base. China hoped that its positive co-operation with the Fund would grow in years to come.

37. Ms. ILIC (Yugoslavia), commenting on the Secretary-General's report on the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (A/44/511), noted with concern that the expected progress in many areas of relevance to women had not materialized and that obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies had been encountered at the national and international levels. That made it all the more important for Governments and the agencies of the United Nations system to give their full attention to the forthcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which would review the progress thus far in implementing the Strategies and make recommendations for future action.

38. The Secretary-General's report indicated that international goals could be more easily achieved by making women more effective participants in the decision-making process. At the same time, it had noted that women did not participate actively in politics or in political decision-making. Governments should pay proper attention to the reasons for that situation, as outlined in the report. In that same connection, her delegation supported the convening in 1991 of a high-level interregional consultation on women in public life, which would, inter alia, examine the role of women in the major decision-making processes.

39. Developmental constraints constituted the main impediment to the advancement of women and the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. The negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on women and children should be examined under the general question of development. A good analysis of that subject was provided in section 2 of the 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. According to that survey, there was a direct correlation between the external debt of developing countries and their adjustment measures, on the one hand, and the decline of net income and average wages resulting in widespread poverty among women. Reduction in public expenditures had a particularly negative impact on women and children, who were dependent on public services. Macro-economic measures to bring about a more favourable international economic environment were necessary to change the situation. Steps to minimize women's particular vulnerability to economic crises should be taken at the national level. Future issues of the World Survey should continue to link the advancement of women to key areas of economic development. It was gratifying to find that issues of relevance to women had been included in the 1989 World Economic Survey. In view of the cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary nature of those issues, United Nations activities aimed at integrating women in development needed to be strengthened. In that connection, Yugoslavia supported the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

40. The Ninth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in September 1989, had reaffirmed the valuable contribution of women, strongly supported the recognition of their rights, and laid particular stress on the need

(Ms. Ilic, Yugoslavia)

for greater efforts aimed at integrating women in development, especially in non-aligned and other developing countries. It had also called for intensified efforts to launch a co-operative programme on women in development supported by the international community and had urged all non-aligned and other developing countries to participate in the ministerial conference of non-aligned countries on the role of women in development to be held in early 1990. The Programme for South-South Co-operation in the Area of Women in Development, elaborated jointly by Zimbabwe and Yugoslavia in co-operation with INSTRAW, had been presented at the Summit.

41. Her delegation welcomed INSTRAW's research programme on improving concepts and methods for data collection on women, and was pleased to see that it had organized numerous seminars for participants from national statistical offices and sectoral ministries. Her country had used the Institute's training manual to organize national consultations and was interested in expanding that activity to the regional level in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Europe. She wished also to commend the efforts of the United Nations Statistical Office and INSTRAW in collecting data on women's work in the informal sector. Such information would provide concrete evidence of women's substantial contribution to national wealth and growth and would encourage innovative policies to provide them with assistance.

42. The adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a milestone in the United Nations Decade for Women. Her delegation was gratified that thus far 99 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention and 18 more States had signed it. Increase in the number of ratifications, faithful implementation of the provisions of the Convention and gradual withdrawal of reservations would contribute significantly to the advancement of women world wide. She therefore welcomed the steps taken to publicize the Convention on the tenth anniversary of its adoption.

43. The Yugoslav delegation endorsed the proposal of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to convene a working group to meet for three to five days prior to its ninth session. That would enable the Committee to organize its work more efficiently, and in turn facilitate its review of the periodic reports. In that connection, increased secretarial support for the Committee would be welcome.

44. Mr. WILENSKI (Australia) wished to thank the Secretariat on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and his own Government for its prompt and comprehensive response to the concerns recently expressed by the members of the Third Committee, particularly about the lack of progress in the action programme for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat and the need for a more dynamic approach. A review of progress made in 1989 indicated that a slow but steady approach would not be adequate to meet the goal of overall participation of women at a rate of 30 per cent by 1990. In fact the 6 per cent increase registered in 1989 could only be taken as a warning signal that progress was faltering.

