

the International Women's Year must be regarded as a point of departure for continued and intensified action in that field, particularly in developing countries. It should be noted that the achievement of lasting peace was an objective to be pursued for the benefit of all mankind and that women, like men, had to be involved in all general problems whose solution was necessary for the establishment of genuinely friendly relations among States; however, the solution to those problems should not be seen as a prerequisite for progress towards equality between the two sexes and for participation of women in development on an equal footing with men.

69. In Italy, as in all other countries, the International Women's Year had had a wide impact throughout the country and at all levels; the President of the Republic had signed the International Women's Year Declaration (see A/10263, para. 16). A national committee, presided over by the Under-Secretary of State for Labour, who was a woman, and composed of representatives of all the ministries concerned, representatives of the principal women's associations and organizations and members of political parties and trade unions, had been set up to organize the activities which would be held under the programme for the International Women's Year. That Committee was currently making preparations for a national conference which would not merely debate the present status of Italian women but, most importantly, formulate national policies and plans to meet the economic and social needs of the country, in accordance with the suggestions made by the World Conference of the International Women's Year.

70. At the Mexico City Conference, her delegation had spoken at length on the status of Italian women; she would therefore confine herself at present to pointing out the progress made in that field in 1975. Shortly before the Mexico City Conference, the Italian parliament had approved, after years of debate, Italy's new family legislation, which was a juridical instrument capable of radically modifying traditions that had hampered the full emancipation of women. The new family law made wives and husbands fully equal with regard to children; it set the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for both sexes; the economic contribution of the wife to the life of the family was recognized, whether she worked at home or took up a

job; equal rights were established with regard to the ownership and administration of common property, so that in case of separation or divorce the wife and her children acquired part of the family property; lastly, the new law ensured due protection to children born out of wedlock.

71. The World Conference of the International Women's Year had been marked by very positive results, such as the unanimous adoption of a World Plan of Action and the adoption of a large number of resolutions. Regrettably, however, women's problems had been mixed with other problems of a political nature and the Committee should do its best to avoid repeating the mistakes made at the Conference in order to achieve a consensus.

72. Mr. TRAVERS (France) said that, in their statements on items 75 and 76, as well as in certain letters they had addressed to the United Nations (particularly the letter contained in document A/C.3/644), several representatives had, in connexion with the World Congress for the International Women's Year, referred to Berlin as the capital of the German Democratic Republic. On behalf of the delegations of the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France, he recalled that the position of the United States, United Kingdom and French Governments concerning the status of Berlin remained the same as had been outlined by those Governments in two letters to the Secretary-General, one dated 26 June 1975² and in the other dated 14 April 1975³; he read out paragraphs 1 and 2 of the latter.

73. The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegation of Barbados had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2198, the delegations of Togo and the United States of America had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2200, the delegation of Benin had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2193 and the delegation of Uganda had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2196.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

² A/10126.

³ A/10078.

2177th meeting

Thursday, 4 December 1975, at 10.55 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2177

In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs. Semerani (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEMS 75 AND 76

International Women's Year, including the proposals and recommendations of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (*continued*)

Status and role of women in society, with special reference to the need for achieving equal rights for women and to women's contribution to the attainment of the goals of the Second United Nations Development Decade, to the struggle against colonialism, racism and racial discrimination and to the strengthening of international peace and co-operation between States (*continued*) (A/10003, chap. III, sect. F; E/5725 and Add.1, A/10042, A/10045,

A/10049 and Corr.1, A/10056, A/10057, A/10066, A/10070, A/10071, A/10073, A/10075, A/10076, A/10088, A/10089, A/10099, A/10107, A/10111, A/10138, A/10140, A/10160, A/10210, A/10263, A/10264, A/10340, A/C.3/643, A/C.3/644, A/C.3/647, A/C.3/648, A/C.3/L.2193-2198, A/C.3/L.2199/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.2200)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the United States of America had become a sponsor of draft decision A/C.3/L.2197, that Gabon had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2193, that Togo had become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/C.3/L.2198 and A/C.3/L.2199/Rev.1, and that Argentina, France and Gabon had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2200.

2. Miss MELČICKÁ (Czechoslovakia) said that her country had welcomed the proclamation of 1975 as the International Women's Year, and that Czechoslovakia, as one of the socialist countries, had fully applied the motto of the Year, which was summed up in the words: equality, development and peace. The achievement of complete equality of women with men depended upon the removal of obstacles to social progress and the elimination of discrimination, exploitation, wars, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and *apartheid*. Economic and social development, which was possible only under conditions of peace and international security, was another important factor determining the social position of women.

3. Referring to the situation of women in her country, she noted that Czechoslovak women had made great sacrifices in the Second World War and were well aware of the value of peace. Their gratitude to those to whom they owed their liberation was therefore all the greater. The liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Army had brought about a fundamental change in the status of Czechoslovak women and, in addition to resolving other issues of the national and democratic revolution, it had led for the first time to the enjoyment by Czechoslovak women of full and true equality in all spheres. The Constitution of her country proclaimed the obligation to create the same conditions and opportunities for women as for men in all areas of life and provided for special health protection for pregnant women and mothers, and for improved facilities for women. All those provisions were implemented in daily life.

4. Referring to the activities undertaken by her country in connexion with International Women's Year, she noted the establishment of the Czechoslovak Commission for International Women's Year, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister, and of regional and district commissions which co-ordinated activities relating to the Year at their respective levels. Moreover, the themes of the Year were reflected not only in the mass information media, but also in theatre programmes and the activities of cultural institutions and in other practical ways. Countless seminars and meetings at the district, regional and State levels had been organized since the beginning of the Year, some of them with international participation, various exhibitions had been staged and many publications issued. Czechoslovak delegations had also participated in seminars and other activities abroad, including the World Congress for International Women's Year held at Berlin from 20 to 24

October 1975, the appeal issued by which (see A/C.3/644) had its full support. As to the World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975, she said that her delegation attached great importance to the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (see E/5725, chap. II, sect. A) and the Declaration on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace (*ibid.*, chap. I), and wholeheartedly supported the resolutions adopted at the Conference (*ibid.*, chap. III) which had, *inter alia*, condemned the fascist régime in Chile, supported the legal rights of the people of Palestine, condemned the racist régimes of South Africa, Namibia and Southern Rhodesia, and called for the greater participation of women, as equal partners with men, in the strengthening of international peace and co-operation and in the process of development.

