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President: Mr. Ismat T. KITTANI (Iraq).

AGENDA ITEM 30

International Year of Disabled Persons: report of the Secretary-General (*continued*)

REPORT OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE (A/36/764)

1. Ms. SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic): Persons with impaired health require a particular degree of support and assistance from the community so as to be able to cope with the requirements of everyday life. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic gave whole-hearted approval to General Assembly resolution 31/123 proclaiming 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. We consider that resolution an opportunity to focus broad attention on that group of persons so as to promote the initiation and implementation of appropriate action.

2. For the preparation and observance of the Year a national committee was established in the German Democratic Republic. It is headed by the Minister of Health and composed of representatives of public institutions, for instance, those concerned with education, vocational training, construction and transport, as well as representatives of the association of the blind and partially sighted, the association of the deaf and of persons with impaired hearing and sports associations of physically handicapped persons. Furthermore, representatives of the German Democratic Republic Red Cross, the medical-scientific society for rehabilitation, the trade unions, the home mission and the welfare organization of the Evangelical Church are members of the Committee.

3. The programme of work of the Committee includes the full use of all opportunities provided by socialist society to integrate disabled persons fully into the work process and into public life; enhancing public awareness and co-operation to further the participation of and equalization of opportunities for disabled people in all spheres of life by increased publicity on education and rehabilitation opportunities for disabled children, young people and adults; and action aimed at preventing or reducing the occurrence of factors which impair the health and efficiency of man and limit his human potentialities.

4. The basic premise embodied in the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, namely that "Disabled persons, whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, have the same fundamen-

tal rights as their fellow-citizens of the same age, which implies first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life, as normal and full as possible" [resolution 3447 (XXX)] has become the basis of the approach to disability in the German Democratic Republic.

5. The comprehensive opportunities which the socialist State offers all citizens for health care or for the restoration of their health and efficiency, as well as for education and vocational training, are also available to disabled persons and are adapted to their specific needs and the degree of their disability.

6. The laws and regulations for the required medical, pedagogical, vocational and social measures provide a secure basis for that programme. A prerequisite for the effectiveness of such action is the registration of all persons who need special care. This is guaranteed in the German Democratic Republic by a general duty of registration. The data so obtained are treated with discretion so that disabled persons are not put at a disadvantage by such measures. The registration allows for an early introduction of the necessary treatment and care, thus increasing the chances of mitigating or improving existing impairments or handicaps or at least preserving the remaining capacities and functions. The full use of educational opportunities must be seen as an important element in facilitating the social adjustment or readjustment of handicapped children.

7. Without financially burdening their parents, disabled children are brought up and educated in specialized facilities. Such institutions are equipped with the technical aids required for pre-school and school children, such as devices needed for the instruction of the deaf and persons with impaired hearing, visual aids and special textbooks for partially sighted and blind children, equipment to facilitate mobility for the physically handicapped, and so on.

8. These specialized institutions are staffed with special educators who, within the framework of their pedagogical training at institutes of higher or technical education, have acquired specialized knowledge in the education and training of disabled children. Care for the rehabilitation of children with severe—that is, multiple—handicaps is entrusted to graduate rehabilitation instructors.

9. The employment of disabled persons is secured in the German Democratic Republic by manifold provisions. Disabled persons with an adequate background and who are fit for work are employed by all enterprises and institutions, providing adequate conditions. Every enterprise has to provide a certain number of so-called sheltered workplaces, which are constantly supervised by a State rehabilitation commission and which, according to statutory requirements and their equipment with technical aids, are primarily destined for persons with disabilities.

10. Disabled school graduates in our country can, for instance, acquire a skilled worker certificate. An indi-

vidually compiled training programme enables them to make optimum use of their skills and capacities. We believe that this specific possibility helps greatly to develop the self-reliance, well-being and involvement of disabled persons in normal working and living conditions.

11. Persons with physical handicaps but a normal mental development can be directly trained for suitable careers at rehabilitation centres. Specialized educational or re-educational opportunities are available for those adults who at a certain time of their life have suffered a major impairment of their health and capacities. In the period of rehabilitation and vocational training for a new career the disabled person receives social security benefits so that hardships for himself and his family are prevented.

12. Within the framework of the German Democratic Republic's comprehensive housing programme an increasing number of flats are specifically adapted to the needs of disabled persons and to give wheelchair users maximum mobility in their domestic sphere. Families with disabled children are entitled to especially generous treatment under the current housing scheme. The purpose is to guarantee disabled children the optimum development and to ease the life of their families. If required, the rents of such flats are subsidized.

