

2172nd meeting

Friday, 28 November 1975, at 3.25 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ladislav ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia).

A/C.3/SR.2172

AGENDA ITEM 73

Alternative approaches and ways and means within the United Nations system for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms: report of the Secretary-General (*concluded*) (A/10235, A/C.3/645, A/C.3/L.2189 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.2192)

1. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy), speaking in explanation of vote, said that at the preceding meeting her delegation had voted against the proposal by the United Arab Emirates that draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 should not be put to a vote because it firmly believed that every Member State had the right to present its views and proposals on any matter under discussion and to know the position of other delegations on those views and proposals. Its vote did not, however, mean that it shared the view expressed in the draft resolution that current methods of investigating violations of human rights were inadequate. On the contrary, it believed that those methods had already proved to be fruitful. One of those methods was the one used by the Commission on Human Rights with regard to the situation of human rights in Chile. The results of that method had been useful, although not totally successful, and her delegation hoped that the causes of that lack of success could be eliminated as soon as possible. Another method was that provided for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) concerning procedures for dealing with human rights communications. Definite progress was being made with that method and her delegation was confident that the results achieved would be positive and accepted by a growing number of States.

2. Mr. CHORFI (Morocco) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote on the proposal by the United Arab Emirates. It would, however, have voted in favour of the proposal by Saudi Arabia to postpone the vote on draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 until a later session because many delegations had not been in a position to take a decision on that draft resolution at the current session. Moreover, the Saudi Arabian proposal was in keeping with the provisions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and would in no way have prevented a Member State from exercising its right to have its draft resolution put to a vote. Thus, in view of the Chilean delegation's refusal to withdraw draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189, the Saudi Arabian proposal had been the one which would have been most likely to enable the Committee to avoid a deadlock on certain human rights issues.

3. His delegation considered that when the Committee had voted on the proposal by the United Arab Emirates, it had also expressed an opinion on the text of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 as a whole.

4. Mr. DIEZ (Chile) said that his delegation's votes had been designed to accelerate the study and adoption of a

system of universal application for automatic and obligatory investigation of allegations of violations of human rights. His delegation was of the opinion that such a system was essential and that was why it had submitted draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189.

5. It was not logical for the Committee to show concern for the situation of human rights and to appeal to countries to respect such rights while at the same time agreeing to postpone the study of an effective, generalized and non-political system to protect and promote such rights. His country would continue to pursue its efforts, by all means possible and in accordance with United Nations procedures, to achieve the establishment of a serious, non-political system of universal application for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

6. Mr. GROS (France) said that his delegation had fully supported draft resolution A/C.3/L.2188, which was designed to supplement the studies undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the International Covenants on Human Rights and was thus true to the spirit of the International Conference on Human Rights, held at Teheran in 1968.

7. With regard to draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189, relating to one of the most important and difficult aspects of the efforts carried out by the United Nations to ensure the effective enjoyment of human rights guaranteed by various international instruments, his delegation was of the opinion that, in the preambular part, more emphasis should have been placed on the positive aspects of Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) so that they might subsequently be incorporated into a more effective system for the investigation of allegations of human rights violations. In that connexion, his delegation had some questions about the definition of such a system and considered that operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 might have been a positive step in the direction of establishing adequate machinery for co-operation between the United Nations and Member States if it had included indications of the procedures and mutual guarantees involved in such co-operation. Another weakness of the Chilean draft resolution was that it contained no details relating to definition and the supervision of the mandate to be entrusted to the proposed group of experts. Despite the confidence internationally known personalities enjoyed, it was not customary to give them *carte blanche* in an area relating to the sovereignty of States.

8. His delegation had joined in the appeal to the Government of Chile to restore fundamental freedoms in that country. It was nevertheless in favour of improving procedures within the United Nations system for the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and would therefore have voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 if it had been put to the vote.

9. Mrs. DE BROMLEY (Honduras) said that her delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2188 because for the past decade it had been aware of the need to strengthen the capacity of United Nations bodies to deal with violations of human rights, which unfortunately seemed to be occurring with increasing frequency. Her delegation, would, however, have liked that draft resolution to have been adopted in its original form.