5. In conclusion, she said that her delegation was in favour of the early adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and stressed that it was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2196.

6. Mr. KAAK (Tunisia) stressed the importance of the participation of women in the development process and said that any society which denied women their rightful role was a backward society. In that connexion, he said that for some Governments 1975 had marked a step forward towards the liberation of women, at least from a psychological point of view, and towards the removal of certain age-old prejudices with regard to women.

7. Referring to his own country, he said that Tunisia, ever since its independence, had been doing much to promote the status of women legally, culturally and socially. It had adopted a number of laws designed to ensure the basic human rights of Tunisian women and to enable them to live honourable and decent lives. Those laws had, *inter alia*, enfranchised Tunisian women, abolished polygamy, repealed the law enabling a husband to repudiate his wife and established divorce regulations. In the field of education, women enjoyed the same rights as men and there was a growing number of co-educational schools in addition to training institutions exclusively for women. Moreover, in Tunisia today there were women members of Parliament, doctors, diplomats and civil servants. The action of his Government to promote the status of women was based on the conviction that a society could not be healthy and balanced when one half of its members were in bondage, exploited and humiliated. He noted that on 13 August of each year, round-table discussions, meetings and seminars were held throughout Tunisia to consider questions relating to the status of women. Tunisian women participated in all aspects of the social, cultural, economic and political life of the country, and his Government would spare no efforts to ensure that they played an increasing role in the development process and in international seminars. In that connexion, he noted that the Tunisian Women's National Union had participated in an international conference on the promotion of women to communal responsibilities, held in Togo earlier in the year.

8. He pledged his delegation's support for any action taken by the Committee to promote the status of women throughout the world and said that the establishment of an

international research and training institute for the advancement of women as proposed in draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195 would be a positive step in that direction, since its task would be to conduct research and to collect and disseminate information which would form the basis for programmes and policies designed to ensure the effective participation of women in the life of their countries.

9. In conclusion, he urged the Committee to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195, of which Tunisia was a sponsor.

10. The CHAIRMAN announced that the observer for UNESCO had, in a spirit of co-operation and in view of the shortage of time, withdrawn his name from the list of speakers on the items under consideration. She expressed the hope that other delegations might be able to do the same.

11. Mrs. SANDIMANIE (Liberia) said that her delegation wholeheartedly endorsed the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 2263 (XXII)), the basic premise of which was that sex should not be a factor in determining equal rights of women or men. Each individual must be considered on the basis of merit and not of sex and any legal system which imposed benefits, obligations or penalties on grounds of sex was a repressive system.

12. She noted that women had always been discriminated against in employment and said that the first step towards the elimination of that state of affairs was to reform the whole legal system, which would involve a change of attitude on the part of both women and men. In fact, there had already been signs of a more positive attitude among men towards women in employment. In that connexion, she stressed the importance of child-care facilities for the children of working women and of the need to project in schools a more active, competitive and positive image of girls and the role of women in society. Facilities must also be provided to enable women at all ages to develop their skills in many areas and to participate in the economic and social development of their countries. Moreover, real progress required stronger government educational programmes in rural areas, so as to overcome the tradition of confining rural women to menial agricultural tasks and the procreation and rearing of children. It was therefore extremely important to provide health services and all necessary facilities to enable rural women to become fully integrated into the development process.

13. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that any draft resolution designed to promote the welfare of rural women in the developing countries would receive the support of the Committee and the General Assembly and stressed the importance of the contribution of women to the attainment of the goals of the Second United Nations Development Decade, to the struggle against colonialism, racism and racial discrimination, and to the strengthening of international peace.

14. Mr. BELOUSOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation hoped that the designation of 1975 as International Women's Year, the organization of a number of international events during the year, including the World Conference in Mexico and the World Congress in

Berlin, and the adoption of new measures to ensure the equal rights of women at the national level would give impetus to the proposed United Nations decade for women (see A/C.3/L.2195). The confirmation of the equal rights of women was one of the historic gains of the great October Socialist Revolution. The leader of the Revolution, V. I. Lenin, had defined specific ways of attaining the complete elimination of the legal and *de facto* inequality of women and of all forms of discrimination against women. The Leninist directives were being implemented through the tireless efforts of all the Soviet people and thanks to the constant concern of the Communist Party.

15. In the Ukrainian SSR there was no sphere of production, culture or science in which women did not work as equal, active and valued members of socialist society. The Ukrainian SSR implemented the Leninist precept that women should be included in the management of the State, the decision-making processes determining the development of society, the work of promoting the welfare of the people and the determination and implementation of foreign policy. More than a third of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR were women. Women also participated fully in local Soviets, the government apparatus, the legal system, public organizations and trade unions. Ukrainian women attended international conferences and made an important contribution to the development of international co-operation and the solution of urgent contemporary problems.

16. The programme of International Women's Year had been carried out in the Ukrainian SSR with the aim of further raising the political and productive activity of women. A Republican Commission on the Observance of Women's Year had been established. Public and State organizations had increased their supervision of the observance of laws on the work of women, the health protection of mothers and children, the improvement of living conditions and the expansion of the network of children's institutions and of educational opportunities for children. The Ukrainian SSR would continue to pay attention to those questions. Exhibitions, conferences, competitions and other events related to women's role in society had been held during the Year. The Year had coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the victory over fascism and militarism and the outstanding role of Soviet women in the defence of the socialist motherland had repeatedly been recognized during the year. True to the spirit of internationalism, Soviet women also considered that it was their duty to give the fullest support to their sisters in countries where discrimination against women continued to exist.