13. Much emphasis is laid on sports for disabled persons. Sports not only provide them with the possibility of competing with each other but are also a source of pleasure. The disabled themselves have devised a number of games which they can play despite physical handicaps. Basketball, for instance, is very popular among wheelchair users.

14. All the measures quoted here as examples are part of a new approach to disability in the German Democratic Republic. Under socialism the care of disabled persons and their integration in community life has ceased to be only a matter of charity by individuals and has become the concern of the entire society.

15. We also attach major importance to informing the public about the life and problems of disabled persons. For instance, films show specific aspects of rehabilitation. Films entitled "Humanity under examination", "Life in a wheelchair", "Diagnosis: brain-damaged" and "Obligation" are meant to help develop and deepen contacts and relationships between healthy and disabled persons.

16. To assist rehabilitation work special information materials have been published on various categories of disabilities. They contain advice on care and treatment and the promotion of physical and mental capacities, and provide career guidance.

17. Recently an exhibition entitled "Understanding, help and partnership" was held in Berlin. It gave an impressive picture of rehabilitation work in the German Democratic Republic and of related problems. Attention was focused, above all, on the elimination of architectural barriers in housing, roads and traffic. In addition, the press, radio and television have served the International Year of Disabled Persons by special publications and broadcasts.

18. While my country guarantees to all disabled persons comprehensive health protection and social security—which will be further improved in the future—everything is done to prevent disability wherever possible.

19. As a special activity in preparation for the International Year of Disabled Persons, physicians of various disciplines in the German Democratic Republic compiled a book containing a supervisory programme in relation to the major diseases which involve dangers of permanent impairment of health. It is a reference book which will enable every physician to recognize early deviations from the normal state of health, make a diagnosis and begin treatment as soon as the first symptoms become evident. This will help to reduce the dangers of severe impairment of health that could lead to permanent disabilities.

20. As the German Democratic Republic's Minister of Health and Chairman of the National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons has stated "All our activities and programmes designed to improve the health of people and nations will only remain on paper filling the drawers if we do not make our contribution to the maintenance of peace, using all our political and moral authority." Their humanist mission confers upon all physicians and members of the public health service the obligation to ban any dangers threatening human life.

21. The famous physician Rudolf Virchow has pointed repeatedly to the fact that physicians, being apostles of peace, should at all times demand that "statesmen should be interested in health control for their people rather than in the question when to attack and whom to kill first"

22. As scientific investigations clearly show, the number of cripples and of neurotic and nervous cases increases considerably as a consequence of armed conflict. Such diseases bring about severe changes of the human personality which represent major impairments. Although medical science has succeeded in developing new methods of treatment which make it possible to preserve or restore human health, their application is restricted in many countries by the ever-growing expenditures on armaments. Such huge spending is accompanied by cuts in funds for medical and social care. In his lecture at Charity Hospital in Berlin, the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Mahler, pointed to the fact that about 80 per cent of the military expenditures of all countries put together would suffice within the next two decades to eliminate starvation, improve the morbidity situation, which results from the colonial heritage, and reduce the extremely high rate of maternal and infantile mortality in some countries.

23. It is sad that today we still have to say that a very small portion of the money spent on armament would be sufficient to bring the international level of protection against infection, which is basically necessary for health, to the level reached by leading countries in that field, among them the German Democratic Republic.

24. Physicians are the guardians of human life. Hence it should be their duty to combat anything that represents a threat to it, including war. Their endeavours to maintain and strengthen peace are part of the peace movement in all countries.

25. The German Democratic Republic has made maximum efforts to ensure complete recognition of the rights of disabled persons, as embodied in the relevant Declaration, and will continue to do so in future. In the first place, my country will act to ensure that the number of disabled persons resulting from war and its consequences does not increase. We believe that the maintenance of peace is the best preventive in this respect.

26. Mr. BYKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): The attention being given here at the United Nations to the plight of disabled persons and the concern which is shown to improve their situation and involve them in the life of the society of which they are part are fully understandable. According to various estimates, there are more than 500 million disabled persons in the world, an impressive number of whom were invalided in the war or disabled at work—those who sacrificed their health in defending their homeland or promoting and enhancing the well-being of its people. They are entitled to live in the same conditions as everyone else.