10. Her delegation hoped that the next time the item was considered, it would be given the high priority it deserved. In that connexion, it had welcomed draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 and hoped to have an opportunity to consider the suggestions it contained when the item was considered again at the thirty-second session. Her delegation had voted against the proposal by the United Arab Emirates that that draft resolution should not be put to the vote and regretted that the delegations which were most concerned about the situation of human rights in Chile had not considered it urgently necessary for the Committee to make every effort to find effective means of dealing with such problems in all parts of the world.

11. Mr. PEDERSEN (Denmark) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2188, although it regretted the adoption of the amendment providing for the postponement of the consideration of the item in question until the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. His country attached great importance to that item and regretted that such a basic issue as finding new and better ways of protecting human rights had not been given high priority by the Committee. Moreover, it was of the opinion that the improvements which would be brought about by the entry into force of the International Covenants did not in any way mean that it was less important to strengthen measures for the protection of human rights by, for example, establishing a post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. When it considered that proposal again, the Committee would have to hold lengthy consultations and make provision for more meetings than had been devoted to that matter at the current session.

12. Mr. LARSSON (Sweden) said that, with regard to the proposal by the United Arab Emirates, it could be maintained that it would have been fair to vote on draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189. His delegation had, however, been of the opinion that such a vote would be premature and would have abstained if a vote had been taken on that draft resolution. It had therefore also had to abstain in the vote on the proposal by the United Arab Emirates.

13. Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia) said that if his delegation had been present, it would have abstained in the vote on the proposal by the United Arab Emirates that draft resolution A/C.3/L.2189 should not be put to the vote.

AGENDA ITEM 74

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in relation to detention and imprisonment (concluded)* (A/10260, A/10158 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.3/641, A/C.3/646, A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1)

14. Mrs. KALLIGA (Greece), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1, said that the sponsors of draft resolu-

tion A/C.3/L.2187 had given serious consideration to the modifications proposed by other delegations and by the Secretariat and were now submitting a revised version of that text. The sponsors had not been able to accept the amendment suggested by the representative of the German Democratic Republic at the 2167th meeting concerning the wording of the second preambular paragraph because it had been a mere repetition of the last preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 3218 (XXIX). They had, however, agreed to the suggestion by the representative of the Soviet Union with regard to the sixth preambular paragraph and had simply emphasized the relevant document submitted by WHO to the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/CONF.56/9). Other amendments suggested in connexion with the fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs had not been accepted by the sponsors, who had been of the opinion that reference to the Fifth Congress and other related activities and events was relevant to the draft resolution and should therefore be retained.

15. With regard to the operative part of the draft resolution, the sponsors regretted that they had not been able to accept the addition at the end of operative paragraph 1 of the words "and for defining precisely what is meant by torture", as suggested by the representative of India. Although they agreed that the definition of torture adopted by the Fifth Congress was an important step forward, they did not wish to exclude the possibility that another, more precise definition might be formulated in the future. Operative paragraph 2 had been redrafted in accordance with the suggestions made by the representatives of the Soviet Union, India and other countries, and the sponsors hoped that it could now meet with general support. In operative paragraph 3, the words "and conclusions arrived at" had been added after the words "presented to" and the words "through the Commission for Social Development" had been added before the words "and the Economic and Social Council". The first of those amendments had been suggested by the representative of India and the second was designed to respect normal procedures. Finally, in operative paragraph 4, the word "urgent" had been replaced by the word "further", in accordance with the views expressed by certain delegations. She said that Cyprus had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

16. Mr. GRAEFRATH (German Democratic Republic) said that his delegation appreciated the efforts the sponsors had made to improve the text of the draft resolution, but thought that further improvements were necessary. Thus, in the tenth preambular paragraph, it requested the sponsors to consider the possibility of replacing the words "international action is" by the words "efforts are" because the words "international action" usually referred to action by the Security Council. In operative paragraph 2, the words "and all necessary steps for" were rather vague. His delegation therefore suggested that they should be replaced by the words "with a view to".