45. He hoped that further clarification would be forthcoming on a number of points in the Secretariat's response. Furthermore, he trusted that information would be

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

provided to the Fifth Committee regarding the number of times the Steering Committee for the programme had met since April and the results of those meetings. He would also like to know what steps had been taken in 1989 to respond to the 1988 recommendations of the Steering Committee. Lastly, more information about the roles of the focal point and the Director would be welcome.

46. Ms. VASSILIOU (Greece) also wished to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for her comprehensive response to the questions raised in the Third Committee. Since it had requested a report on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat in 1988, the Third Committee had expected to have the relevant report before it during the current debate on the item. For the forty-fifth session, it would appreciate having that information before it went to the Fifth Committee.

47. Mr. MANYO (Lesotho) said that the proposals and recommendations set forth in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women remained the only hope for achieving further advances in the status of women. That goal implied increased participation of women in social and economic development. Among the specific factors requiring immediate international and national attention were inequities in obtaining education, the need for training activities and access to health services and child-care services. The situation of women in Lesotho was made more difficult by the fact that the able-bodied male population often spent long periods employed as migrant workers in neighbouring countries, leaving the responsibilities of household care, development and agricultural and livestock production to women. Women's role as producers and agents of change had been severely limited by their meagre share in the means of production and by their marginalization in production relations.

48. Education and training were crucial to bring about the effective participation of women in development. While his country's educational policy afforded equal opportunity for boys and girls, the substantially higher proportion of women in the population meant that more females acquired higher education. In general, his Government continued to adopt measures aimed at equalizing political, cultural and socio-economic opportunities for men and women and promoting greater participation of women in the development process. For example, it had always supported the principle of equal pay for equal work and had included that principle in the labour regulations. Nevertheless, men continued to dominate in the higher strata of the civil service and the private sector. It was hoped that the disparity would gradually be eliminated as women became more fully integrated into the development and decision-making processes. In that connection, his country had established the Directorate of Youth and Women's Affairs in 1979 for the purpose of integrating women into the socio-economic sphere by assisting them in project formulation and identifying funding sources.

49. Impediments to the advancement of women in Lesotho included laws concerning family and marriage, inheritance, succession, land distribution and banking. For example, women had limited access to the means of production because they were regarded as minors as long as their husbands were alive. In order to redress certain inequalities, his Government had promulgated the 1979 Land Act, which had brought about marked improvements in women's rights in the areas of property

(Mr. Manyo, Lesotho)

acquisition, finance and credit. Two banks had started providing loans for women who submitted viable project proposals. Women had also formed financial and legal organizations to aid them in their struggle for equal treatment before the law.

50. His delegation endorsed the remarks of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to the effect that women were the centre of development and that without more assistance to women, the development process itself would stall. At the same time, there was room for optimism in light of the various activities being carried out by the United Nations specialized agencies, as outlined in their valuable reports. The agencies had a primary role to play in making Governments aware of what action must be taken.

51. Mr. AL-RAWAS (Oman) said that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were one of the main achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Strategies had taken account of the sufferings of Palestinian women in the occupied territories, where they were daily subjected to oppression and acts of terrorism by the occupying forces. The international community must carry out its responsibility with regard to Palestinian women and help them regain their right to a life in dignity in their own homeland.

52. Although Oman had supported the consensus leading to the adoption of the Nairobi Strategies, it had general reservations about any provisions which might be in conflict with the Sharia.

53. His Government had brought about improvements in education and health care that had a positive impact on the overall situation of women. Omani women had opportunities to participate actively in the development process and received training for that task. There were plans to expand maternity and child-care facilities and many women's organizations had major achievements to their credit in the field of social services. A women's association had been set up to promote the participation of women in development and Oman had actively participated in international efforts to promote the advancement of women.

54. He stressed the need to put an end to all forms of discrimination against women in the field of employment. In Oman, there was no discrimination between men and women with regard to employment and salaries since women enjoyed the right to collective and private ownership of property. The Sharia guaranteed equality of the sexes in education, employment and other areas. Women worked as doctors, served in the police and armed forces and occupied high positions in many governmental and private institutions. Those advances could not have been achieved without the major social reforms instituted by the Sultan of Oman, who recognized that the participation of women was an effective and dynamic factor in the development of society.

55. Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal) said that her country attached great importance to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Senegalese Ministry of Social Development had set up a department to improve the situation of women by organizing women's groups in urban and rural areas in order to carry out development activities. Steps had been taken to identify women's needs, formulate

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

specific development projects, facilitate women's role in agricultural production and establish a special fund to meet their financing requirements. The Government pursued a policy aimed at relieving women from domestic work to enable them to engage in remunerative activity.

56. The success of the Government's policy to achieve food self-sufficiency was largely due to the efforts of women. In the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, water supply and measures to combat desertification, women were active at all levels and made a valuable contribution to achieving the desired goals. The National Women's Committee increased public awareness of the need to ensure the full integration of women in the development process and promote the advancement of women in the social, economic, political and cultural fields.

57. Senegal had been able to carry out its programme for the advancement of women thanks, in part, to the support of the international community and such international organizations as UNDP, UNEF, UNICEF, ILO and UNIFEM as well as non-governmental organizations. UNIFEM provided substantial assistance to promote activities by women in developing countries. In that connection, her delegation supported the appeal urging donor countries to increase their contributions to the Fund to enable it to meet its numerous obligations.

58. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies constituted the basic framework for providing legal guarantees for the advancement of women. Accordingly, in its appraisal of the implementation of the Strategies, the Commission on the Status of Women should take account of the relationship between the right of women to equality and the need to protect and ensure the exercise of that right.

59. Ms. SEMAMBO-KELEMA (Uganda) said that little progress had been made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies because of the negative effects of the world economic situation on efforts to improve the status of women. The already disadvantaged position of women had been aggravated by structural adjustments. Governments must renew their commitment to the Strategies and strive to achieve meaningful economic and social development for women. Her delegation noted with concern the situation of black women in South Africa and appealed for increased international assistance to them and their children, whose political, civil and economic rights continued to be violated. Palestinian women and children also required international assistance.

60. For women in rural areas in developing countries increased efforts must be made to provide better health care and family-planning facilities and eliminate illiteracy. In that regard, her delegation noted with satisfaction the work carried out by UNIFEM and other international and non-governmental organizations in assisting Governments to achieve the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. UNIFEM would assist the Ugandan Ministry of Women in Development in addressing key priority needs through mutually supporting projects.

61. She noted with regret that the United Nations had not achieved its target for increasing the number of women in high-level decision-making positions within the

(Ms. Semambo-Kelema, Uganda)

Organisation and called upon the Secretary-General to set a good example in implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

62. Her Government fully recognized the crucial role of women in national development. Since 1986, much had been done to promote participation by women in the national decision-making process. The Ugandan Directorate for Women's Affairs had been remarkably successful in increasing the political awareness of women and encouraging them to participate in politics. Women served in many key positions in the Government. The Ministry of Women in Development also assisted women in achieving economic emancipation.

63. Uganda was committed to the integration of women in economic development. The Government had initiated a programme to provide loans to rural women and was encouraging them to engage in more extensive and profitable agricultural production. Several organizations provided expert advice to rural women in the field of agriculture, health and education.

64. A legal aid clinic provided free legal assistance to women and a project was being developed to carry out a study of laws relating to women's needs.

65. Her delegation expressed satisfaction with the work carried out by international and non-governmental organizations in assisting the Ugandan Government to implement the Nairobi Strategies and appealed for increased funds from donor countries. She called on those States that had not yet done so to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and commended the work carried out by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

66. Mr. HASHI (Somalia) said that in his statement at the previous meeting he had referred to the hardship of women refugees in Namibia and South Africa. Press release GA/SHC/2954 had erroneously included Zimbabwe among those countries and should be corrected.

67. Miss AIQUAZE (Algeria) thanked the representatives of the Yemen Arab Republic and Democratic Yemen for their expressions of sympathy and support in connection with the recent earthquake that had occurred in her country.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.