27. The Soviet Union supports United Nations efforts in this sphere. The purpose of proclaiming the International Year of Disabled Persons and of the elaboration and implementation of a draft world programme of action on this subject is to promote a solution to this humanitarian problem. Of great significance in implementing these steps is the exchange of experience among various countries in tackling the problem of preventing disability, improving the situation of disabled persons and involving them in the life of society.

28. The Soviet Union has plenty of experience to share in this area. The care of disabled persons and the satisfaction of their needs and interests are a condition of the way of life of a socialist society and are consolidated in law by the Constitution of the Soviet Union, which guarantees the right of disabled persons to participate on a basis of equality with other members of society in all spheres of economic, political, social and cultural life. Of particular importance in this connection is the implementation of a comprehensive programme of socio-economic measures to help improve working conditions, industrial safety precautions, the occupational and external environment and the life-style and leisure conditions of the workers.

29. The growth in the material well-being of Soviet citizens and the development of a comprehensive and effective national health system have made it possible to improve considerably the health of the people, reduce the level of injuries and disease, eliminate a number of illnesses which were previously widespread and sharply reduce morbidity and the incidence of disability.

30. In the last four years alone the number of workers on disability leave has been reduced by 8 per cent, including those on leave for work-related injuries and occupational diseases. One of the paramount principles observed in disability prevention is disease prophylaxis, including steps to prevent various kinds of hazards that might lead to disability.

31. As WHO has indicated, our country has the lowest number of work-related injuries. In the Soviet Union it is the constant concern of the Councils of people's deputies, ministries, government departments, trade unions and other public organizations to tackle the problems of the disabled. Questions concerning the improvement of the lot of disabled people in all its aspects are dealt with fully in the context of measures for disability prevention, the medical and socio-professional rehabilitation of disabled persons and their return to participate in working and social life.

32. As a result of various measures which have been taken at all levels, many disabled persons every year recover their capacity to work and are restored to a full and active life. The main form of social security provided to

handicapped citizens is a disability pension. The Soviet system of disability pensions is applicable to all, as can be seen from the fact that, in the first place, pensions are awarded regardless of the cause of the disability—whether it is bad health generally, including chronic illness, a work-related injury, or anything else—and also irrespective of when the disability occurred—whether during working life, before taking up a post, or after employment has ceased. Secondly, the pension is paid not only in the case of complete loss of working capacity but also in the event of partial disability.

33. Pensions are paid by the State without any contributions having to be made by the citizens themselves. One of the great achievements of socialism, in the words of Mr. Brezhnev "is the fact that every Soviet citizen is sure of his future. He knows that society will never leave him in distress, that in the case of sickness he will receive free treatment, in the case of disability he will receive a pension, and his old age will be provided for."

34. In the case of those workers disabled as a result of industrial accident and occupational diseases, pensions are established at a higher level. In the case of the disabled in the first group, they receive 110 per cent of their old-age pension; those in the second group receive the same amount as the age-based pension. In the case of persons disabled in the Second World War, even higher pension levels are established. All persons disabled in that war whose ability to walk has been impaired are provided with free cars, and those with work-related disabilities are provided with motor-driven wheelchairs, either free or with an 80 per cent discount. In our country, every condition has been established to ensure that the disabled person who wishes to do so can, as far as he is able, continue to work, for awareness of the fact that he is necessary and useful to society has an extremely beneficial effect on the handicapped person.

35. Management is obliged to provide the disabled with lighter work of briefer duration or to establish a reduced work week. A broad network of institutions exists in the country providing training and vocational guidance for the disabled. The vocational training of disabled persons from ages 15 to 40 is provided by a group of technical boarding establishments as well as by vocational and technical colleges. While studying, all students have their expenses paid by the State.

36. In the case of disabled persons unable to work in normal conditions, special businesses, workshops and plants are set up. Persons working therein have a shorter working day, lower standards are required of them and they have longer vacations.

37. The successful adaptation of working conditions for the benefit of persons with a partial loss of working capacity has been amply illustrated by the fact that in our country at the present time approximately 80 per cent of the disabled are engaged in socially productive work. In this connection, it should be pointed out that, in addition to their wages, such persons also receive a disability pension.

38. In recent years further steps have been taken in the Soviet Union to improve the material welfare of disabled persons. In our country, rent is only from 3 to 4 per cent of the family income, that is, the lowest rent level in the world, and rates for disabled persons are reduced by a further 50 per cent. Such persons receive community

service benefits as well as benefits in the form of treatment in sanatoriums and health resorts.