17. Mr. SRINIVASAN (India) said that he also wished to suggest some additional amendments designed to improve the text of the draft resolution. Although the first amendment suggested by the representative of the German Democratic Republic would improve the tenth preambular paragraph, his delegation would prefer the deletion of that

* Resumed from the 2167th meeting.

preambular paragraph. With regard to operative paragraph 1, it was of the opinion that attention should be drawn to article 1 of the Declaration adopted by the Fifth Congress which defined torture, and that that paragraph should refer specifically to the work carried out by the Congress with a view to defining that practice. Lastly, he said that his delegation was still of the opinion that operative paragraph 4 did not add anything to the draft resolution and therefore suggested that it should be deleted.

18. Mr. FERNANDEZ ESCALANTE (Argentina), referring to operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1, drew attention to the fact that the *Study of the Right of Everyone to be Free from Arbitrary Arrest, Detention and Exile*¹ was out of print and therefore could not serve as a basis for the formulation of a body of principles for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment.

19. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the meeting should be suspended so that the sponsors could hold consultations on the amendments suggested by various delegations.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

20. Mr. SPEEKENBRINK (Netherlands), referring to the results of the consultations held by the sponsors of the draft resolution, said that in accordance with the suggestion concerning the tenth preambular paragraph made by the representative of the German Democratic Republic, the sponsors had agreed to replace the words "international action" by the words "international efforts" in order to avoid using the language of the Charter. With regard to the suggestion by the representative of the German Democratic Republic that, in operative paragraph 2, the words "and all necessary steps for" should be replaced by the words "with a view to", the sponsors were of the opinion that it would be necessary to retain the former words because they provided a clear mandate for the Commission on Human Rights, whose task, as provided for in operative paragraph 2, should not be defined too narrowly.

21. The sponsors had not been able to accept the suggestion made by the representative of India concerning operative paragraph 1 because they had not wanted to go as far as saying that the work carried out by the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had led to a final definition of torture. With regard to the suggestion by the representative of India that operative paragraph 4 should be deleted, he noted that that paragraph referred to document A/CONF.56/9 submitted by WHO to the Fifth Congress. In paragraph 78 of that report, the question had been raised of the possibility of further studies of problems arising from discussions at the Fifth Congress. The sponsors were of the opinion that such studies should be carried out and therefore considered it necessary to retain operative paragraph 4.

22. With regard to the question raised by the representative of Argentina concerning operative paragraph 2, he

said that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had prepared the draft principles on freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention contained in the *Study of the Right of Everyone to be Free from Arbitrary Arrest, Detention and Exile*, to which reference had been made in the fifth preambular paragraph and paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 3218 (XXIX). Thus, that study was quite well known in the United Nations and delegations had certainly had an opportunity to consider it.

23. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, said that the use of the word "all" in connexion with the necessary steps to be taken by the Commission on Human Rights was hardly necessary since it would be practically impossible for the Commission to take all necessary steps. His delegation therefore suggested that the word "all" should be deleted. With regard to paragraph 1 of the report by the Secretary-General (A/C.3/646) concerning the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187, which stated that the implementation of operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution would require the Secretariat to prepare the necessary background documentation, including a preliminary draft to a code of conduct for law enforcement officials, he was of the opinion that it was the task of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, and not the task of the Secretariat, to prepare such a draft code. In the light of that opinion, his delegation considered that draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1 would not involve any financial implications and would not require the assistance of specialists in the field of law enforcement.

24. Mr. MUELLER (Chief, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Section, Social Development Division), referring to document A/C.3/646, drew the attention of the representative of the Soviet Union to the fact that the programme budget contained no allocation for the preliminary draft to be submitted by the Secretariat to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its June 1976 session. The preparation of the pre-session documentation and of the draft would require the assistance of a specialist or specialists in the field of law enforcement for a total of four man-months. Of course, the preparation of a code of conduct would be the ultimate responsibility of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control but experience had shown that a draft containing alternative possibilities and the results of extensive research would facilitate that Committee's work. Efforts were being made to obtain extrabudgetary sources for such research work by the Secretariat, but if those efforts did not succeed, it would be necessary to provide additional consultancy funds in the amount of \$8,000.

25. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the representative of the Social Development Division for the explanation he had provided. His delegation was, however, of the opinion that it would be advisable for the Secretariat unit concerned to try to prepare the preliminary draft of a code of conduct as part of its routine activities and by using the staff now at its disposal. In that way, the assistance of a specialist or specialists in the field of law enforcement would not be required.