17. The improvement in international relations was creating additional favourable conditions for the genuine emancipation of women and strengthening their hopes for a bright future. Détente had undoubtedly contributed to the success of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, which had concentrated on the basic problems of the contemporary world and had not allowed itself to be diverted into a discussion of extravagant feminist slogans or of the so-called war between the sexes. Any attempt to belittle the importance of the main decisions of the Conference or to adopt a selective approach in assessing those decisions was quite unacceptable.

18. With regard to draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195, his delegation considered that it should reflect the need for even greater enlistment of women in the struggle for the elimination of war, the cessation of existing armed conflicts and disarmament and against the vestiges of colonialism, racism and *apartheid*. There should be provision for control by the United Nations over the implementation of those parts of the World Plan of Action which set forth goals for the enlistment of women in political activity and international co-operation and the strengthening of international peace. It would also be appropriate to call on the countries which had not yet done so to adhere to the United Nations conventions on women's rights and to ratify them. The United Nations should call on the Commission on the Status of Women to accelerate the preparation of the text of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women so that it could be adopted in 1976. The principles of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195 had been supported by most of the participants in the World Conference of the International Women's Year and his delegation hoped that the General Assembly would give similar support to them. It hoped that the good foundation laid in 1975 would be a guarantee of progress in attaining the goals of the proposed United Nations decade for women and that the United Nations would pay consistent attention to the questions of ensuring legal and *de facto* equal rights for women, who constituted more than half the human race.

19. Miss NURU (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the proclamation of the International Women's Year was an expression of concern over the ever-increasing disparity between women and men and the injustices which women had to endure throughout the world. Referring to her own country, she said that women there had played an active and significant role during the struggle against colonialism, but that immediately after the attainment of independence, their involvement in national affairs had diminished. However, recognition of the exploitation and oppression of women as a group had led to the establishment of the National Women's Organization of Tanzania, the objective of which was to unify all women and strengthen their role in the development of their country. Since 1962 that organization had undertaken a variety of activities, including the holding of seminars and courses on nutrition, maternal and child care, home economics and related subjects. Tanzanian women were participating in agricultural courses and literacy and adult education programmes and also attending family-planning clinics to acquire the knowledge which would enable them to take part in economic development instead of having to devote their entire adult lives to raising numerous children.

20. Tanzanian women enjoyed equal rights with men under the Constitution and laws of the country, irrespective of race, creed or status. However, although the marriage law of 1971 had given equal rights to both spouses, traditional attitudes were still impeding the achievement of equality in that respect. The International Women's Year had made women and men more aware than ever of the need to promote the status of women in the United Republic of Tanzania, and it was significant that for the first time in the history of the Republic, two women had been appointed full Cabinet Ministers, and one had been appointed to the office of Regional Party Secretary. The Prime Minister had also

urged heads of institutions and governmental departments to promote qualified women to positions of responsibility.

21. In that connexion, her delegation shared the concern expressed regarding the employment and promotion of women to higher positions of responsibility in the United Nations Secretariat and the specialized agencies.

22. The Mexico City Conference had been a milestone in the effort to promote equality between men and women and the implementation of the World Plan of Action and of the decisions adopted by the Conference should improve the status of women in all societies. Her delegation welcomed the proposals to proclaim the period from 1976 to 1985 as the United Nations decade for women and to establish an international research and training institute for the advancement of women (*ibid.*). Such an Institute should not, however, prejudice United Nations assistance for any of the regional research and training centres which were to be established in the near future. She stressed the following pre-conditions for the achievement of equality between women and men: the liberation of peoples and nations from the yoke of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism; the elimination of discrimination; and the shedding by women and men of their respective complexes of inferiority and superiority. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's conviction that the achievement of equality, development and peace depended on the full participation of women in the political, economic and cultural life of their communities, which was entirely consistent with the fulfilment of their roles as wives and mothers.

23. Mrs. HO Li-liang (China) noted that the Declaration adopted by the Mexico City Conference had stressed that women were a great potential revolutionary force in the world today and had called on women to join men in the struggle to eliminate imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, zionism, *apartheid* and racial discrimination. It had thus reflected, on the one hand, the increasing awareness of women in the third-world countries of their situation and, on the other hand, the just demand of women throughout the world for emancipation.

24. Chinese women had fought for liberation over a long period. Countless setbacks had shown that national and class oppression was the root cause of the discrimination and oppression of the broad masses of women in old China and that to achieve emancipation they must first of all fight for national liberation and social progress. For decades Chinese women, together with the rest of the Chinese people, had carried on the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism and they had finally achieved nationwide liberation. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the entire Chinese people had displayed great initiative in the practice of socialist revolution and construction, which had eradicated the root cause of the age-old oppression of women. The People's Government had adopted a Constitution and a series of laws and policies which guaranteed and promoted the enjoyment of equal rights by women in the political, economic, cultural and social fields. Women were given extensive opportunities to receive education and to participate in political activities and social productive labor. Chinese women were currently working shoulder to shoulder with the broad masses of men to build their country into a socialist land with modern

industry and agriculture and modern science and technology by the end of the century.

25. The struggle of peoples and women of various countries for national liberation, social progress and economic development was closely linked with the development of the current international situation. In the view of the Chinese delegation, that situation was characterized by great disorder, the root cause of which lay in the sharpening of the basic contradictions of the world of today, particularly the frenzied arms expansion and war preparations by the super-Powers in their intensified contention for world hegemony. That contention would lead to war some day and the danger of a new world war was obviously growing. One super-Power was vehemently clamouring for "general and complete disarmament", but the danger of war came precisely from the super-Powers, and especially from the wild ambitions of social imperialism, which was engaged in aggression and expansion everywhere. While accelerating the development of its nuclear weapons, it was energetically expanding its arsenal of conventional arms and maintained a military force far exceeding its defence needs. That same super-Power had been proclaiming the so-called "irreversibility of détente" and other fallacies. But how could there be "détente" when the super-Powers were fiercely contending for world hegemony? The stark reality was that there existed neither political nor military détente, let alone lasting peace. What existed was the approaching danger of a new world war.

