

mes to achieve the full integration of women in the development process. Discrimination against women was non-existent and special emphasis was being given to providing better opportunities for women in the fields of education, health, employment, social welfare and civil and political participation.

34. Mr. SAMHAN (United Arab Emirates) said that his delegation endorsed the conclusions contained in the report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, including the proposal that an international research and training institute for the advancement of women should be established. He recalled that the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries held in Lima, Peru, in August 1975 had reaffirmed the principles of the Declaration of Mexico and had also recognized the need for national strategies based on the principles of the Declaration and on the World Plan of Action and related resolutions and decisions aimed at ensuring the equal rights and equal responsibilities of women and men in all spheres of life. Women represented a tremendous potential and could have a great impact on social and political changes. The Political Declaration adopted at the Lima Conference<sup>2</sup> had pointed to the need for the full contribution of women in the struggle to eliminate racial discrimination and *apartheid*, and that should be borne in mind during discussions at the United Nations and in subsidiary bodies. The United Arab Emirates supported the Palestinian women who were contributing to the struggle for the self-determination of their people and against the racism which was being practised by Israel against the Palestinian people. His delegation also paid tribute to the African women who were participating in the struggle against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and *apartheid* as practised by the white minority in southern Africa. His Government would spare no efforts in supporting that struggle until final victory was attained.

35. Since the United Arab Emirates had achieved independence, the Head of State and competent bodies had done

<sup>2</sup> See A/10217 and Corr.1.

everything in their power to improve the standard of living of all the people; they had made all possible efforts to improve the status of women within the framework of society and to stamp out the vestiges of colonialism which had limited the role of women to the domestic sphere. Since independence, women in the United Arab Emirates had been given full opportunities to take their place beside men and measures had been enacted to enable women to contribute to building a better society. Various women's associations had been set up in the country, including a Women's Council which aimed at eliminating illiteracy and improving education and the status of women in all sectors of society. In its desire to ensure equality between men and women, his Government attached great importance to health and education as the basis of the well-being of the people. It provided free medical care for all citizens and attached great importance to the progress that was being made in providing full education and career opportunities for women. Women were being educated so that they could become active citizens and make a full contribution in all sectors of society, and they were being ensured equal pay for equal work. A budget had been established to enable women to participate fully in all social and cultural activities.

36. The status of women in the United Arab Emirates was based on the country's Islamic heritage in accordance with which women had always participated with men in society. His Government would continue to work to improve the status of women until it fully realized its goals of ensuring the well-being of all citizens.

37. Mrs. MOHAMMED (Nigeria) suggested that the time-limit of the submission of draft resolutions in connexion with items 75 and 76 should be extended to midday on 2 December 1975.

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.*

## 2174th meeting

Tuesday, 2 December 1975, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2174

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs. Burnley (United Republic of Cameroon), 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/L.2193-2195)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, the Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Cameroon had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2193 and that Mauritania had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195.

2. Mr. KIELLAND (Norway) said that the International Women's Year had been successful in highlighting the question of the status of women and had stimulated the groups which were already actively involved in working for the improvement of the position of women in society. The legitimacy of the cause of women was now more generally accepted and national and international authorities were proving responsive to the pressure that had built up during the year. The challenge now was to keep up the momentum for years to come; equality of status for women could be achieved only through a long and sustained struggle. Against that background his Government considered that the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (see E/5725, chap. II, sect. A) adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year held at Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975 constituted a good basis for action at the national and international levels and was an eloquent elaboration on the basic theme that the intolerable obstacles to equality between men and women must be eradicated so that society could fully benefit from the advantages of women's full participation in all spheres of political, economic and social life. The Plan rightly placed the main emphasis on improving the lot of women in the developing countries. His Government shared the view expressed in the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace (*ibid.*, chap. I) that a redistribution of economic power from rich to poor nations was necessary to improve the status of women. The World Plan of Action should be viewed as a contribution to a new international economic order in that it no longer tolerated inequalities based on sex. The main responsibility for implementing the Plan rested with national Governments, but the United Nations also had a key role to play and could exert pressure for the implementation of the Plan. Non-governmental organizations should also be involved in the work of implementation, as the problems were so complex that legislative action alone was insufficient. It was necessary to come to grips with attitudes and prejudices which were rooted in centuries-old practices. It gave his Government great satisfaction that the Conference had recognized that the promotion of the status of women was an integral part of the general development process, for women were particularly exposed to the hardships caused by under-development. It considered that highest priority in development efforts should be given to aid programmes directed towards the poorest and least influential strata of society, to which the women of many parts of the world belonged. All the Member States of the United Nations must examine their legislation and practices in order to establish national strategies for the attainment of the objectives of the Plan.

3. In Norway a seminar was to be held early in 1976 to study the decisions of the Conference and in particular the World Plan of Action and to identify the political consequences for Norway at both the national and international levels. The seminar would also include a survey of the activities which had been initiated all over the country during the International Women's Year. More than three quarters of the local administrative boards in Norway had set up committees which had arranged events and initiated action in connexion with the status of women. An act had recently been submitted to Parliament under which discrimination on the grounds of sex would be illegal. The Norwegian Association for the Rights of Women had arranged a Nordic seminar on the situation of women in the mass communication media.

4. His delegation considered that the review and appraisal of the World Plan of Action should be linked with that of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. A more thorough elaboration of the Plan was needed; his Government considered that the Plan would gain considerably if some of the irrelevant political overtones were eliminated. His delegation also drew attention to the recommendation contained in resolution 8 of the Conference (for the resolutions, see E/5725, chap. III): it believed that immediate steps were needed to correct inequalities in employment and personnel practices in the United Nations. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Plan called for men to contribute more to the raising of children and to housework so as to free women for outside and other activities and that it stressed the right to family planning facilities. The Plan also gave women a special role in the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Population Conference<sup>1</sup> held in Bucharest from 19-30 August 1974. The faithful implementation of both those Plans would not only benefit women but also broaden the prospects for a world society based on human values.