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. 65.XIV.2.

26. Mr. SPEEKENBRINK (Netherlands) said that, with regard to the suggestion made by the Soviet Union concerning operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the sponsors could agree to replace the word "all" by the word "any".

27. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1, as amended, without a vote.

It was so decided.

28. Mrs. MAYMI (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, recalled that Secretary of State Kissinger, in his address before the General Assembly at the 2355th plenary meeting on 22 September 1975, had urged the Assembly to adopt the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and had further suggested that a group of experts be appointed by the Secretary-General to study the nature and extent of torture in the contemporary world and to report back at the following session of the General Assembly. Her delegation welcomed the adoption of the Declaration, which underlined the gravity of the problem of torture in the world and demonstrated the collective determination of the United Nations to do something about it. It also reinforced the complete and unconditional prohibition against torture set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and left no possible loophole through which government officials responsible for torture could escape condemnation by the international community.

29. Her delegation had hoped that the Committee, having set forth the relevant principles, might decide upon measures for their implementation. Since time was too short to submit a proposal to that end, her delegation intended to pursue the matter again in the General Assembly and perhaps in other human rights forums. It wholeheartedly supported draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1, and particularly noted the request addressed to the Commission on Human Rights in operative paragraph 2. It hoped that during the following year the work called for by the resolution would proceed and also that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities would continue to make its important contribution. With such progress, the thirty-first session of the General Assembly would be in a better position to decide upon further measures to combat the practice of torture.

30. Dr. MALAFATOPOULOS (World Health Organization) noted that draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1 referred in its preamble to document A/CONF.56/9, which had been submitted by WHO to the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. WHO had taken careful note of the comments made by several representatives on its contribution. The WHO paper represented an approach to the problem guided by past decisions of the WHO Executive Board and made some suggestions for the development of a health charter on the basis of the Standard Minimum

Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.² The Director-General of WHO would submit the request contained in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution to the Executive Board meeting in January 1976 for its consideration and action.

31. Mrs. MASSON (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her delegation considered that the adoption of the Declaration was a first step towards the realization of the efforts begun at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The fact that an item on the elimination of torture had been placed on the agenda of the current session showed that the determination of the international community had not lessened, but it also showed that the problem had not diminished in scope. The Declaration was a valuable instrument because it provided States with a code of conduct for implementing mechanisms for combating torture. However, it was essential that the Declaration should be supported by the establishment of the appropriate mechanisms at the international level. It was for that reason that her delegation had sponsored draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1, which called for concerted action by all the United Nations bodies concerned. Her delegation was convinced of the need to implement strict international norms so that it would be possible to investigate cases of torture and to prohibit the practice of torture, and it considered that it was important to widen the field of application of the draft principles on freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention and of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners with a view to the adoption of a code for the protection of all persons subjected to any form of detention or imprisonment. She recalled that at the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders her delegation had suggested that articles 24 to 27 of the draft principles should be incorporated in chapter II of the Standard Minimum Rules so as to ensure detained persons greater protection against torture, and also that an additional rule should be drafted aimed at including a study of the Standard Minimum Rules in the training of the staff of penitentiary institutions. Her delegation hoped that the Commission on Human Rights would take those proposals into account. It also considered that the Standard Minimum Rules should apply to all persons, whether or not legal proceedings had been instituted against them. It would continue to support all constructive proposals aimed at the elimination of torture.

32. Mr. KOLBASIN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.3/L.2187/Rev.1, taking into account the fact that its adoption would not have any financial implications.

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)*

* Resumed from the 2170th meeting.

² *First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders: report by the Secretariat* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 1956.IV.4), annex I.A.

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)

33. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) suggested that the time-limit for the submission of draft resolutions in connexion with items 75 and 76 should be extended to 6 p.m. on Monday, 1 December.

It was so decided.

34. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the list of speakers on items 75 and 76 should be closed at 6 p.m. that day.

It was so decided.