26. However, it should be pointed out that in another respect the current world situation was excellent. Super-Power intervention, expansion, aggression and exploitation had provided a negative example for the education of the broad masses of the people, whose political consciousness had risen to an all-time high. The just struggle of the broad masses of the third-world people against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism was developing vigorously. The international situation was moving in a direction more and more favourable to the people, while the super-Powers were in ever greater isolation and difficulties. The broad masses of the people, including women, had come to realize ever more clearly that in order to achieve their own liberation, it was imperative to carry through to the end the struggles against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and particularly against super-Power hegemonism. One super-Power, which flaunted the signboard of "socialism", had been using the topic of the Mexico City Conference to peddle its deceptive wares, such as "disarmament", "détente" and so on. It had been trying to convince the women of various countries that those wares were a kind of panacea which would eliminate imperialism, colonialism and racism and suddenly bring about the full success of the women's liberation movement. Such fraudulent propaganda was designed to divert the liberation movement of the women of the world from its true ends, divorcing it from the main struggles of people of various countries for national and economic independence and thus removing all obstacles to the super-Power arms race and war preparations, aggression, expansion and contention for world hegemony.

27. Referring to the primary task of the world movement for the emancipation of women, she said that the women of various countries should stand together with the broad

masses of the oppressed nations and peoples of the world in their struggles against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. They should plunge into the struggle against the super-Powers' sham disarmament and real arms expansion, sham détente and real war preparations. They should maintain vigilance against the super-Powers' aim of a new war, and make the necessary preparations against a war of aggression, thus making practical contributions to the cause of the liberation of peoples and women throughout the world. Without that, there could be no solid guarantee for national independence and women's liberation.

28. Miss OYERU (Uganda) said that, in supporting the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3010 (XXVII) proclaiming 1975 International Women's Year, her delegation had stressed its determination to intensify action to promote equality between men and women, to ensure the full integration of women in total development efforts and to recognize the importance of women's contribution to the development of friendly relations and co-operation among States and to the strengthening of world peace.

29. As shown in document A/10263, her country had carried out various activities for the International Women's Year and had taken part in the World Conference held in Mexico City, where it had reaffirmed its faith in the objectives of equality, development and peace and had supported the adoption of the Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action. The objectives of the Year were being fully implemented in her country, as had been stated by the President of Uganda in his statement to the General Assembly at the 2370th plenary meeting on 1 October 1975. Thus, Uganda had already guaranteed equality between men and women, both in principle and in practice, and Ugandan women had been given opportunities to make maximum contributions in areas such as decision-making, planning and the implementation of policies, programmes and projects.

30. Her country's total commitment to the objectives of the International Women's Year was a demonstration of its determination to ensure the participation of women, who made up half of the world's population, in the establishment of a new world order based on equality, sovereignty, mutual respect and peace, in accordance with the provisions of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and the Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its sixth special session (resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI)), the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (resolution 3281 (XXIX)) and the decisions of the seventh special session of the General Assembly. The non-discriminatory character of the new international economic order must be universal because if it was not made universal, it would simply mean that women in developing countries would be equal with men in those countries and share equally with them in ignorance, disease and poverty. The new international economic order must put an end to the exploitation of developing countries by developed countries, provide solutions to current economic problems and ensure equality, development and peace in the spirit of the Declaration of Mexico. In that connexion, she said that her delegation attached great importance to paragraph 24 of the Declaration because it believed that international co-operation and peace, which would guarantee equality and development

for all, required total liberation and true independence through the elimination of colonialism, neo-colonialism, foreign occupation, Zionism, *apartheid* and all forms of racial discrimination.

31. Since the military take-over in Uganda in 1971, considerable emphasis had been placed on the role of women in the achievement of national development objectives. Thus, women had played a very important role during Uganda's economic war in August 1972 and were now involved in all sectors of the economy on an equal footing with men. Her country's policy of self-reliance did not, however, conflict with its recognition and support of the concept of interdependence and of the idea that over-all economic and social health were essential to the well-being of all mankind. It was therefore of the opinion that the United Nations should endorse the Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action and renew its determination to ensure that women would not be condemned to lives of deprivation, but would be given the opportunities to develop skill for coping with the challenges of life. The United Nations should also establish appropriate machinery for the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the World Conference, for example, by proclaiming 1976-1985 as the United Nations decade for women and reviewing the progress made at the national, regional and international levels in improving the status of women and ensuring them equal rights. In that connexion, the establishment of an international training and research institute for the advancement of women, to which reference had been made in document A/10340, would go a long way towards bringing about improvements in the status of women and their integration in the development effort.

32. The world should now be thinking of changing its attitudes and of considering women as assets to society rather than cost factors. To that end, the United Nations should consider the strengthening of the Commission on the Status of Women or any other machinery established to deal with matters pertaining to the status of women. As a member of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations system and of the Economic and Social Council, her country would submit proposals relating to the strengthening of such machinery.

33. Mr. DE FARIA (Portugal) said that the situation in Portugal regarding the problem of the status and role of women in society could be summed up by what his delegation had stated at the World Conference in Mexico City, namely, that, for Portugal, the International Women's Year had come at a time of deep political, social, cultural and economic change, a time of quest and tension and a time of growth as a nation and as a people. Thus, only the full participation of Portuguese women in the process of reconstruction and the establishment of a new and free socialist society could ensure that equal rights would be enjoyed by every sector of the population and, in particular, by women. To enable the women of Portugal to take part in the task of reconstruction, a number of measures had been and would continue to be taken by the National Commission on the Status of Women, whose programme of action had been described in document A/10263 and includes changes in legislation to eliminate discrimination against women.