5. Mrs. PEREYRA (Venezuela) said that, even though the Charter of the United Nations had reaffirmed faith in the equal rights of men and women 30 years previously, it had taken the United Nations that long to convene a World Conference to defend the rights of women, who made up half the world's population. The emancipation of women was a problem of the highest importance because without their participation it would not be possible to bring about social change. Thus, their emancipation must be the common cause of men and women alike. Moreover, as her delegation had stated at the Conference, the goals to be achieved during the International Women's Year did not relate only to women, but involved changes for the benefit of society as a whole and required solutions to problems now faced by many peoples throughout the world, such as hunger, over-population, poverty, backwardness and all the other factors which characterized under-development. Nor did the marginal situation to which women were relegated, and which was characterized by legal inequality, discrimination in education and employment and a lack of participation in decision-making and planning, affect women only. Their status as second-class citizens also affected their children and their countries.

<sup>1</sup> See *Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, 1974* (United Nations publication, Sales No E.75.XIII.3), chap. I.

6. Her delegation was convinced that no country could afford the luxury of underestimating the capacities of its women, who could make a substantial contribution to the solution of the serious problems faced by all of humanity. In the light of that view, the President of her country had established the Women's Advisory Committee, which was composed of women representatives of various sectors and occupations and had been entrusted with the task of studying, analysing and evaluating the legal, social, economic, political and cultural status of Venezuelan women with a view to the adoption of specific programmes and the implementation of measures designed to bring about the necessary changes. Women in her country were aware that laws and constitutional provisions were not sufficient to change their status and that such laws must be accompanied by the Government's commitment to their implementation. Thus, the solution to women's problems required thorough changes in social structures and in the attitudes of all the citizens of the country. Of course, it was first of all necessary to make all sectors of society aware of their basic rights with regard to food, health and education before measures could be taken to solve the specific problems of women. In that connexion, she noted that one Latin American country had recently enacted a Family Code proclaiming that men and women had equal responsibilities and rights. In her country as well, the Government was promoting measures for the reform of legal structures which kept women in a position of inferiority.

7. Her delegation was in favour of the full implementation of Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations because it considered that the requirements of that Article with regard to the conditions in which women entered the service of and worked in the United Nations, gained promotions and enjoyed benefits were not being respected. In that connexion, it was wrong to think that women could work better in one type of activity than in another and, fortunately, that erroneous idea tended to be forgotten when women had been given the opportunity to demonstrate that they were as responsible and competent as men. Her delegation hoped that the first year of the proposed United Nations decade for women (see A/C.3/L.2195) would be a point of departure for collective efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women. Her Government was convinced that full equality of rights and opportunities for the citizens of all countries of the world was absolutely necessary for the attainment of that end. The present was full of conflict, injustice, wars, violations of human rights, hunger and oppression, and men, who had always held the reins of power, had not been able to solve those problems. The participation of women in the search for solutions was essential because men and women had a common destiny and were exposed to the same dangers. Until the participation of women had been achieved, no effective solutions to the problems of humanity could be found.

8. Mrs. MUTUKWA (Zambia) said that her delegation believed that the International Women's Year had awakened the conscience of the whole world to the problems of women. Her Government was fully committed to the objectives of the Year. When the President of Zambia had inaugurated International Women's Year in Zambia he had emphasized that it was important for both men and women to shoulder fully their responsibilities to their families and

communities and to the nation. The Zambian women had played a very active role in the struggle for independence and as a result no laws discriminating against women had been passed since independence had been attained. However, Zambian women were prevented from fully exercising their rights under the law by various factors, including such major problems as the high rate of illiteracy, malnutrition, the lack of adequate educational health facilities, archaic social structures and customs and meagre financial resources. In the 11 years of independence, considerable progress had been made towards enabling women to participate in the development of Zambian society. Women were represented in the main political bodies, and the Government was making a deliberate effort to promote the status of women and to integrate them into all spheres of life in Zambia.

9. As part of the International Women's Year programme, a National Council of Women had been set up by the President. The Council had drawn up a comprehensive programme for the whole country and many activities had been carried out, including seminars in all the eight provincial capitals and numerous conferences and workshops, as well as an extensive publicity campaign.

10. Her Government realized that solutions to the major problems confronting the world could be found only on the basis of the equal participation and contribution of both men and women and it therefore welcomed efforts to promote the universal recognition of the equality of rights of men and women and to enable women to participate fully in the over-all development of their societies. The World Conference had been an important starting-point in enhancing the status of women. Her Government supported the Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action. Her delegation hoped that the Committee would take action aimed at implementing the decisions adopted in Mexico and in particular the World Plan of Action. National Governments too must adopt plans and strategies for implementing the plan. Her delegation considered that particular priority should be given to the sections of the Plan and the resolutions relating to rural women. She reiterated her delegation's support for the recommendation by the seventh special session of the General Assembly that competent organs of the United Nations should give priority to the prevention of malnutrition and to providing primary health services to communities (see resolution 3362 (S-VII), sect. III, para. 9).

11. Her delegation welcomed the proposal to establish an international research and training institute for the advancement of women (see A/C.3/L.2195). The importance of relevant data and information about women could not be overemphasized, especially as the delegation also believed that the work of regional research institutes was very important; such institutes should concentrate on what was most urgent and relevant in their areas and then exchange information with other institutes. Zambia welcomed the recommendation that the international institute should work in close co-operation with, for example, the Institute for Training and Research for African Women established by the Economic Commission for Africa. It hoped that the group of experts, the establishment of which had been proposed (*ibid.*), would pay particular attention to the role of the regional institutes and how they could be made more effective.