35. Mrs. MARINKEVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic actively supported International Women's Year in recognition of the great importance of the role of women in the contemporary world and of their increasing contribution in the struggle to ensure universal peace and security and to confirm the principles of peaceful coexistence and co-operation on a basis of equality in relations between States with different social systems.

36. At the beginning of 1975 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR had appointed a republican Commission for the observance of International Women's Year headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR, N. L. Snezhkovaya. The Commission, in co-operation with State and public organizations, had done a great deal of work in implementing plans and programmes for International Women's year. Various public organizations of the Byelorussian SSR had taken part in many events which had been held in the Soviet Union in connexion with the Year. In the Byelorussian SSR there had been a series of conferences and seminars at which important questions of the social and labour activities of women and their participation in the international peace movement had been discussed. The mass media had broadly publicized the themes of International Women's Year and the achievements of socialism in providing women with equality in political, economic and cultural life.

37. It had become indisputable that the world's first socialist State had set an example in emancipating women and ensuring their full equality of rights. The Leninist principle of the broad enlistment of women in the management of the State and in all the activities of society was being consistently implemented in the Byelorussian SSR. The Soviet State displayed constant concern in

ensuring for women the fullest opportunities and optimum conditions for the realization of their rights and for carrying out activities in all spheres of economic, political and social life. Byelorussian women held responsible posts in the State apparatus, in the management of the economy and culture and in trade unions and other mass organizations of the Republic. Currently, 37 per cent of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR were women, and 47 per cent of the members of the local Soviets of Working People's Deputies were women. In 1973, 53 per cent of all the workers and officials in the Republic were women. Women in the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had the same opportunities as men to receive all-round education, including higher and specialized education and vocational training. As a result, women were being employed increasingly in highly qualified and specialized occupations. Participation in social and productive labour ensured women economic independence and contributed to their cultural development and professional growth and to their civil and political maturity. The scientific and technological revolution had opened up new opportunities for women in sectors with a high degree of mechanization and automatization of production such as electrotechnology, instrument-making and electronics. The trade unions paid great attention to increasing the skills of women and meeting their needs. In the Byelorussian SSR, consistent work was being done to enable women to combine the roles of worker and mother in the best possible way. The Byelorussian SSR had a broad network of specialized medical institutions for women and children, and also of schools and other institutions for children designed to assist families in educating their children.

38. In 1975, the Byelorussian people had celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the victory over fascism in the Second World War. The Byelorussian people, and women in particular, had paid a heavy price for that victory. An international women's meeting devoted to the theme of women of the world in the struggle against fascism and for a lasting and just peace in the world had been held in August 1975 at Minsk, and had been attended by representatives from 27 countries with different social and economic systems. Many of the participants had pointed out that women had made a considerable contribution in the struggle against fascism during the Second World War. Noting the importance of International Women's Year for combining the efforts of States and the public in attaining the goals of equality, development and peace, the participants had declared their support for the results of the work of the World Conference of the International Women's Year.

39. The World Congress for the International Women's Year, held at Berlin in October 1975, had been one of the most representative forums in the history of the women's movement. The Byelorussian SSR fully supported the demand of the participants of the Congress that women everywhere be allowed to develop fully their talent and capacity. It also agreed that liberation of women could only be the fruit of national and social liberation and that peace, democracy, national independence and social progress must triumph throughout the world.

40. A delegation from the Byelorussian SSR had also participated in the World Conference of the International

* Resumed from the 2170th meeting.

Women's Year and it attached particular importance to the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace (see E/5725, chap. I). She drew attention to the principles contained in paragraphs 1, 15 and 25 of that text. Her delegation considered that the principles proclaimed in the Declaration should form the basis of the policy of Governments in achieving the aims of International Women's Year: equality, development and peace. With regard to the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (*ibid.*, chap. II), her delegation fully supported the view expressed in paragraph 23 that sustained international co-operation based on peace, justice and equity for all was an essential element for securing the protection of human rights and full equality between men and women. The Conference had also adopted a number of important resolutions relating to the situations in Chile, Palestine and southern Africa.