34. In the past 18 months, Portuguese women had gained access to careers in sectors which had previously been closed to them. It was expected that all the legal barriers to the employment of women would soon be removed and that the equal rights of women would be provided for in the new Constitution. He noted, however, that equal rights for women had little meaning if the population as a whole enjoyed only a few of the basic rights to which every human being was entitled. It was therefore the duty of women to take part in the building of a new Portugal and the duty of men to seek their help. Those ideals and principles had been expressed in the various instruments adopted at the Mexico City Conference, which would help to bring about opportunities for men and women to participate on an equal footing in the building of the social structure and the educational system and in the process of economic development; without such participation, the only equal rights would be those of equal exploitation.

35. Mr. PETROV (Bulgaria) recalled that the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had visited Bulgaria twice during the International Women's Year; those visits had helped in preparing for the participation of Bulgaria in the events of the Year and also enabled the Assistant Secretary-General to gain first-hand knowledge of the achievements and problems of Bulgarian women and to appreciate the dedication of the Bulgarian Government to the task of enhancing the role of women in all spheres of public life.

36. In Bulgaria the International Women's Year had coincided with the implementation of a comprehensive programme for enhancing the role of women in the building of a developed socialist society. The programme had been prepared with the assistance of the Committee of Bulgarian Women and had been adopted by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the State Council. In implementation of the recommendations contained in the resolutions of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, a National Initiative Committee attached to the Council of Ministers had been established in January 1975. Together with the Committee of Bulgarian Women it had made a survey at the national level of the implementation of the provisions of the programme and had also co-ordinated the activities carried out in Bulgaria during the Year and the participation of the country in the relevant international activities. Individual ministries, departments and public organizations had developed their own programmes for the Year. Much work had been done by the information media to inform the people of the goals of the International Women's Year, the activity of the United Nations in that sphere and the problems that confronted women in Bulgaria and elsewhere. There had also been a series of competitions, exhibitions and discussions on questions of the equality of women and of their participation in socio-economic development and in the struggle for peace. Special committees had been established to supervise the implementation in Bulgaria of the decisions already taken and the goals which had been laid down. In September 1975 a seminar on the theme of women in contemporary society had been held in Sofia and had been attended by representatives of 32 countries. Information about that seminar had already been provided to the Secretariat by his delegation and it hoped the information would be duly reflected in forthcoming accounts of the

measures taken within the framework of the International Women's Year.

37. The problems encountered by women were regarded in his country as problems of society as a whole and conversely the problems of society were viewed in terms of how they affected individual members of society and in particular women. There was no doubt that the International Women's Year had had a favourable effect on the continuing solution of those problems. At the international level Bulgarian delegations had played an active part in both the World Conference of the International Women's Year and the World Congress for International Women's Year held in Berlin. His delegation fully supported the principles and decisions set forth in the documents and declarations of those two forums, which were an important contribution to securing broad recognition of the three basic aims of the International Women's Year and promoting that implementation. His delegation was convinced that the proposed United Nations decade for women would justify the optimism and hopes engendered during 1975 and that the end of the International Women's Year would mark the beginning of the successful and practical implementation during the forthcoming decade of the principles and decisions which were being adopted.

38. Mrs. ZONDO (Swaziland) said that her Government attached great importance to General Assembly resolution 3010 (XXVII) proclaiming 1975 International Women's Year and was gratified at the events that had taken place in 1975, particularly in Mexico City at the World Conference. That Conference had been a major step in the efforts of the international community to examine its value and seek methods and strategies which would afford women the same opportunities as men to participate in the development process, establish a new international economic order and strengthen world peace.

39. Her Government considered it of the highest importance to integrate women into the national development process and to enable them to develop their own potential and obtain full equality with men. Her culture respected the natural gift of women, namely, child-rearing, but her Government believed that the dignity and worth of the human person must also be recognized if it was to be possible to raise healthy families, promote social progress and thus achieve better living standards. Her country had therefore pledged to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the World Plan of Action adopted at the Mexico City Conference. To that end, 30 October 1975 had been designated as Women's Day in her country and a special tribute had been paid to the achievements and contributions of Swazi women, who were taking an active part in the development process by helping to build rural schools, clinics and community centres and by becoming involved in adult education programmes, cultural development projects, teaching and nursing. The laws of the country guaranteed the right of women to vote and to be eligible for election, as well as their right to educational and employment opportunities without discrimination. Moreover, her country's awareness of the important role played by women in the development process had led to the abolition of the "five sixths rule", which had been inherited from the colonial Government and had stated that women would be paid five sixths of what men earned.

40. A committee had been set up for the International Women's Year and district sub-committees were administering the programme for the Year at the grass-roots level. Special publicity and educational measures had been undertaken to familiarize Swazi men and women with the objectives of the Year and to discuss women's concerns and problems of Swazi culture and society. In addition, a review of existing laws relating to women and the family had been undertaken.

41. Her Government was of the opinion that, once the equality of men and women had been universally recognized, women's natural love of peace and their reluctance to sanction war would prove of great benefit to the world. While education would bring about such changes in attitude, the kind of education provided should go beyond the training of the intellect or the acquisition of skills and include a deeper understanding of the purpose and value of life and the meaning of qualities such as trustworthiness, honesty and justice.

42. Her delegation considered that the search for solutions to the social problems of women must take account of the relationships between men and nature and between peoples and countries and, in that spirit, it supported draft resolution A/C.3/L.2200. It also supported the proposal for the establishment of an international research and training institute for the advancement of women, which was the subject of document A/10340.