12. Her delegation hoped that the question of the role of women in relation to the struggle against colonialism, racism and racial discrimination would be included in the agenda of the next session as a matter of priority, and that all the resolutions on the subject adopted at the World Conference would be implemented by all countries. It also hoped that particular attention would be paid to the decisions of the Assembly's seventh special session. In that connexion it stressed the importance of economic independence for women if they were to be able to maintain and consolidate their new and wider role.

13. Mr. LUBIK (Poland) said that the International Women's Year had been regarded in Poland as an important step towards the socio-economic development of the world and the realization of the goals of humanism and peace. Poland fully supported the main goals of the Year. The participation of women in the strengthening of peace throughout the world and in international co-operation for social progress was increasing and there was an urgent need to eliminate the remaining manifestations of discrimination against women. There was a close link between the improvement in the status of women and the solution of basic problems of the contemporary world. Peace ensured social progress and the realization of basic human rights, including equal rights for women. The women of Poland had survived the tragic events of the war years and they unflinchingly supported the strengthening of peace and international security, détente and peaceful coexistence. They consistently supported the peoples who were struggling against all forms of colonialism and racism and they advocated respect for human rights.

14. The acceleration of socio-economic development was very important for further improvement in the status of women. The realization of that aim, along with the progressive restructuring of international economic relations, required greater participation of women in the life of their countries and in the process of development. The steady improvement of the status of women required far-reaching internal socio-economic changes as described in the Declaration on Social Progress and development (General Assembly resolution 2542 (XXIV)) and a number of other United Nations decisions. In Poland the goals of the International Women's Year were being fully realized as a result of the socio-economic changes which had taken place over the past 30 years. The socialist order had ensured that Polish women enjoyed the same economic, social, cultural and political rights as men. The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic guaranteed the equal rights of women and men. Polish women also had special rights linked with their family obligations. They participated in activities of every kind and played a significant role in the development of their country. In some spheres the measures to protect women even went beyond the relevant international standards. Nevertheless, International Women's Year had been a stimulus for further efforts to enhance the role of women in all spheres of human activity. A number of measures had been taken to broaden the social rights of women. A new Labour Code had entered into force which broadened health care for pregnant women and maternity rights. In accordance with the Government's action programme for women, broader opportunities had been created for women to improve their education and their qualifications for employment.

15. The decisions of the World Conference and in particular the Declaration of Mexico were a step forward towards the recognition of the just aspirations of women. The Plan of Action rightly attributed great importance to the role of peace as a basic condition for improving the status of women. The Government of Poland attached great importance to the decisions taken at the Conference and was working on measures to give effect to the conclusions of the Conference which were in keeping with the current stage of social and economic development of the socialist Polish State.

16. Poland actively participated in the work of the progressive and democratic national and international organizations which were concerned with the problems of women and families. Those organizations had convened the World Congress for the International Women's Year in Berlin from 20 to 24 October 1975. That Congress had been a continuation, as it were, of the World Conference in Mexico City and had great significance for the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the latter. His delegation fully supported the final document of the Berlin Congress (see A/C.3/644) and its basic aims and goals.

17. Mrs. WALDRON-JACKSON (Guyana) said that Guyana, like other countries in the developing world, recognized the need for social and economic development and for dealing with development problems, including the question of the promotion of the status of women, as a whole. There was an indissoluble link between the low status of women in society and the related problems of world insecurity and discrimination. Hence, the struggle of women for liberation and equality was no less valid than the struggle of colonial peoples to exercise their fundamental human rights and to achieve independence.

18. Development was a twofold process involving the expansion of new economic and social activities, on the one hand, and the transformation of traditional activities by a process which guaranteed the efficient use of all human resources, on the other. In developing countries, major traditional activities were performed by women. Therefore, any resistance to equipping women with adequate skills could be viewed as resistance to the development process, and more especially to the mobilization of human resources. Economic planning should be designed to ensure that a reduction of the traditional female input as a result of the introduction of modern technology did not deprive women of opportunities to earn income. Unused resources were wasted resources and modernization which brought about unemployment or underemployment would be counterproductive. National plans and international action should therefore seek to make the maximum use of reserves of female labour. An added advantage of ensuring the full incorporation of women into the development process would be a more equitable distribution of income, which would serve the best interests of the poorest families. In that connexion, she stressed the need for social facilities such as day-care centres, adult education and the like in order to achieve the full integration of women in the total development effort. That goal could not be reached, however, unless planning was based on a systematic analysis of the current use of male and female labour and on research into the most efficient use of labour and its effects and the implementation of the plan. UNDP could assist in

that area by conducting projects which would contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Plan. In that connexion, she noted with satisfaction that some of the draft resolutions before the Committee reflected such an approach.

19. She noted that over the past few years increasing attention had been paid to the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (General Assembly resolution 2263 (XXII)), and that the socialist revolution in many new States had promoted women from the status of homemakers to that of nation-builders. Women had met the challenge of sharing with men in decision-making, although they had encountered the traditional difficulties of winning acceptance and recognition of their ability to think just as logically and constructively as men. Consequently, there was a need for further action to ensure the implementation of the above-mentioned Declaration.

20. Referring to the situation in her own country, she noted that the Government had repealed laws inherited from the British legal system which discriminate against women; had appointed a commission to study the legal status of women and legislation to eliminate any remaining discrimination against them; and had also made it possible for an increasing number of women to take their rightful places in the social, economic and political life of the country in all its aspects. That was only a beginning, however, and her country was resolved to pursue to its logical end the action undertaken to promote the status of women.

21. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's conviction that the total involvement of men and women in the development process could only strengthen international peace, security and co-operation among States.

22. Mrs. SEKELA KANINDA (Zaire) said that the status and role of women in society had been aptly summed up in a recent address delivered by the President of Zaire, who had described how the rights of women had been trampled under foot throughout human history. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to note the progress which had been made with a view to guaranteeing women's rights and integrating women into the development process. Most countries had recognized the political, economic, social and cultural rights of women, although the removal of the differences between the status of men and that of women would clearly be a long-term undertaking.

23. Referring to the status of women in Zaire, she noted that they had always played a significant role in the traditional society of her country, especially in the pre-colonial era, but that participation in development had declined in modern times as a result of the colonial system, which had denied women access to education. With the advent of the Second Republic in Zaire, action had been taken to promote the educational advancement of women and to ensure their full participation in the political life of the country. However, much remained to be done to achieve the goals of full and equal participation of women in all aspects of the life of the country. In that connexion, she noted that her Government had welcomed the World Plan of Action because of the importance which the latter attached to the effort to eliminate illiteracy.

24. Document A/10210 described the active role played by her country in the activities of the International Women's Year. In that connexion, she noted a number of resolutions of a political, social and economic nature which had been adopted earlier in the current year at a national seminar in Kinshasa on the situation of Zairian women with regard to the past, present and future development of their country, and said that her delegation was prepared to provide any interested members of the Committee with full information on the work of the seminar, the final declaration of which had been made available to the working group entrusted with the task of drafting the Declaration of Mexico.

25. Mr. CHORFI (Morocco) noted with satisfaction the progress already achieved during the International Women's Year, and the activities undertaken at the national and international levels to promote equality between men and women and to ensure the full integration of women into the development process. Women had actively participated with men in the political liberation of the developing countries, and continued to display the same ardour and dynamism in the effort to strengthen peace and to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination. Thanks to the experience acquired in the struggle against colonialism, women in the developing world were open to all ideas of emancipation and progress, and were prepared to take full advantage of any action designed to improve their education, knowledge and training in all fields.

26. Referring to the efforts of his country to promote the status of women, he noted that as early as 1947 King Mohamed V had initiated the process of breaking down the obstacles to the participation of women in certain activities. Since then Moroccan women had achieved great progress towards their total integration into the life of the nation. However, that progress had not been uniform despite the diversity of the measures taken and their adaptation to specific conditions. In that connexion, he referred to the role played by the network of over 400 centres for the promotion of the status of women in the fight against illiteracy and in the fields of civic education, health nutrition, family planning, home economics and vocational training. The action of those centres had been supported by daily radio broadcasts. Moreover, national and regional centres had been established to ensure the training of skilled personnel and teachers within the framework of the national development plans.

27. His delegation had welcomed the proclamation of 1975 as International Women's Year, had supported all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on that subject and had actively participated in the Mexico City Conference, which had made a significant contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Year. Morocco would spare no efforts to ensure the implementation of the World Plan of Action and the resolutions adopted at the Conference, and hoped that all States Members of the United Nations would unanimously support and implement the Declaration of Mexico, the World Plan of Action and the related resolutions concerning the period from 1976 to 1985. He also expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would take all necessary measures to give immediate effect to all the recommendations adopted by the Conference.

28. In conclusion, he stressed the need to make a special effort during the coming decade to improve the living conditions of women in the developing countries, and especially women in rural areas, and pointed out that the economic and social development of the developing countries could not be ensured without the continuing promotion of the status of women and their total integration into the national life of their countries.

29. Mrs. SELLAMI MESLEM (Algeria) noted the contradictory reactions provoked by the Mexico Conference, ranging from sarcasm to the hopeful expectation that it would herald the coming of an age of freedom and equality for all human beings, and said that despite differences of opinion about the role and significance of the Conference, there could be no doubt that its outcome constituted a refutation of the claims of the sceptics. The delegates, 80 per cent of whom were women, had examined the conflicts and problems relating to the status of women in a serene and auspicious climate. There had been an awareness of the fact that the requisite transformation of the mentality of society could not be achieved by the classical means of struggle used to promote trade unionism or national liberation but would require co-operation between men and women. The Declaration of Mexico reflected that realistic approach. In that connexion, she noted the importance of the establishment of a new international economic order to ensure the necessary economic transformations within the developing countries, and expressed her delegation's conviction that the Declaration of Mexico would contribute to the achievement of a more just world economic order in which men and women would live together in harmony and dignity and from which all forms of exploitation would be banished.

30. Referring to the World Plan of Action, she said that it would serve as the basis for the transformations necessary within each country, taking into account the specific characteristics of the latter. The recommendations of the Plan were clear, practical and moderate, and the task of each Government would be to create the appropriate conditions for their implementation. In that connexion she said that the world conference proposed for 1980 would be a suitable occasion for taking stock of the results achieved and that progress thus far suggested that the balance sheet would be positive. However, in order to maintain interest in such a fundamental question as the promotion of the status of women, international co-operation must be reflected not only in words, but in deeds. Accordingly, her country was in favour of proclaiming a United Nations decade for women. She noted with satisfaction the efforts made by each Member State with a view to the total integration and participation of women in the development process. That had been one of the major concerns of her Government and, like the problems of youth, the peasantry, illiteracy and unemployment, it represented an essential aspect of the struggle to overcome under-development. Algeria's national development plans were based on the idea that women should contribute on a footing of equality with men. No legal discrimination between the sexes existed in Algeria. Moreover, the action of the National Union of Algerian Women at the national level was co-ordinated with that of the General Union of Algerian Workers. In that connexion, she said that the establishment of an African institute for the training of skilled women workers was envisaged and

she expressed the hope that it would receive the support of international bodies and work in close co-operation with the proposed international research and training institute for the advancement of women as recommended in resolution 26 of the Mexico Conference. Her delegation would appreciate further information on the objectives and structure of the proposed international institute, and felt that a careful study of the specific characteristics of each region should be made when considering the appointment of the group of experts who would assist in the establishment of the institute and draw up its terms of reference.