41. The Byelorussian SSR attached great importance to the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 2263 (XXII)) and also to other documents of the United Nations and specialized agencies aimed at achieving the full equality of women in all spheres of life. At the same time it considered that the various organs of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, especially such bodies as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights, the ILO and UNESCO, should make a greater contribution towards the realization of the aims of International Women's Year. As a participant in the work of those bodies, the Byelorussian SSR would make all possible efforts to confirm the principle of equal rights for women and to eliminate discrimination so as to secure the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights and the international conventions relating to women. The documents which were being discussed in the Committee and the draft resolutions it would adopt would be important factors in stimulating the efforts of Governments and of world public opinion to achieve the lofty aims of International Women's Year and create optimum conditions for the equal participation of the women of all countries in the struggle for a peaceful future and the social progress of peoples.

42. Miss PRODJOLALITO (Indonesia) noted that women, who made up half the world's population, were still subjected to considerable discrimination despite various United Nations instruments adopted since 1945, and that the majority of women were illiterate, led a life of misery, and were crushed by constant childbearing, poverty, overwork and ill health. That unfortunate situation prevailed mainly in the developing countries, and required immediate national and international action.

43. Her delegation was particularly impressed by the fact that at the Mexico Conference it has been generally agreed that while national laws had increasingly recognized women's rights and the principle of equality, progress towards equality in practice had been very slow in such vital areas as education, employment and participation in government decision-making. It was therefore essential to impress upon Governments and groups of all kinds the need to incorporate the recommendations of the World Plan of Action, especially those relating to economic development,

into their national policies and programmes. However, since the main obstacle, in her delegation's view, to the full participation of women in the development process lay in deep-rooted ancient traditions and attitudes, there could be no fixed pattern for the implementation of the Plan of Action, which would necessarily vary from country to country according to the pace of socio-economic development. Each Government should adopt its own long-term national programme based on the Plan of Action, and should ensure the participation, *inter alia*, of schools, voluntary associations and, in particular, the mass media, which were of crucial importance in reshaping attitudes about the role of men and women in society.

44. Referring to the action taken in her country to improve the status of women, she noted that 22 December 1974 had been officially declared as the beginning of International Women's Year in Indonesia, and that a National Committee for the International Women's Year, comprising government officials and members of non-governmental women's organizations and youth associations, had been established. That Committee had set itself the task of defining programmes based on the World Plan of Action, with priority being given to the elimination of illiteracy among women. Moreover, in order to create awareness of the aims of the Plan of Action among women at all levels, the Indonesian National Commission on the Status of Women had translated it into the Indonesian national language. Furthermore, at a meeting of women representing the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, held at Manila in June 1975, a decision had been taken to recommend the establishment of a permanent committee on women's participation in development within the structure of ASEAN. In that connexion, she noted that a seminar on the integration of women in development would be held during a forthcoming conference of the ASEAN countries.

45. She stressed the importance of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the implementation of the World Plan of Action, and was pleased to note the action already taken in that connexion, as described in the Secretary-General's report (A/10263). One of the obstacles to the improvement of the status of women was a lack of up-to-date research concerning the integration of women in development, especially in rural areas. Her delegation therefore proposed that greater emphasis should be placed on up-to-date descriptive, as well as numerical, analysis of the participation of women, as compared with men, in the various development areas.

46. In conclusion, she expressed her delegation's support for the important role which the UNDP resident representatives were called upon to play, as described in paragraph 101 of the Secretary-General's report, in the implementation of the World Plan of Action.

47. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) expressed his delegation's conviction that the International Women's Year had opened up new possibilities for achieving, on a global basis, the promotion of equality between men and women, the full integration of women in the total development effort, and the recognition of women's increasing contribution to the development of friendly relations and co-operation among States and to the strengthening of world peace. As one of

the sponsors of the text subsequently adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 3010 (XXVII), which proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year, his delegation had been motivated by the belief that such a year would make it possible to promote equality between men and women, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to emphasize the rights and responsibilities of women in the social, economic, cultural and political fields, and to focus attention on the contributions which women could and should make to the strengthening of world peace. Those goals had been embodied in the World Plan of Action, which had been very well received in his country, especially the recommendations dealing with equal employment opportunities for women, fairer systems of remuneration and true social equality.

