

2026th meeting

Wednesday, 14 November 1973, at 3.10 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yahya MAHMASSANI (Lebanon).

A/C.3/SR.2026

AGENDA ITEM 58

Question of the elderly and the aged: report of the Secretary-General (concluded) (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XXI, sect. A.7; A/9126 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2051 and Rev.1, A/C.3/L.2053, A/C.3/L.2054 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2056-2059)

1. Mr. KOLBASIN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that in the Byelorussian SSR, as in all Republics of the Soviet Union, the right of retirement was guaranteed by the Constitution. The State paid considerable attention to the needs of elderly persons and, as the Soviet delegation had mentioned (2025th meeting), new measures had recently been adopted to enable them to participate in the productive life of the nation. Old age was not a time of isolation, since the elderly continued to be socially active. Moreover, there was no generation gap, since the ideals of all citizens were those of the October Revolution, and the different generations were bound together by common interests. Respect for the elderly, who had a wealth of experience and in some cases were extremely cultured and even possessed advanced scientific skills, was inculcated in children. For their part, the elderly had a duty to try to hand down their experience to the young generations. Encounters between old and young people took place in clubs, factories, and universities, where questions of common interest were discussed.

2. The question of the elderly and the aged had for some time commanded the attention of a number of United Nations bodies, and his delegation believed that that question should continue to be accorded the attention that it warranted.

3. Draft resolution A/C.3/L.2053 defined the approach that the United Nations and the specialized agencies should take, and he would vote for it, as well as for draft resolution A/C.3/L.2051, which posed no problems for his delegation. The Committee should be able to adopt those two texts, which were mutually complementary. The various amendments submitted were also acceptable, since they improved form without affecting substance. He wished to congratulate the Secretary-General on his report (A/9126 and Corr.1), which was the outcome of considerable effort, but felt that that document could be criticized for lacking a sufficiently sound scientific basis.

4. He wished to draw attention to the fact that the strengthening of peace, disarmament measures, the elimination of *apartheid*, racism and colonialism, and also détente, could have a considerable impact on the problem under consideration. Substantial sums were still being spent for military purposes, to the detriment of social expenditure. Consequently, any United Nations initiative to promote disarmament and détente would enable States, acting in co-operation with each other, to devote more attention to the elderly.

5. In conclusion, he observed that, when recommendations and programmes of action for the elderly were prepared, account should be taken of the views expressed at the World Congress of Peace Forces held in Moscow and attended by representatives of 143 countries, at which emphasis had been placed on the need to pay great attention to human rights, the improvement of public health systems, housing and social security schemes and co-operation among States.

6. Mr. CARPENTER (Nigeria) said that the Nigerian social system, which was based on the concept of the extended family, afforded security to all members of the community. Consequently, in the particular case of the elderly and the aged, the question of loneliness, boredom or desolation did not arise. In rural communities, older persons took on progressively lighter duties, and at home they occupied themselves with handicrafts. Elderly members of the family played a vital role in educating the young, to whom they transmitted the cultural heritage of the community, its religion, arts and history. They were revered and respected by the whole community, which sought their opinion and advice in the conduct of its daily business.

7. However, the traditional system was gradually being eroded by the urbanization and industrialization of the country. The young and the educated members of the community were tending to migrate to the urban centres. That trend had not yet raised any problems for elderly people in rural areas, who were looked after by the community and assisted financially by the other members of the family who worked in the towns and regarded it as an obligation to contribute to their maintenance. The real problem was that of the urbanized workers, who were living under modern conditions of employment and were alienated from their traditional way of life and deprived of social security. The Nigerian Government was conscious of that problem and had taken steps to guarantee social security to urban workers. Thus, Government-employed workers were covered by a retirement pension scheme which assured them a steady income for the rest of their lives. Provision had also been made for the re-engagement of retired persons to enable them to increase their income by undertaking duties more appropriate to their age. For workers in the private sector, the Nigerian Government had established a National Provident Fund financed by deductions from wages and by contributions from employers which were double those made by employees. That money and the interest earned from its investment were paid to employees on retirement. Finally, the elderly were exempt from payment of community taxes. Social, medical and health services were provided free of charge to all members of the Nigerian community.