31. In conclusion, she said that her delegation would also welcome further information on the programme envisaged by the United Nations system as a whole for the preparation of interagency projects and that an exchange of views on that subject would be useful.

32. Mrs. MAIR (Jamaica) stated that it was highly appropriate that the main goals of the International Women's Year should be promoting the equal status of women, integrating them fully into the development process and increasing their contribution to the strengthening of world peace. After the Year, things would never be quite the same again for women the world over. That could already be seen in the many reports before the Committee concerning the national activities in connexion with the Year, which had been envisaged not as something capable of overcoming the disabilities and inequalities of centuries but as the context for a searching dialogue and for the establishment of plans of action.

33. Referring to the action taken in her country to sharpen the focus of society on the status of women and to accelerate the search for appropriate strategies, she mentioned basic research, educational programmes, publicity, legislation and the establishment of governmental administrative machinery. Moreover, a national women's conference had just been held to discuss the Jamaican national plan for action, which had drawn on the experiences and insights gained at the national level and also on those of the regional Caribbean and Latin American meetings and seminars and the Mexico Conference.

34. Commenting on the proposals and recommendations of the Mexico City Conference, she said that the Declaration of Mexico reflected the concerns of women in the developing and under-developed world and, in so far as it related to the three main goals of the Year, was of virtually universal application and had established the essential guidelines for the international community to follow in seeking to improve the total human condition on the basis of the fullest development of women. In that connexion, her delegation was at a loss to understand the criticisms of the work of the Mexico City Conference. The question of women's enjoyment of all their legal, humanitarian, economic and other rights was in a very fundamental sense a political question, since power to determine their role in many vital areas of life was not exercised by women themselves. To acquire and exercise that power was a political process in the deepest sense of the word, and women were currently engaged in that process.

35. At another level of experience, it was inconceivable that the fate of women could be separated from the

political world of national and international decision-making, which determined the conditions of millions of women and their families. That was especially true in the colonial or newly independent countries. Women's knowledge of and involvement in the international movements for economic justice, equity and co-operation and for the attainment of human rights were absolutely crucial to the improvement of their own economic status and enjoyment of human rights within their countries. In that connexion, she referred to the control exercised by transnational corporations over the lives of millions of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, adversely affecting their enjoyment of many human rights. She also referred to the November issue of the publication of the United Nations Unit on *Apartheid*, which dealt with the subject of women victims of *apartheid* in South Africa, and which demonstrated that it was women who suffered most acutely as a result of political and economic forces which were often external to their societies and over which they had no control.

36. In conclusion, she said that the work of the Mexico City Conference provided a comprehensive and viable framework for the achievement of the objectives of the Year, and expressed the hope that the current session of the General Assembly would confirm the commitment of the international community to the effort to promote the status and role of women in the modern world.

37. Mrs. JAYAWEERA (Sri Lanka) noted that the activities undertaken in connexion with the International Women's Year had created an awareness of the many problems faced by women throughout the world and that there was a need to translate that awareness into concrete action on the basis of the guidelines contained in the World Plan of Action. The duty of national Governments was to review existing legislation, to identify areas of discrimination, to introduce corrective measures and to create national machinery for that purpose. International and regional organizations, and also non-governmental organizations in each country, also had the duty to assist in the implementation of national programmes according to national priorities and needs. Those policies and programmes should be implemented within the framework of the norms and principles elaborated in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 3281 (XXIX)), the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the Declaration on the establishment of a New International Economic Order (General Assembly resolution 3201 (S-VI)) and the Charter of the United Nations, all of which had as their objective the creation of a just society.

38. It must be remembered, however, that the needs and problems of women differed from society to society and that the status and role of women were inextricably linked with the conditions of their societies as a whole. It should also be noted that balanced social and economic development was only possible through the active participation of women in society.

39. Referring to the situation of women in her country, she said that while Sri Lanka was a country in which women had traditionally had an honoured place in family

life and society, it was also an example of a country in which egalitarian political and social policies had functioned within the constraints of a developing economy to create problems in integrating women in employment and in the development process. She noted that universal adult suffrage had been introduced in 1931 and that in 1960 a woman had become the Prime Minister of the Country, although the number of women in decision-making positions was still insufficient. Equality before the law, improved health services and positive labour legislation had helped women to participate in the process of modernization. The most significant factor in their advancement had been the rapid spread of education, through a policy of free elementary, secondary and higher education, and extended educational facilities. However, despite the positive general educational achievements of women in her country, they were still somewhat disadvantaged in the area of vocational training. That situation was the result of sex-based curriculum diversification in schools in the past and of social attitudes which were often shared by women themselves. Nevertheless, the educational opportunities available to women in her country had had a direct impact on their employment opportunities, and women had entered into the professions in large numbers, establishing themselves in former male preserves in scientific and commercial fields, in which they enjoyed equal pay and leave benefits. It must be stated, however, that women had not yet been fully integrated into the economy and that they were not adequately represented in areas such as management, technical employment and skilled labour. The absence of adequate training programmes had prevented many women from improving their economic status, and the fact that at least half the women employed in a developing country were in the depressed agricultural sector led to the concentration of women at the bottom of the economic structure. Moreover, the massive unemployment problem facing her country was making it increasingly difficult for women to find jobs. The problem facing her country was therefore less a question of women's rights than one of improving the over-all economic situation and the most hopeful solution apparently lay in reshaping global economic policies as envisaged by the new international order.