48. As in most, but not all, economically advanced countries, the principles laid down in the Plan of Action were already being implemented in Austria. However, there was a need to eliminate prejudices which still stood in the way of full equality of men and women, and with that end in view, the Austrian Government was organizing a number of national programmes and activities in connexion with International Women's Year. In particular, following an inauguration ceremony in January 1975—at which the Austrian President, the Federal Chancellor and one of the three women members of the Austrian Government, the Minister for Science and Research, had underlined the importance of International Women's Year—Austrian governmental and non-governmental agencies, strongly supported by the mass media, had initiated promotion campaigns to enhance public awareness and understanding of the issues involved. Special consideration had been given to promoting more active participation of women in all branches of employment and public life; mass rallies had been held at the provincial and district levels to stimulate interest among the rural population; and special health programmes involving preventive treatment and child care and the further development of family planning services had been established. In that connexion, he noted that his Government had contributed \$US 12,000 to the Voluntary Fund for the International Women's Year.

49. He referred to the important legislative measures enacted in his country to reform the family and matrimonial régimes on the basis of the principles of the equality of the sexes and the partnership of husband and wife. As a result of those measures, husband and wife were regarded as equals in their personal rights and duties, and were expected to arrange their marriage by showing mutual understanding, with due regard for each other and for the well-being of their children. Both partners were also obliged to contribute to the maintenance of the family in accordance with their respective possibilities. The reform programme would be continued with further legislation on divorce, including the financial implications of divorce for former spouses.

50. Despite the measures already taken, much remained to be done to ensure the full equality and integration of women in society. It was a fact that women having a level of education equal to that of men still did not attain the same positions in their professional careers, and that manual skills typical for women were not valued equally with heavy labour done by vocationally unqualified men.

However, the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs was examining individual collective agreements to determine which were not fully consistent with the principles laid down in the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value,³ which had been ratified by Austria as early as 1951.

51. His delegation fully realized that each country had to find its own way of ensuring equality for women in all aspects of life, and that the problems facing the industrial nations were not necessarily the same as those confronting the developing countries. However, International Women's Year provided ample opportunities for exchanging views, adopting international measures to break down remaining social barriers against women, and establishing guidelines for ensuring genuine equality between men and women at the national and international levels.

52. Mr. COMMENAY (France) recalled the words of Mme Françoise Giroud, the French Secretary of State responsible for matters relating to the status of women, at the Mexico Conference, to the effect that women would always be victimized so long as their first priority was not to achieve a speedy narrowing of the gap between their status in society and that of men and the systematic destruction of the obstacles which hindered the achievement of that goal. She had added that the International Women's Year would become meaningless if it was used for national or international political purposes, however urgent, respectable or noble those purposes might be. Those words reflected perfectly the position of his delegation concerning International Women's Year in particular and the status of women in general.

53. The promotion of the status of women was one of the important tasks which mankind must face during the last quarter of the twentieth century. In view of the universality of the problem, despite its specific aspects in each region or country, it was natural and desirable that the United Nations should devote special attention to it. His delegation, in particular, had supported the idea of an International Women's Year and a World Conference, and had been one of the sponsors of the text later adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 3277 (XXIX) establishing the Consultative Committee for the Mexico Conference. That Conference had marked a significant stage in the evolution of the status of women. In his delegation's view, the primary, if not exclusive, purpose of the Mexico Conference should have been the discussion of problems relating specifically to women, and especially the gap between the status of men and women in each society.

54. Admittedly, problems such as the maintenance of peace, the quest for a new international economic order, disarmament, racism or colonialism affected the life of women, but those were global problems confronting society as a whole, discussed within appropriate United Nations bodies, and on which each Member State defended its own point of view. However, the Mexico Conference had taken up those major issues, and rekindled old disputes which diverted its attention from its primary purpose of improving the status of women. As a result, in order to dissociate

³ International Labour Organisation, *Conventions and Recommendations, 1919-1966* (Geneva, 1966), Convention No. 100, p. 795.

itself from the course generally taken by the work of the Conference and to reaffirm its well-known positions on the political and economic problems dealt with by the Organization, his delegation had abstained in the vote on the so-called Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace. On the other hand, his delegation had supported the Plan of Action, which it regarded as a means of achieving progress, by concrete measures, in improving the status of women. In connexion with the objectives to be achieved by 1980, as described in paragraph 46 of the Plan, his delegation welcomed the emphasis placed on the following three fields of action: equality of civil, political and social rights; equality of access to education at all levels; and family planning measures, which, in view of the diversity of situations, must be dealt with pragmatically.