8. The Nigerian Government, which was aware of the problems arising—particularly for the elderly and the aged—from the breakdown in the traditional system caused by urbanization and industrialization, would

support the United Nations in its effort to make public opinion conscious of those problems and to find effective solutions that were suited to the particular situation obtaining in each country.

9. Mr. GRUBER (German Democratic Republic) said he shared the view that the item under consideration was an important humanitarian question and that the situation of the elderly and the aged varied according to social systems and regions. For instance, despite the increase predicted for the world as a whole, there would be a 1.5 per cent decrease in the percentage of elderly people in the German Democratic Republic by 1980.

10. Although it was difficult to make any general assessment of the problems of that age group, his delegation welcomed the fact that the United Nations and the specialized agencies intended to consider the topic, since that exchange of views would be useful to States for the shaping of national policy in that field.

11. The German Democratic Republic's special interest in that question stemmed partly from the fact that, as a consequence of the Second World War, it had a particularly unfavourable population structure. Twenty-two per cent of the population was over 60 years of age, whereas the average for Europe and North America was 15 per cent. His delegation felt that Governments should provide social security for the elderly and ensure their integration into society. Article 36 of the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic stipulated that every citizen was entitled to social care in old age, and social policy aimed at guaranteeing social security for all citizens, including the aged. The State also endeavoured to ensure that elderly persons were not cut off from economic activity and, hence, from social life. The right to work was thus guaranteed to every elderly person and every pensioner. In addition, enterprises were obliged by law to provide especially favourable working conditions for elderly people. In 1972, 44.2 per cent of retired men aged between 65 and 70 and 31.5 per cent of retired women aged between 60 and 65 had still been working. In addition to their retirement pension, such pensioners received full wages, and also enjoyed full insurance coverage, without having to pay any insurance contributions. Moreover, medicine and medical treatment were paid for by the social insurance scheme.

12. Every effort was also made to ensure the social integration of elderly persons in residential areas and to care for them in the cultural field; in that connexion, he drew attention to the efforts made by the People's Solidarity, an organization with more than 1.5 million members. In the area of medical research, the problems of the elderly were the subject of intensive scrutiny; since 1969, a large number of scientists had been co-operating in a Ministry of Health project relating to gerontology, a science pioneered by Professors Hufeland and Bürger.

13. It was essential, when devising any policy for elderly people, to ensure that the State guaranteed their social integration and security. For that reason, his delegation warmly supported draft resolution A/C.3/L.2053, submitted by the Ukrainian SSR, which covered that point. It was also able to support draft resolution A/C.3/L.2051. In his opinion, the two texts were very close to each other: one was more general and the other more oriented towards the fundamental question of social security.

14. Mrs. ESHEL (Israel) said that the percentage of elderly people in Israel had risen from 3.8 per cent of the total population in 1949 to 7.2 per cent by 1970, and the forecast for 1980 was that it would rise to 9.5 per cent. The increase was only partially due to the rise in life expectancy, since two thirds of the elderly were new immigrants who had come to Israel at the age of 50 or more, forming a heterogeneous population with varied cultural backgrounds, traditions and mores. In the face of that vast problem, Israel had had to establish priorities in dealing with the elderly and the aged, and some of the measures taken might be of interest to the members of the Committee because of the new elements they introduced.