43. Mrs. BURNLEY (United Republic of Cameroon), having congratulated the members of the Secretariat who had been responsible for the preparation and implementation of the programme of the International Women's Year, said her delegation hoped that, in accordance with resolution 4 adopted by the World Conference of the International Women's Year, provision would be made for additional staff and financial resources to strengthen the Secretariat unit at Headquarters dealing with women's questions.

44. The World Conference had given wide publicity to and aroused deep concern over the obstacles to the equality of women and to their integration in development efforts. As the President of her country had stated, the problem to be solved was that of creating conditions which would enable the vast majority of women to experience equality in practical terms. Such conditions would, however, be created only when discrimination against women had been eliminated and when women had finally faced up to their responsibilities in a modern and progressive society.

45. With regard to the status of women in her country, she noted that the Constitution guaranteed equal rights for all, irrespective of sex, and that the Statutes of the Public Service and the Labour Code guaranteed equal conditions of employment, equal remuneration and equal opportunity for advancement for all persons employed in the public and private sectors. Moreover, there were special conditions of employment to protect the roles of women and children. Women in her country enjoyed equal trade union rights with men and, in 1975, a woman had been elected Treasurer-General of the National Union of Cameroon Workers. Women also enjoyed the right to vote and to represent their constituents in the National Assembly.

Legislative measures protected women against exploitation and laws dealing with various aspects of marriage and civil status had been enacted between 1966 and 1972. Other laws provided that women were free to exercise the profession of their choice, to make and break contracts, to dispose of their income and to have bank accounts. They were recognized as complements to their husbands and enjoyed both parental and domestic rights.

46. Another factor affecting the status of women in her country was education, which was the most effective method of preparing people in developing countries for full participation in the development effort. Schools in her country were coeducational and, at the primary level, about 50 per cent of students were girls, although the number decreased at the higher levels. Men and women nevertheless competed for places in all institutions of higher education, including the University and the Centre for Health Sciences.

47. The problems faced by uneducated rural women were the main concern of the women's organization of the Cameroon National Union, whose leadership, training, literacy, social and health education programmes were carried out in co-operation with the staff of the Government Community and Social Welfare Departments. The problems faced by educated urban women were also being studied by the women's organization, which had held seminars and lectures to help improve the status of professional women who combined the functions of housewife and mother with civic responsibilities. In that connexion, her delegation welcomed the idea of the establishment of regional and international research and training centres for women who would assume leadership roles in their communities. It was, moreover, convinced that the minimum targets set by the World Plan of Action would be achieved in her country, which was now implementing its fourth national plan.

48. In conclusion, she said that her delegation hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the recommendation relating to the proposed United Nations decade for women: so that all men and women might work together to create a world where women complemented men and the best in human nature excelled.

49. Ms. SAARINEN (Finland) said that her Government based its policies on the principle that all human beings were equal. It therefore considered that the improvement of the status of women had to be dealt with as an integrated part of the social, economic and cultural development of everybody.

50. With regard to follow-up activities to the International Women's Year, her delegation had welcomed the recommendation made at the Mexico City Conference that 1976-1985 should be declared a United Nations decade for women on the understanding that such a decade would be given sufficient attention by the relevant organs of the United Nations system so that it could help to bring about tangible improvements in the living conditions of all men and women and to the achievement of equality between individuals, regions and developed and developing countries. Any consideration of such improvements should take account of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of

States. Her delegation fully supported the main principles contained in the Declaration of Mexico on Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace.

51. Future international action would also have to be based on the World Plan of Action adopted at the Mexico City Conference, which must be supported by an appropriate review and appraisal system, to be fully integrated with other United Nations activities, particularly those in the field of development co-operation. Since separate treatment should not be given to activities relating to the problems of women, the present activities of the United Nations system should be reviewed from the point of view of their impact on the question of equality between the sexes. She referred, in that connection, to the role of the International Labour Organisation, which had recently adopted a declaration and a plan of action for the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers.

52. Referring to the restructuring process of the economic and social activities of the United Nations, she emphasized that it was important for promoting equality between men and women that the intimate link between activities both in the economic and social fields was fully taken into account.

53. Her delegation fully supported the strengthening of the relevant Secretariat units which would be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the proposals made at the Mexico City Conference and for the activities of the Decade for Women.

54. Mrs. OGOT (Kenya) said that the International Women's Year marked a new era in the history of mankind, since for the first time the world had recognized women's determination to overcome the obstacles which had in the past denied them the opportunity to take a full part in the development process and thus bring about the economic and political stability which was vital for world peace.

55. The Government of Kenya whole-heartedly welcomed the proclamation of the International Women's Year because its traditional society fully integrated women into development. Women in traditional society had known their role and rights and had been very much aware of the laws and customs which provided for the division of labour between men and women. Men and women had worked side by side in developing the economy of the country and tending their families. However, colonialism had introduced discriminatory laws into the land; the men had been recruited to help build up the colonial towns or to work in farms whose produce was exported to benefit only foreign countries and the women had been left in rural areas to care for the home and take over all the duties which had previously been carried out by the men. The education introduced by missionaries had followed the same pattern; the first schools had been only for men, whom the colonial government saw as potential workers in their fast-developing administrative centres. It was not until several decades later that a very few ill-equipped schools had been opened for girls. The imbalance in education between men and women had not been due to any lack of interest on the part of women but was the result of colonialism, which not only discriminated between the races but also encouraged inequality between men and women. Kenyan women had

made a crucial contribution to the fight against colonialism in their country, which had raged for nearly a decade. The Kenyan Government had outlawed all discriminatory laws, and article 82 of Kenya's Constitution guaranteed equal rights for men and women. Kenyan women, being well aware of the evils of colonialism, had great sympathy with their sisters in southern Africa.