40. Referring to the international aspects of the question, she expressed her delegation's support for the World Plan of Action and drew special attention to the following policies outlined in the World Plan and in the Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development adopted for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (see E/5725, chap. II, sect. B.1): the encouragement of increasing political participation of women at the decision-making level in central and in local government; the use of communication media and direct measures to remove sex stereotypes in education and development; the development of an extensive programme of non-formal education in vocational skills that would help women to participate in the development process; the organization of a viable scheme in agriculture and agro-based industries and the provision of infrastructural services to facilitate self-employment.

41. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's wholehearted support for international and regional co-operation, and for the activities of such institutions as the proposed

international research and training institute for the advancement of women.

42. Mrs. DIALLO (Guinea) said that her delegation welcomed the positive impact that the International Women's Year had had on international opinion and on awareness of the important role played by women in the development process. It also welcomed the national and international measures taken to improve the status of women throughout the world. In that connexion, she noted that the World Conference of the International Women's Year had given a new dimension to the struggle of women to improve their status through the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of the cause of equal rights within the family and in society. It was to be hoped that that would lead to the kind of understanding and solidarity among women, progressive organizations of men and youth and peace-loving nations which would make it possible to implement the measures provided for in the World Plan of Action and the Declaration of Mexico.

43. The fact that the world's major problems were closely related and could not be solved in isolation must be taken into account in any evaluation of the success of International Women's Year. In that connexion, she was sure that the growing awareness of the interdependence of peoples at all levels of international life would help to change certain traditional attitudes which encouraged social stagnation and discrimination against women. It was now unanimously agreed that the problems of the status of women must be considered in the political and economic context of the society in which they lived. Thus, the International Women's Year could be considered as the result of three decades of effort to ensure women a place in society and as the beginning of an era of progress in peace and harmony for the international community as a whole.

44. Her delegation had taken part in the work of the World Conference of the International Women's Year and the World Congress of the International Women's Year, which had been held in Berlin.

45. Her delegation reserved the right to refer later to the draft resolutions before the Committee.

46. Begum KHAN (Pakistan) said that the results of the World Conference of the International Women's Year would undoubtedly have a far-reaching impact on the status and role of women in society, their integration in the process of national development and their contribution to the promotion of peace and security in the world. The Conference had confirmed that women all over the world belonged to a common sisterhood and had the same aspirations. The Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action constituted valuable guidelines for efforts at various levels to improve the status of women, and it was necessary to ensure their early implementation. Discriminatory customs and beliefs must be eliminated in order to ensure for women a life of respect, equality and dignity. The Plan should be implemented within the framework of the decisions taken by the General Assembly during its sixth and seventh special sessions on the establishment of a new international economic order and of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. The Plan had rightly identified areas requiring priority action and Governments

should endeavour to incorporate those areas in their short-term plans. Her delegation attached great importance to the recommendations concerning the requirements of women in the developing countries, especially those in rural areas or lower-income urban areas. The developed countries and agencies of the United Nations system could play an important role in providing the necessary economic and technical assistance to developing countries. In the implementation of the Plan and the Declaration, due account should be taken of the diverse religious, cultural and social values in the world and of priorities of national plans. Her delegation also considered that the establishment of the proposed international research and training institute for the advancement of women was an important recommendation in view of the need for adequate research on the status of women and for an increase in training facilities. Her delegation supported the proposal that another world conference on women should be convened in 1980 so as to review and evaluate the progress made in implementing the objectives of the International Women's Year (see A/C.3/L.2195).

47. Her Government welcomed the Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action as well as the proposed proclamation of the United Nations decade for women. It would bear in mind the decisions of the World Conference in formulating its development plans and policies; it was fully committed to complete equality and the integration of women in the development process and was adopting all possible measures towards the realization of that goal. If at times it lagged in full implementation of the recommendations of the World Conference, that was mainly due to the constraints of underdevelopment. The Pakistan Constitution unequivocally safeguarded the fundamental right of equality of women. Moreover, the constitutional Principles of Policy provided that steps should be taken to ensure the full participation of women in national life and also the protection of the family. In implementation of those provisions significant measures had been taken to improve the lot of women in rural and urban areas. Women's participation in national politics and development efforts had increased and they were making a valuable contribution to national decision-making processes.

48. The International Women's Year had heightened awareness in Pakistan of the status and role of women in society. A six-day international seminar on women's participation in development had been held in Rawalpindi from 10-15 November and had been attended by delegates from 19 countries and from various United Nations agencies.

49. It was commonly recognized that the ensuring of equal treatment for women as human beings was part of the general struggle for promoting human rights and socio-economic progress in the world. Developing countries could ill afford to leave unutilized the potential of almost half of their population, and it was essential to accelerate the integration of women into all spheres of society on a footing of equality with men. The Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action should guide every Government in the struggle to provide a better life for its people. Pakistan was impelled to take that course not only as its constitutional obligation but also under the dictates of the Islamic ideology which precluded any form of discrimina-



tion. Her delegation hoped that draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195 would be supported by all Member States.

50. Mr. DANISHJO (Afghanistan) said that, throughout history, women had been deprived of their legitimate rights by customs and traditions. Currently, however, there was growing awareness that a strong and healthy society could not afford to waste half its strength by allowing discrimination on the basis of sex. Attitudes had been slow to change, but it was currently being acknowledged that customs and traditions should not prevent women from sharing in the benefits of economic and social progress. In that connexion, the United Nations and the specialized agencies had made praiseworthy efforts to put an end to discrimination against women by such measures as the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 3010 (XXVII), which had proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year and the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of its resolution 1849 (LVI) by which it had been decided that the theme of the Year would be "Equality, Development and Peace".