15. In 1969 an association for the planning and development of service to the aged had been established, its funds being derived in equal parts from government sources, the interested ministries, and voluntary organizations. In determining community service for the aged, the association had been guided by the principle that the elderly preferred to live in their own homes as long as their physical condition permitted and as long as medical and social care was dispensed. The main plans of the association were to promote the responsibility of local government for the aged in its area through the establishment of local committees for their care; to spread services for the aged all over the country; to provide comprehensive facilities in homes so as to ensure continuous care for aged residents becoming infirm; to step up the establishment of protected housing units for the aged within the community, with central services; to build up multifunctional services for the aged within the community, including home care services, social activities, employment counselling and mental health counselling; and to prepare legislation regarding easy access to public buildings and use of public transport for aged and handicapped persons. Part of the association's budget was set aside for training medical and administrative staff, and community centre and social workers. It was planned to set up a gerontological institute to study all facets of the problem of the aged and to establish geriatric wards in hospitals. One of the important functions of the association was to help towns and townships to set up their local services, and to that end community planning committees had been set up including doctors, nurses, social and community workers, together with local citizens, to study the needs of the aged in their locality and the network of services required. As a second stage it had been decided to set up a local association for the aged in conjunction with the local authorities, to be responsible for local projects. To increase the possibility for the aged to continue living in the community, either independently or with some help and support, efforts had been made to encourage the development of preventive programmes for the elderly.

16. There was no single solution to the problems of the aged, and many countries did not have adequate financial resources to undertake special programmes for the benefit of old people. She nevertheless considered that the needs of the elderly could be satisfied as part of the social policy of Governments. The United Nations had an important part to play in working out guidelines for national policies and action relating to the elderly.

17. Her delegation would find no difficulty in supporting both the draft resolutions before the Committee, but it hoped that the two texts could be fused into one.

18. Mr. INGVARSSON (Iceland) said that his delegation unreservedly supported the Ukrainian draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2053) as rounding out the other text before the Committee (A/C.3/L.2051), of which his delegation was a sponsor. Iceland felt that the Ukrainian draft would be strengthened by a mention of the need to provide for architectural installations designed for the aged and handicapped persons, and his delegation was submitting an amendment to that effect (A/C.3/L.2056).

19. Mr. PAPADEMIS (Cyprus) said he hoped that the Secretary-General's report, which was comprehensive and dealt with certain aspects of the problem of the elderly and the aged for the first time, would arouse greater interest in the question at the national level and that Governments would publicize the document widely.

20. In Cyprus, because of the social structure and the cultural situation, the problem of aged and elderly persons was not unduly acute. In the rural areas, old people continued to work to a ripe old age if their strength permitted them, and they were surrounded by the care and affection of their families. In urban areas, they invariably lived in the family circle, so that they did not suffer from moral isolation. Nor did they have material problems, since there was an efficient system of social security under which old-age pensions were payable.

21. The question under consideration was world-wide in scope and called for intervention by the United Nations in the same way as the questions of youth and of women. The elderly were not only at times physically handicapped, but unlike young people, for example, they had no means of pressing their claims.

22. Governments should see to it that the elderly had a minimum income, and the Secretary-General's report rightly emphasized the economic independence of the aged. The State should likewise provide medical services for old people in poor health. It was also important to see that the aged were happy in their declining years. The problem did not arise where the family entity was strong, but social structures changed, families split up, and the problem arose; and it was the duty of the State to solve it by taking the necessary measures.

23. The draft resolutions before the Committee did not attempt to solve all the problems, and did not give specific directives to Governments, but merely general guidelines. He thought that by the time the next report was submitted, Governments would be in a position to make recommendations based on their own experience for the solution of a problem which was becoming more and more acute with the growth of population, longer life expectancy, and urbanization. It might be advisable, as had been suggested, to make arrangements for additional scientific studies not only in the medical field but in the social field as well.

24. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) expressed appreciation of the positive response by the Committee to the Secretariat's report on the elderly and the aged (A/9126 and Corr.1) and said she would like to reply to a few remarks made with regard to the report. First of all, the question of in-depth studies in develop-

ing countries was a major concern of the Secretariat. While research literature was expanding very rapidly in the highly industrialized countries, there was a lack of studies in the field of aging in most developing countries, and in some even the basic data were not available. That situation had prompted the Secretariat to conduct its preliminary study. She was well aware that the number of countries studied was not representative of all developing countries, but she believed that it was a first step in the right direction. The choice of countries had been based on considerations of geographical distribution: from Africa two countries had been selected—Ghana and Uganda; from Asia, Iran and Pakistan; from the Mediterranean region, Malta and Lebanon; from South America, Mexico and Bolivia; from Europe, Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Ukrainian SSR. Material had also been sought from the various United Nations regional offices and economic commissions, but the non-availability of information and limited personnel resources had curtailed their contribution. She hoped that that information met the Italian representative's request (2025th meeting).

25. Secondly, a remark had been made on the advisability of conducting research in the field of aging at the regional level. The Secretary-General's report emphasized that it was basic to policy formulation and implementation, as well as to the development of specific programmes and services, to gather information on the conditions of the aging in specific geographical areas. A major need in that connexion was for Governments to develop standardized definitions and approaches to permit the collection and analysis of demographic data and research studies on specific problem areas of aging at the regional and international levels. In addition, the report recommended the development of demographic designs for the better identification and assessment of the characteristics and trends of aging populations, as well as subpopulations within the aging groups at regional and national levels. Research was essential not only for the verification of policy issues but also for the evaluation of programme effectiveness. Furthermore, easier access to knowledge regarding the studies and programmes of different types of research activities was needed, and a system for the collection and dissemination of information was recommended in the Secretary-General's report.

26. Finally, the question of the role of the family had been raised. Research evidence indicated that mutual support and assistance within the family were widespread in both developed and developing countries, whether or not the members lived under the same roof. However, it must be admitted that very little was known about the quality of the interaction between old people and their families and the function of such interaction within different societies. The importance of that problem was underlined by the fact that all societies in time reached the limit of their resources for services of any kind for any target population. That suggested some form of equilibrium so that the family and its kin system would continue to be involved with adequate compensation for their efforts. Those questions required further consideration.

27. In conclusion she stressed that over the preceding quarter of a century mankind had taken an enormous leap forward in its aspirations. Virtually all societies had as their goal the liberation of men from poverty and

disease, which embraced direct concern for the elderly. Some societies looked further and sought a new vision of man, his relation to his fellow-men, and his environment. In its advocacy of the rights of the aged, the United Nations shared those ideals.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed the general debate on item 58 of its agenda and said that following a meeting between the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2051 and the amendments thereto, the Committee now had before it a revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1).

29. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that the sponsors of the revised draft resolution had taken account of the spirit underlying the amendment submitted by Morocco (A/C.3/L.2054 and Corr.1). Her delegation would therefore withdraw its amendment.

30. Mr. COSTA COUTO (Brazil) thanked the sponsors of the revised draft resolution for incorporating into their text most of his delegation's suggestions, the essence of which was reflected in the third, fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs and in operative paragraph 3 (a), (d) and (g) of the revised draft. He would, however, like the words "for the benefit of the aged", which appeared in the text of the Brazilian amendment (A/C.3/L.2057), to be kept in operative paragraph 3 (g) of the revised text.

31. His delegation, which was withdrawing its amendments, would vote for the revised draft resolution and hoped that the Committee would adopt the text unanimously.

32. Mr. VELLA (Malta), noting that the sponsors of the revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1) had taken account of the amendment proposed by the Philippines (A/C.3/L.2059), announced, on behalf of the Philippine delegation, that the latter was withdrawing its amendment. He also wished to draw attention to some minor changes that needed to be made in the revised text of the draft resolution. First of all, the English version of the fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs contained the term "senior citizens", which was not altogether appropriate since an older person might need assistance even if he was not a citizen of the country concerned. That term should therefore be replaced in those two paragraphs by "the elderly". He also pointed out that the order of operative paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 was illogical because paragraph 5 referred to a report which was requested in paragraph 7. The order of the paragraphs should therefore be reversed so that paragraph 5 became paragraph 7 and *vice versa*. Lastly, with regard to the comment just made by the representative of Brazil regarding paragraph 3 (g), he confirmed that there had been an oversight and that the words "for the benefit of the aged" should appear at the end of the sentence.