56. After independence, the Kenyan Government had included the education of women as a major item in its development plan. The number of girls attending primary schools, secondary schools and universities had increased enormously since the attainment of independence. Women also received training in colleges and training centres and in village polytechnics which offered special training for girls in domestic science. There were also adult literary centres to implement the Government's policy of achieving complete literacy by 1980. The educational programme would contribute greatly to national development and it had also brought about marked changes in the status of women in Kenya. The number of Kenyan women who occupied important decision-making posts was increasing; there were currently six women members of Parliament, one of whom was an Assistant Minister. Childbirth was recognized as national service and women in employment were entitled to paid maternity leave and to social security and pension rights. They enjoyed equal pay for equal work and that had encouraged young women to aim for higher academic qualifications which were vital for their total integration into national development. The implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order would need well-qualified men and women who could use their skills and experience, not only to alleviate world problems but also to ease the burdens of rural women, who in Kenya formed almost 70 per cent of the total female population, and shouldered a large part of the responsibility for the country's economy. African women had often been blamed by women in the developed countries for failing to take an active part in the women's liberation movement as such. The fact was that the small percentage of privileged Kenyan women firmly supported the rights of women the world over, but could not ignore the needs and hardships which characterized the daily life of their sisters in the rural areas of Kenya. Rural women had to be helped to attain economic independence before they could understand their rights as stipulated in the Constitution. Only then would it be possible for all Kenyan women to speak with one voice on equality, development and peace.

57. The efforts of the Kenyan Government, together with those of all friendly countries which were contributing generously to the initiation of new projects in rural areas, were greatly appreciated. Those projects included water development, agriculture, improved health services and family-planning programmes. Furthermore, women's voluntary organizations had been very active in supporting government activities in rural areas. The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization had 42 branches throughout the country which helped women to organize themselves into self-help projects whose main activity was to improve the status of rural women. That organization, in consultation with the Kenya Council of Women, had made the International Women's Year a great success. The Regional Women's Conference held in Nairobi in June 1975 had been

very successful and had been followed by fruitful provincial meetings. Kenya had participated actively in the World Conference of the International Women's Year and was proud that the head of its delegation had been elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference.

58. Mrs. DISELE (Botswana) noted that the Charter of the United Nations had made ample provision for the enjoyment of human rights by all, irrespective of sex, colour, creed or religion, and that the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the proclamation of 1975 as International Women's Year had also been designed to achieve that goal. The majority of women, who represented over half the world's population, were bound to occupations which prevented them from being integrated into the socio-economic development of their countries. It was not enough for Governments to enact legislation providing equal opportunities for women and men in education, employment and so on. They must intervene directly to ensure that such legislation was translated into practice, and the United Nations should urge all Member States to implement the World Plan of Action. Moreover, development plans should stress the role of women in the development process.

59. Referring to her own country, she said that women had played a significant role in the development of Botswana, although their contribution had often been either overlooked or taken for granted. The Ministry of Agriculture was currently holding courses and seminars to enable women to learn new agricultural techniques and methods and the Ministry of Local Government and Land was also conducting seminars for women and girls with a view to improving, *inter alia*, their traditional arts and crafts. Moreover, the Government was doing its utmost to fight ignorance and poverty. Private schools had been established all over the country, women's voluntary organizations were conducting adult literacy classes, and the Information Department was offering programmes on agriculture and the problems facing women.

60. With respect to employment, her Government had in 1970 abolished the disparity between salaries for women and men, and was employing married women on permanent and pensionable terms. However, more men than women were still being promoted to posts of high responsibility. Also, while family planning was encouraged it was not compulsory, with the result that only those with some educational background took advantage of it. Pre-natal and post-natal classes were held in clinics in all major villages and women's voluntary organizations were assisting in pre-school feeding programmes. In that connexion, she noted that malnutrition and rickets were on the decrease. With regard to political life, she pointed out that Botswana women had been participating in politics ever since Botswana had become an independent State and that they had served as town and district counselors, mayors and members of Parliament.

61. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's appreciation of the decision by the Economic Commission for Africa's Conference of African Ministers earlier in the year to establish an African Training and Research Centre for Women.

62. Mrs. DE BROMLEY (Honduras) said that, if the question of improvements in the status of women was considered from the point of view of the objectives and aspirations expressed in the Committee, it could be said that very little progress had been made. Account must, however, be taken of the fact that, since the establishment of the United Nations, an important change in attitudes had occurred and had led to such significant events as the International Women's Year and the World Conference held in Mexico City, which had provided a new point of departure for the elimination of discrimination against women.

63. In that connexion, the representative of Japan had referred (2172nd meeting) in the debate to the impact the International Women's Year had had in her country. A similar impact had been felt in Honduras, where the committee responsible for the programme for the International Women's Year had initiated various activities focusing on the problems of women. Radio and television had publicized the goals and objectives of the Year and seminars and courses had been held in the remotest parts of the country. The focus on women's problems had already begun to be felt, for example, in the land reform laws of 1975, which provided that women had the same right as men to receive the land which would be distributed. Such laws were very important because, in recent decades, only a small proportion of women had been able to take an active part in the life of the country, which was a very small one and had a high level of illiteracy, a factor which prevented women from enjoying, or even being aware of, their rights. It was, of course, obvious, that without development, education and better living conditions, there could be no social justice either for women or for men, but changing attitudes and legislation were providing better opportunities for all citizens, including that of achieving full legal equality.

64. One of the factors which made it difficult to eliminate discrimination against women was that, for various psychological reasons, women themselves feared radical change and often felt hostility towards men, who, in turn, feared for their masculinity. It must therefore be made clear that what women were seeking was merely an opportunity to enjoy the same rights as men and to ensure the enjoyment of those rights by all persons, regardless of their race or religion.

65. Her delegation supported the goals and objectives of the World Plan of Action, as reflected in the draft resolutions now before the Committee. Unfortunately, however, the preambles to most of those draft resolutions reflected political concepts which her delegation had found it difficult to support. For that reason, it had not become a sponsor of those draft resolutions, but would probably vote in favour of most of them.

66. Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) said that his delegation wished to submit some oral amendments to draft resolution A/C.3/L.2196. In the second preambular paragraph, the words, “*inter alia*,” should be added after “the Charter of the United Nations which”. In the fourth preambular paragraph the words “foreign occupation,” should be added after “armed conflicts, arms race, colonialism,”. In the seventh preambular paragraph the words “in many count-

ries” should be added after “continuing discrimination”. In operative paragraph 3, the words “on the basis of full respect for the Charter of the United Nations as well as the United Nations resolutions” should be added after “relaxation of international tension” and the words “foreign occupation,” should be added after “elimination of colonialism”.

67. Mr. BELOUSOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2196 would study the Egyptian amendments and express their views on them at a later stage. He wished to present an oral amendment to operative paragraph 20 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195; the words “of all States” should be added after “in 1980, a world conference”.

68. Mrs. SIPILÄ (Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) noted that several speakers had referred to the imbalance in the situation of the employment of men and women in the Secretariat. That also applied to other United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly. The Secretariat for International Women's Year had planned a final event under the Programme for the Year in the United Nations: a high-ranking panel would discuss the question of the equality of women and the implementation of Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations and would meet on 9 December 1975. It would be opened by the President of the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General would speak at the beginning of the meeting. The 10 panelists would consist of the five chairmen of the regional groups, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Ambassadors of Liberia and Guinea and the Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women, Mrs. Shahani.

69. Mr. GRAEFRATH (German Democratic Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation regretted that at the previous meeting the French delegation had raised a question which had nothing to do with the item under discussion and was not within the competence of the United Nations. The World Congress for International Women's Year had been held in Berlin, as many delegations had noted. The Appeal to the Women of the World adopted at the Congress opened with the words: “We have come from all continents to Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic, to attend the World Congress for International Women's Year.” Berlin was described as the capital of the German Democratic Republic in accordance with the Constitution of that country and the choice of capital was a matter which could only be decided by the German Democratic Republic.

70. Mr. BROAD (United Kingdom) said that he wished to state on behalf of the Governments of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America that the position of those Governments on the status of Berlin remained as stated in the letters of the Permanent Representative of those countries of 14 April 1975 and 26 June 1975¹.

¹ A/10078 and A/10126 respectively.

71. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation fully supported the statement of the German Democratic Republic and regretted that some delegations had brought up a subject at the United Nations which had no connexion with the item under discussion.

The position of the Soviet Union was well known and had been explained in several letters to the Secretary-General.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

2178th meeting

Thursday, 4 December 1975, at 8.50 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2178

In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs. Shahani (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEMS 75 AND 76

International Women's Year, including the proposals and recommendations of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (*continued*)

Status and role of women in society, with special reference to the need for achieving equal rights for women and to women's contribution to the attainment of the goals of the Second United Nations Development Decade, to the struggle against colonialism, racism and racial discrimination and to the strengthening of international peace and co-operation between States (*continued*) (A/10003, chap. III, sect. F; E/5725 and Add.1, A/10042, A/10045, A/10049 and Corr.1, A/10056, A/10057, A/10066, A/10070, A/10071, A/10073, A/10075, A/10076, A/10088, A/10089, A/10099, A/10107, A/10111, A/10138, A/10140, A/10160, A/10210, A/10263, A/10264, A/10340, A/C.3/643, A/C.3/644, A/C.3/647, A/C.3/648, A/C.3/L.2193-2198, A/C.3/L.2199/Rev.1, A/C.3/L.2200)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Kenya and Senegal had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2193, Chad had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195, Poland had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2196 and Afghanistan and Senegal had joined the sponsors of the draft decision contained in document A/C.3/L.2197.

2. Mrs. KALLIGA (Greece) said that the International Women's Year had coincided with a very important phase in recent Greek history, namely the major upheavals associated with the first year following the restoration of democracy and the resumption of normal political life. It would have been only natural, in view of that coincidence, for public opinion in Greece to have ignored the International Women's Year, and it was very gratifying that exactly the opposite had occurred and that the Year had received a larger share of the attention of the general public in Greece than any other Year previously observed by the United Nations. Information on the relevant issues had not been confined to a small selected group and had reached the ordinary citizen. Undoubtedly the general climate of renewal and of free exchange of ideas in Greece had helped

promote concern with a number of political and non-political questions, including the women's movement.

3. Greek women had had their fair share of love and respect within their own small social circle ever since the country's early days as a sovereign State 150 years before. In more recent times, Greek women, having gone through the hardships of war, had been in a good position to understand and support effectively the cause of peace. They had achieved legal and political equality long before, and enjoyed equal opportunities in education and in access to any professions which might have been closed to them before the Second World War. They had a number of privileges relating to working conditions and maternity protection, such as special leave, early retirement and a number of social security advantages. Nevertheless, there was still a significant gap between the condition of rural and urban women. Illiteracy of elderly women in rural areas still persisted. Also, the *per capita* income of working women was low compared to that of men, and women's representation in politics and in high administrative positions was rather limited. In those circumstances, Greece had a great interest in some of the main goals set for the United Nations decade for women proposed in the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (see E/5725, chap. II, sect. A).

4. Greek women shared with their sisters of the less-developed countries some of the main preoccupations for the future relating to women living in rural or low-income areas, particularly the goals of better education, acquisition of professional skills through training, more opportunities for acquiring the financial and other facilities that were available to men in the same areas and adequate access to social services in order to assist them in their duties towards their families and to allow them to participate more fully in the life of society and to contribute directly to the development process.

5. One of the preoccupations that Greek women shared with women in developed countries was the effort to achieve equal opportunities of promotion to top jobs and for a fair share in decision-making and in political life. Success in attaining that goal depended mainly on the willingness and determination of women to increase their participation in government, in union movements and in the leadership of other professional, social or political groups.