51. The World Conference, held in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1851 (LVI), had been an historical event leading to the adoption of the Declaration of Mexico, the World Plan of Action and various resolutions on subjects including improved education and family planning services and women's participation in promoting world peace and international co-operation. The Plan established guidelines and targets for national and international action to solve the problems of under-development which placed women in an inferior position. In particular, his delegation supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 46 of the Plan relating to minimum targets to be achieved by the end of the five-year period from 1975 to 1980.

52. Moreover, it noted with pleasure that the Declaration of Mexico confirmed that the issue of inequality, as it affected the vast majority of women in the world, was closely related to the problem of under-development, which existed as a result of inadequate internal structures and an inequitable world economic order. If shared the view expressed in the Declaration of Mexico that it was essential to establish a new international economic order, which would be based on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and founded on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence and co-operation among all States. It was, however, of the opinion that, in order to implement the recommendations of the Plan of Action, developing countries and, in particular those with limited financial resources, would require assistance from the international community. In that connexion, it welcomed the adoption of resolution 12 by the World Conference and hoped that, in the light of the report of the Secretary-General, the Second Committee would deal with the question of the integration of women in development within the framework of agenda item 123. His country attached great importance to the work done by the Commission on the Status of Women and was very much aware of the role which the United Nations could play in implementing the Plan of Action. In that connexion, it had taken note with satisfaction of resolution 8 adopted at the World Conference.

53. As a developing country with limited resources, Afghanistan had made every effort to deal with the many problems encountered by women, for example, by implementing extensive programmes in primary and secondary schools and offering literacy courses throughout the country. Moreover, the Afghan Women's Institute now had branches in the major cities of Afghanistan and was playing an important role in improving the social and educational standards of Afghan women, as well as their awareness of their social rights and obligations. The Government of his country attached great importance to the achievement of full equality by women in every aspect of national life. The Minister for Information and Culture had been made responsible for co-ordinating Afghanistan's plans for the observance of the International Women's Year. To that end, he had established the Women's Co-ordination Committee, whose objectives were to collect statistics relating to such problems of women as literacy and unemployment and to study the problems of women in urban and rural areas and the role of women in the family and society. The Co-ordination Committee had disseminated information about its projects through provincial co-ordination committees and had published books and pamphlets on the position of Afghan women and their awareness of the principle of equality of rights. In addition to such activities, a series of mobile seminars had been held in 1975. Afghan women looked forward to further successes in the activities they were carrying out with a view to emancipation and were taking measures to popularize the concept of equality as propounded by Islam.

54. Mrs. Azca ALI (Bangladesh) said that, in the past quarter century, awareness had been gained of the urgent need to take over-all measures to solve the problems of mankind as a whole. Such measures would, however, be unsuccessful if women, who made up nearly half of the world's population, were not fully integrated into the development process.

55. Thus, the World Conference of the International Women's Year had been of great significance because it had been the first time women's problems had been discussed in depth in an international forum. Those discussions had highlighted the relationship between the themes of the Conference, namely, "Equality, Development and Peace". and had made it clear that the achievement of equal opportunities by women and their integration into the development effort as equal partners with men were closely linked with other basic social and economic issues, such as development, exploitation and oppression. It had also been revealed that the key to women's problems was education, which alone could enable women to demand more employment opportunities. Another principal theme had been that legislation was not enough and that concerted efforts were needed to stimulate social and political awareness so that legislation might be implemented to free women of the customs and practices which locked them into a marginal and secondary role in society.

56. The World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference provided guidelines for national, regional and international action to be taken in the next 10 years with a view to achieving the goals and objectives of the International Women's Year. The adoption of that document had, however, been only the beginning of a long struggle and, in

that connexion, her delegation attached particular importance to a comprehensive review and appraisal of the progress achieved by the United Nations system. To that end, the Secretary-General should be requested to make appropriate arrangements for the first biennial review in 1978.

57. With regard to the resolutions adopted at the World Conference, her delegation attached particular importance to resolution 9 on the protection of maternal and child health, resolution 21 on the condition of women in rural areas and resolution 14 on research for the formulation of policies concerning the integration of women in the development process. In that connexion, it supported the establishment of an international research and training institute for the advancement of women (see A/10340).

58. With regard to the status of women in Bangladesh and the programmes which were being envisaged as part of the new focus on women's problems, she said that, in recent years, women had been taking an increasingly active part in the life of the country. She noted, however, that although women in rural areas played a very important role in productive activities, the proportion of women taking part in sectors of the urban economy was still limited. Women workers in her country faced the problems of inadequate employment assistance, cultural barriers and lack of housing and child-care facilities. Those problems were being given special attention at various operational levels and, for the time being, the existing machinery was adequate to deal with them, as the number of women workers was not very high. Efforts were being made to encourage responsible leadership among women themselves. Women members of the Parliament represented women's interests in general, including the interests of women workers. Financial assistance was being provided to voluntary women's organizations active in programmes for education, health, vocational training, population planning and rural development. Within the limitations imposed by the weakness of the country's economy, attempts were being made to promote the employment of women workers through counselling and vocational guidance and the establishment of a special training programme. Labour administration in the country had not yet been able to extend its services to agricultural workers, which included a large number of women. In the industrial sector, improvements had been made in the living conditions of all workers, including women, and steps had been taken to review the wage and salary structures of workers in nationalized industries and to provide them with retirement benefits, incentive bonuses and essential commodities at reasonable prices. Unfortunately, however, the implementation of such promotional activities had been hampered by the lack of resources and by various organizational problems. When the necessary resources became available, it would be possible to establish a programme and a special administrative unit for women workers in the country.