33. He could agree to the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution, as suggested by the representative of Brazil.

34. Mr. FØNS BUHL (Denmark) said he was sorry that he had been unable to consult the sponsors of the draft resolution about the amendment proposed by his delegation (A/C.3/L.2058). He hoped that the sponsors would agree to incorporate that amendment in their draft and that it could be adopted unanimously.

35. Mr. VELLA (Malta) said that he had not consulted the other sponsors but, as far as he was con-

cerned, he would have no objection to complying with that request.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that, if the other sponsors had no objections, the Danish amendment (A/C.3/L.2058) would be incorporated into the text of the revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1).

It was so decided.

37. Mr. KHMIL (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) thanked the delegation of Burundi for becoming a sponsor of the Ukrainian draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2053) and also thanked all delegations that had supported that draft. He wished to reiterate that, in his delegation's opinion, the two draft resolutions did not conflict with one another. One draft dealt with the question of the elderly and the aged as a whole and the other dealt more specifically with the social context in which the problem of the aged should be viewed. He hoped that the Committee would adopt both draft resolutions. As for the proposed amendments to the Ukrainian draft resolution, he had no difficulty in accepting the amendment proposed by Iceland (A/C.3/L.2056) and could agree to delete the words "especially in the developed countries" from operative paragraph 3, as requested by the representative of Brazil.

38. Mr. VAN WALSUM (Netherlands) said that his delegation had some problems with operative paragraph 3 (f) of the revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1) which called for the promotion, by all possible means, of the strengthening of the family unit. While that might be necessary in some societies, the provision, as it stood, presented problems for his delegation, mainly because of the categorical tone of the wording. He pointed out that in other subparagraphs of paragraph 3 the sponsors had seen fit to introduce such terms as "as required" and "whenever the over-all situation allows". His delegation's difficulties were due to the fact that in the Netherlands there was an ongoing debate on the role of the family and some people held the view that to make the family the foundation of society would be to discriminate against all individuals who did not participate in the family structure. If the wording was retained, his delegation would like its reservations to be duly placed on record, but it would prefer it if the text could be changed.

39. The CHAIRMAN said that the reservations of the Netherlands delegation would be duly recorded.

40. Mr. ALFONSO (Cuba) considered that the question of the elderly and the aged was particularly important and that the two draft resolutions before the Committee were both very constructive. The revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1) was an improvement on the initial text and his delegation would vote for it. However, he noted that the Spanish version of the fifth preambular paragraph was not entirely correct and should be brought into line with the English text. The provisions of operative paragraph 3 (a) were particularly important for his country because it was not employment that was lacking but manpower, and older persons should be able to carry on an activity as long as they wished.

41. With regard to the draft resolution submitted by the Ukrainian SSR (A/C.3/L.2053), his delegation would have no difficulty in voting for it and welcomed

the deletion of the phrase "especially in the developed countries" at the beginning of operative paragraph 3.

42. The CHAIRMAN said that the Spanish text of the fifth preambular paragraph of the revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1) would be made to correspond to the English text.

43. Mr. VAN WALSUM (Netherlands) asked for a separate vote on paragraph 3 (f) of the revised draft resolution (A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1).

44. Mr. COSTA COUTO (Brazil) thanked the Ukrainian delegation for agreeing to his proposal. He also wished to appeal to the representative of the Netherlands not to insist on his proposal that there should be a separate vote on paragraph 3 (f) of the draft resolution, so that the Committee could adopt the text unanimously.

45. Mr. VAN WALSUM (Netherlands) said that his delegation had asked for a separate vote because it had thought that other delegations might share its views. In a spirit of co-operation it would forgo its request. However, it maintained the reservations it had expressed earlier.

46. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that, in view of the spirit of co-operation shown by the representative of the Netherlands, her delegation would not ask for a separate vote on the fifth preambular paragraph, as it had intended to do.

47. The CHAIRMAN said that all the amendments had been withdrawn by their sponsors and the Committee now had before it two draft resolutions.

48. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1.

It was so decided.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/L.2053, as revised.

It was so decided.

50. Mr. EVORA (Portugal) said that his delegation was happy to see the objective and positive attitude shown by members of the Committee, which had facilitated the adoption of the two draft resolutions dealing with a problem of concern to all countries. He hoped that the work done on that subject would be continued in the same spirit of co-operation and that account would be taken of the different systems of values prevailing, for the good of all mankind. He also hoped that, in view of his own country's traditions, any solutions that might be adopted would preserve the role of the family in society.

51. Mr. LÖFGREN (Sweden) wished the summary record of the meeting to reflect the fact that his delegation entertained reservations similar to those voiced by the Netherlands delegation concerning paragraph 3 (f) of the revised draft resolution A/C.3/L.2051/Rev.1).

52. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 58.

AGENDA ITEM 62

World social situation of youth: report of the Secretary-General (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XXI, sect. A.8; A/9919 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2052, E/CN.5/486 and

Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1)

53. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), introducing the Secretary-General's report on youth (E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1), said that the events of the preceding 12 months and the initial reports on progress made during the Second United Nations Development Decade reinforced the conviction she had expressed the previous year to the effect that Member States wanted the United Nations to be an advocate for young people rather than simply a passive observer of their needs and aspirations. In most countries of the world young people continued to be a "vulnerable" group with little power to redress the social imbalances that sometimes made their situation desperate. It was the young who, proportionally speaking, were mainly affected by growing unemployment, the crisis in education and deficiencies in health care, nutrition and recreation. At the same time, young people could make a far greater contribution to the development process, because of their energy, their positive view of the future and their insights, if they were only given the opportunity.

54. The Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1407 (XLVI) of 5 June 1969 had requested the Secretary-General to prepare an analytical study in depth of the world social situation of youth, describing the needs and aspirations of the world's young people to help the United Nations, Governments and other interested parties to better understand the situation of youth and point the way to better solutions to its problems. The task was not a simple one. The notion of "youth" was not easy to define and did not relate to a homogeneous group. However, during the preparation of the report, it had been found that a seemingly arbitrary age classification—the 15-to-25-year-old age group—would be useful to provide a general framework of mutual understanding that might otherwise be difficult to achieve. However, the classification was only helpful if linked to an analysis of more concrete characteristics and phenomena, such as opportunities for education, employment and participation, and the implications of social class on physical and socio-psychological development.

55. The fact remained that if the international community could deal constructively and imaginatively with the issues relating to the 15-to-25 years age group, it would be dealing with the largest part of the "youth issue" even if it had not been possible to arrive at precise definitions. In doing so it would be dealing with one of the most intractable problems of development in the current decade.

56. The Secretary-General's report provided information on and an analysis of the issues facing youth and offered some suggestions for meeting them. It seemed clear from the report that the problems affecting young people could be solved only if new concepts of employment, social participation, learning, health, nutrition and recreation were formulated.

57. The task was an extraordinarily difficult one, for the United Nations, despite its declarations and its good intentions, had not been able to make a significant impact in terms of the social aspects of development,

i.e. those relating to the basic vulnerability and powerlessness of groups such as young people, women, young children and the handicapped. Population pressures and the growing food production gap were likely to intensify those problems, and successes and failures in over-all development efforts would be even more closely linked to action taken in the social field. What was needed for success in that field was a combination of will and resourcefulness in order to reconcile new concepts and techniques with long-standing social and cultural modes. In that connexion, two relatively new approaches to the problems of young people appeared especially promising: first, a concept of employment related to social service rather than exclusively to economic resource allocation, which could help to increase rates of youth employment, especially in developing countries; secondly, new techniques of non-formal education, grounded in indigenous social and cultural forms and aimed at building both national and personal self-reliance. Some experience had been gained in both those areas, but much more was needed.