55. He expressed his delegation's interest in the project for an international research and training institute for the advancement of women (see A/10340), but pointed out that if such an institute was to be useful, its objectives and structure must be carefully studied in a pragmatic spirit. That was why his delegation welcomed the recommendation of the Conference in its resolution 26 (see E/5725, chap. III) to establish a group of experts to carry out such a study.

56. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's hope that the text which would emerge from the Committee's discussion of items 75 and 76 would contain no polemical overtones and revive no unfortunate controversies.

57. Mrs. OGATA (Japan) said that in Japan International Women's Year had attracted more interest and attention from the Government, non-governmental organizations, the mass media and the average man and woman than any similar observance by the United Nations in the past. It was indeed appropriate that the objectives of the Year should be development, equality and peace, because without development even the first steps to improve the lot of women could not be undertaken, without peace no economic and social development could be undertaken, and without equality the fruits of development and peace could not be shared justly between the sexes. Equality had in fact been the keynote of the Year in her country. Japanese men and women were guaranteed equality in the civil and political fields, and had equal access to education. However, owing to the deep-seated belief that a woman's place was in the home, women continued to suffer considerable disadvantages in employment, and did not participate fully as equal partners in policy formulation and decision-making at the community and government levels.

58. International Women's Year had led Japanese women to reassess their status from the points of view of job and role differentiation and of the issue of protection and equality. Public attention had been drawn to job discrimination, and efforts were under way to eliminate it, starting with the government sector. The question of role differentiation had also been at the centre of public debate, and the mass media had been admonished to rectify their stereotyped presentation of women as child-bearers and housekeepers, and men as bread winners and decision-makers. The issue of protection and equality was complicated by the fact that labour laws were based on the idea of the

weaker sex. However, women would have to decide how many of their privileges—special leave, prohibition of heavy work or night shifts, and so on—they would be prepared to forego in order to achieve equality.

59. Referring to the action taken in her country in connexion with the Year, she noted the initiatives taken by various women's groups, numerous symposia, study sessions and a national conference of 41 non-governmental women's organizations, which had met to consider whether the promises made by the Government to improve the status of women would be carried out. Moreover, at the government level interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery had been set up, in accordance with the World Plan of Action, to interpret programmes concerning women in the various administrative agencies and to serve as the central planning and executing organ of the Government for the promotion of the status of women. In that connexion, she noted that her Government had recently sponsored a Japanese Women's Conference, and was to publish a Japanese translation of the World Plan of Action and the Declaration of Mexico, which would serve as guidelines for the action of women's organizations during the coming Decade for Women. The Year had also been observed by the Japanese Parliament, which, to commemorate its observance, had adopted a Child Care Bill which allowed women teachers and hospital nurses in public schools and institutions to take child care leave of up to one year.

60. Referring to the international aspects of the Year, she noted that a world-wide education programme for women, under United Nations auspices, would go far towards enabling women to play an integral part in the development of their countries. She expressed the hope that the global effort carried out by the United Nations to promote the status of women would be as actively supported in the future as it had been during the current year, and welcomed the convening of another Conference at the midpoint of the Decade. She insisted, however, that the second conference should be devoted primarily to the review and appraisal of the World Plan of Action, to the assessment of the results of short-term programmes and to considering whether any long-term programmes required remonitoring. In that connexion, she welcomed the projected establishment of an international research and training institute for the advancement of women, which would meet the immediate need for the collection of information to serve as the basis for the mid-term review and for the formulation of programmes and the dissemination of information in the years to come. In establishing the institute, however, very careful and thorough planning was necessary in order to avoid duplication and to ensure co-ordination with other United Nations bodies. Her delegation looked forward to the report of the group of experts that would draw up the terms of reference of the institute, and in particular to the linking of the institute with the newly-established United Nations University, since that would reinforce the network of United Nations research organs.

61. In conclusion, she said that her delegation reserved the right to speak at a later stage on the various draft resolutions which the Committee would have before it on the items under consideration.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.