59. Mr. NAJAR (Israel) said that Israel's social structures were well known for their progressive nature and that women's organizations and women in general played a very important role in the social, cultural, professional and political life of the country. His delegation had therefore been pleased at the idea of attending the World Conference of the International Women's Year. There, however, it had

encountered an infamous political manoeuvre on the part of the Arab States, which had succeeded in including in the documents of the World Conference a reference to the elimination of zionism. Thus, the Arab States had poisoned the atmosphere of the Mexico Conference and the proposed United Nations decade for women, as they had also done in the case of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, by sacrificing the common interest to their feelings of hatred and their taste of violence. At the Committee's preceding meeting, the representative of the United Arab Emirates had again welcomed those actions.

60. In that connexion, he noted that at the 2400 plenary meeting on 10 November 1975 there had been a historical debate in the General Assembly on the question of zionism and the majority had won a Pyrrhic victory. His Government had, however, disdainfully rejected the infamous resolution adopted by the General Assembly. It was grateful to all the countries which had refused to be associated with that resolution and had fought against it out of indignation and disgust. The spiritual and intellectual forces of the world, including Andrei Sakharov in the Soviet Union, had spoken out against that apparent triumph of the forces of evil, condemning it as a pitiful and unworthy excess. Consequently, it was now a badge of shame for any State to be included in the list of countries which voted in favour of that resolution. Zionism was the expression of Jewish permanence and of Jewish faith in the Jewish nation and its religious and historical traditions. Thus, an attack against zionism was not only an attack against the State of Israel as a State and an anti-Semitic attack of the most infamous kind, but also an attack against Judaism, which was one of the oldest religions in the world and which had given birth to Christianity and Islam. For that reason, churches of all faiths and Christian religious thinkers had protested vehemently against General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX).

61. Under Hitlerian nazism, his generation had experienced a tragedy of horrible proportions which had involved all thinking men in a fundamental debate of the sanctity of the human person. In order to save the conscience of mankind, the Jewish people had to be reborn from their ashes. Thus, a young, proud and vigorous Jewish nation had been born in the land of Israel. That miraculous event was now part of the annals of history and nothing could ever erase it. In that connexion, he noted that one of the most renowned Catholic philosophers, Jacques Maritain, had said he thought that, once the Jewish people had again set foot on the land God had given them, nothing could ever take it away from them again. The Arab extremists, nevertheless, wanted the elimination of zionism and the destruction of Israel.

62. Surprisingly, however, of all the States of the world, it had been the Arab States which had expressed the most effective recognition of the fundamental relationship between the Jewish people and the land of Israel by forcing more than 800,000 Jews to leave the countries of the Arab world. Of those Jews, 600,000 had chosen to emigrate to Israel. The same number of Palestinian Arabs had left their homes during the wars of 1948 and 1967, thus bringing about a true exchange of population. The Arab States had been fully aware that those 600,000 Jews were going to Israel. Moreover, the arrival of those Jews in Israel was not

the kind of population movement which could go unnoticed. The Arab world had thus recognized that the natural refuge for Jews was Israel.

63. The struggle against zionism went beyond the framework of the Middle East conflict and could be characterized as anti-Semitism because it went to the very roots of the Jewish religion and traditions, which were centuries old. The exploitation of the United Nations by an anti-Semitic and reactionary manoeuvre designed to eliminate zionism was a universal scandal. Moreover, the use of such a manoeuvre to deny the existence of a Member State of the United Nations was a flagrant violation of Article 2 of the Charter. It was therefore the duty of Member States of the United Nations to follow Israel's example in invoking the Charter in opposition to that manoeuvre.

64. He appealed to the Members of the United Nations which practised political democracy and respected human rights to assume responsibility for the wrong which had

been committed at the Mexico City Conference and to right it while there was still time. In the meantime, his delegation would express, in its votes, its opposition to the wrong which had been committed at the Mexico Conference and it reserved the right to speak later in the discussion on the text of the draft resolutions before the Committee.

65. Mr. AL-HUSSAMY (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement just made by the representative of Israel was not the first in which Israel has attacked a United Nations resolution as being infamous. The United Nations must face up to the consequences of what Israel had stated and continue to adopt resolutions condemning zionism. With regard to the assertion that God had given Palestine to the Jews, he observed that that myth had already been discussed and rejected.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*

## 2175th meeting

Wednesday, 3 December 1975, at 10.35 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2175

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs. Burnley (United Republic of Cameroon), 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.2193-2200)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that Guinea had become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/C.3/L.2195, A/C.3/L.2196, A/C.3/L.2198 and A/C.3/L.2199 and that Malaysia, Nigeria and Romania had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2195.

2. Miss MARKUS (Libyan Arab Republic) said that during the International Women's Year the international community had shown how much importance it attached to the problems of women in relation to other international problems and to the need for concerted efforts to solve those problems. Her delegation had been one of the first to support General Assembly resolution 3010 (XXVII), which had proclaimed 1975 International Women's Year and stated that all Member States should work for the achievement of the new objectives of ensuring equality between men and women and the full integration of women in the development effort and for the recognition of the importance of the role of women in strengthening international peace and security. In considering the problems of women, the Committee should bear in mind that women made up half of the world's human resources and that their liberation through economic, social and cultural advancement would lead to their political liberation. In that connexion, she noted that under the principles of the Islamic religion and cultural heritage women enjoyed full legal equality with men and the right to own and dispose of property. Thus, according to the Koran and the Islamic Shariah, all men and women had equal rights and duties. Moreover, Islam had been one of the first faiths to give women the right to participate in the national defence of their countries.

3. Since human society required the combined efforts of all citizens, it was quite natural for men and women alike to