58. The report also emphasized the need to strengthen channels of communication between the United Nations on the one hand and youth and international youth organizations on the other. The conclusions and observations in the report regarding youth and the international community confirmed that young people had scanty knowledge at best of the United Nations and its activities. At the preceding session the General Assembly had adopted resolution 3022 (XXVII) on the basis of which the United Nations was now attempting to experiment with several proposals for working more closely with young people and their organizations on questions of common interest. In that resolution the General Assembly had approved the recommendation of the Secretary-General to convene an *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group on Youth to advise him on activities that should be undertaken by the United Nations to meet the needs and aspirations of youth. That Group had held its first meeting in New York in August. Following the procedure called for by the General Assembly, the report of the Group would be transmitted by the Secretary-General, with his comments, to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-sixth session in the spring of 1974. The Advisory Group's report dealt with a number of issues that were of concern to young people and the United Nations alike, from youth participation in national policy making and planning to improved communications between youth and the United Nations. The members of the Advisory Group, 70 per cent of whom were under the age of 30, came from all regions of the world and represented a wide variety of social, economic and political experiences.

59. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had co-operated with the Division of Human Rights in organizing the Second United Nations Seminar on Youth and Human Rights, held at San Remo, Italy, from 28 August to 10 September 1973. The conclusions of that Seminar (see A/C.3/L.2052), which related primarily to ways in which young people might better participate in promoting and protecting human rights, demonstrated the growing interest of youth in that area of United Nations activity.

60. Finally, the preparation of the Secretary-General's report had made evident the need to increase substantially the United Nations

capabilities for studying the needs and aspirations of young people. Statistics on the social, economic and political situation of youth at the national level were very sketchy in many cases, which made it difficult for a thorough analysis to be made of youth participation in the Second United Nations Development Decade called for in the International Development Strategy for the Decade. It was also essential to increase the ability of the United Nations to understand youth participation in the development process in other than strictly economic terms. There was a need for more thinking and analysis with respect to the participation of youth in social development and political life and to indicators to measure such participation.

61. Mr. CHIRILA (Romania) said that he was glad to see the General Assembly considering the world social situation of youth and thanked the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies for the report on that subject which had been prepared. That document, which was the result of an extended study undertaken in 14 countries, including Romania, analysed the diversity of situations of young people as determined by such factors as social and political systems, level and direction of social and economic development, and the traditions and culture peculiar to each people, and highlighted the complexity of the problem of youth in relation to the realities of the modern world and the demands of the world of tomorrow. The scope of those problems was such that it had not really been possible to deal with the question in its entirety. His delegation would have preferred a more dynamic approach supported by specific suggestions for future activities, but it felt that the report had the merit of offering a basis for discussion and providing an inventory of the existing problems; it was for the Committee to work out solutions and constructive proposals in a field which offered prospects for fruitful co-operation among all the States of the world, whatever their social and political régime.

62. Young people must be recognized as having an active social and political status which would enable them consciously to participate in the creation of material and spiritual values in a constantly changing world. It was also essential, as Mr. Ceaușescu, President of the Council of State of the Romanian Socialist Republic, had said, to create conditions enabling youth to participate more actively in social life and to devote its energy to perfecting human society and working for the triumph of the ideals of justice, freedom and well-being for all mankind.

63. In Romania great importance was attached to the participation of youth and its organizations, imbued with a spirit of profound social responsibility, in the implementation of the country's multilateral development programme and in the building of a socialist society. While according youth the broadest social and political rights, Romania was developing public education, providing for the vocational and cultural training of its youth, and modernizing the structure and content of education; it believed in the education of youth by work and study, by personal political and social experience and by conscious participation in the process of the renovation and improvement of all aspects of the economic, social and political life of the country.

64. At the same time, Romania offered real possibilities for the social advancement of young people, in accordance with their training, aptitudes and aspira-

tions. Youth and its organizations played an active social and political role supported by an institutional system which ensured their direct participation in the management of society, in the decision-making process and, in general, in the life of the nation. Young people were represented in the central and local organs of State power and administration, in economic units, in trade union councils and in university assemblies.

65. Romania considered that the United Nations could provide an appropriate framework within which a broader and more unified approach could be taken to the problem of the young generation, and thought that its activities in that field, which was currently of general interest, could be developed and broadened. Research, studies and analyses concerning youth and its problems in the modern world, especially in the developing countries, should be continued and intensified; there the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned with social and humanitarian questions had a special role to play. It would be particularly useful to prepare, over a period of several years, and with the help of the interested United Nations bodies, a new report on the situation of youth, based in particular on information from Member States.

66. Future analyses undertaken by the United Nations with regard to youth should be concerned to a greater extent with the role played by youth in the modern world, particularly in promoting the full implementation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international peace and co-operation and the elimination of colonialism, racial discrimination and *apartheid*, and in furthering progress and justice.

67. It might likewise be useful to draft appropriate recommendations concerning conditions of work, study, living and social welfare, and to study ways of enabling young people to give greater expression to their views and to participate effectively in taking decisions at the national, regional and international levels.

68. Considering the place and the role of youth in modern society, his delegation thought that the competent bodies of the United Nations should give thought to the formulation of a comprehensive international instrument concerning the young generation.

69. His delegation would like to see better coordination of the efforts of the various bodies which, each from its own standpoint, were concerning themselves with youth. Discussion of the Secretary-General's report offered an occasion to direct the efforts of the United Nations towards the most important aspects of international co-operation in respect of youth. The General Assembly could also use the occasion to address an appeal to those United Nations bodies and specialized agencies whose activities had a bearing on the situation of youth in the world to work for the implementation of decisions already taken and to adopt new ones concerning questions that were of definite interest to the young generation.

70. As far as specific action was concerned, his delegation did not think that it would be possible to make real progress on questions concerning youth without the direct participation of youth itself and its organizations. In that connexion he recalled that Romania had helped to organize a number of meetings concerning youth, some of them in close co-operation with the United Nations specialized agencies. Thus in 1974 Romania would be host to a conference on youth which would precede the World Population Conference, and it had offered to be host in 1975 to an international seminar on the theme "Human rights and youth: the participation of youth in the organization and administration of society".

71. In conclusion, he expressed the conviction that by joint efforts the Members of the United Nations could succeed in making a real and concrete contribution to international co-operation in that important social and humanitarian field.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

2027th meeting

Thursday, 15 November 1973, at 10.40 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yahya MAHMASSANI (Lebanon).

A/C.3/SR.2027

AGENDA ITEM 62

World social situation of youth: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/9003 and Corr.1, chap. XXI, sect. A.8; A/9119 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2052, E/CN.5/486 and Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/CN.5/486/Summary and Corr.1)

1. Mr. SCHREIBER (Director, Division of Human Rights) said that at its twenty-ninth session, the Commission on Human Rights had again considered the role of youth in the promotion and the protection of human rights, an item which it had included in its agenda in accordance with instructions from the General Assembly and which reflected the Assembly's concern. In the current year, the Commission had concentrated its at-

tention on two problems: conscientious objection to military service, and the teaching of human rights in universities and development of an independent scientific discipline of human rights. The Commission had decided to continue its consideration of the first question at its thirtieth session in the light of the information provided by Member States regarding their internal legislation and other measures and practices relating to conscientious objection to military service and other possible forms of service. With regard to the second question, the Commission had considered a report submitted by UNESCO¹ and had adopted resolution 17 (XXIX),² which requested UNESCO to continue to

¹ E/CN.4/1119 and Corr.1 and 2.

² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6*, chap. XX.