39. Under a decree adopted this year by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union on steps to improve further the social security of the population, it is envisaged that the minimum disability pension will be raised. A broad range of measures has been outlined to improve working and living conditions for those who participated in the Second World War. A considerable increase in the number of residential homes for disabled persons is envisaged, and their amenities and social facilities will be improved.

40. The Soviet State's concern for the prevention of disability, the social and professional rehabilitation of disabled persons and the improvement of their living conditions has been further evidenced in the State plan for the economic and social development of the Soviet Union for 1981-1985.

41. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 31/123 proclaiming 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons, various countries and the United Nations have made some very noteworthy efforts to improve the lot of the disabled, as can be seen from the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the Year at the national, regional and international levels [A/36/471 and Add.1-3]. The draft World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which is to be found in the report on the third session of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, held at Vienna from 3 to 12 August 1981 [A/36/471/Add.1], outlines a further series of measures to be taken by all countries, taking into account the level of their social and economic development and their cultural traditions. Generally speaking, this draft programme correctly identifies the main areas for action with regard to disabled persons. At the same time, the draft world programme of action prompts certain observations that the Soviet Union has already brought to the attention of the Secretariat.

42. The practical steps envisaged in the long-term programme for the improvement of the situation of disabled persons should, first and foremost, be pursued at the national level. In this connection, we believe that the programme should place greater emphasis on efforts to involve disabled persons in political and socio-economic life, to create and improve State systems of social welfare, to strengthen the role of trade unions in the protection of labour and to improve factory working conditions.

43. With regard to international measures to improve the situation and social protection of disabled persons, we believe it important that the programme also envisage further efforts on the part of such specialized agencies as the ILO and WHO. We believe that international co-operation within these and other appropriate international organizations should be focused on preparing draft recommendations and standard-setting instruments in this area, as well as on the task of sharing national experience and information on ways of tackling the problems of disabled persons and their medical, social and occupational rehabilitation. Among the measures outlined on the international level, I should like to point out that in June 1982 the ninth World Congress of Cardiologists will be held in Moscow.

44. It is well known that of the total number of disabled persons a considerable proportion are war-disabled, which in itself should serve as a constant reminder of the impor-

tance of the task which is laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". At a time marked by heightened international tensions caused by the actions of the most aggressive circles of imperialism, the most acute and urgent task is to work to reduce tension in the world, to curb the arms race and to remove the threat of war. As was underlined by the twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, there is no more important problem at the present time for any people than that of preserving peace and guaranteeing the primary right of the individual, the right to life.

45. In our opinion, when planning and carrying out activities connected with the International Year of Disabled Persons it is important that close scrutiny be given to the need for further purposeful action, both internationally and nationally, to mobilize efforts for the fulfilment of that major task, and this should also be taken fully into account in the world programme of action.

46. Sir Anthony PARSONS (United Kingdom): My delegation has asked to speak in order to make a statement on behalf of the member States of the European Community. This statement will be supplemented by national statements by delegations of member States, including my own.

47. The European Community and its member States whole-heartedly support and have played a full part in promoting the aims of the Declaration on the Rights of the Disabled and of the International Year of Disabled Persons, that is to say, "full participation and equality". Over recent years, and particularly in 1981, the European Community and the Governments and societies of its member States have given steadily increasing attention to the problems and concerns of the disabled. This is as it should be. We believe that the practical experience which we have gained in developing services for the disabled can make a real contribution to the consideration and implementation of the draft world programme of action. We hope that the General Assembly at its next session will adopt a draft programme which will reflect the further consideration to be given to this question in the coming year.

48. The European Community and its member States consider that the International Year of Disabled Persons has played a useful part in alerting national Governments and the international community to their obligations towards the disabled. We trust that the experience developed during this Year will be used positively as the basis of action on both a national and an international level in the years ahead.

49. We welcome productive co-operation on disability and rehabilitation at an international level. We believe it is particularly important that there should be exchanges of experience and techniques, both bilaterally and through international gatherings such as the World Symposium on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Technical Assistance in Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation, held at Vienna, from 12 to 23 October 1982.

50. We also consider it important that these exchanges should take place not just between Governments, but also between those non-governmental bodies which specialize in this field. We believe such non-governmental bodies, especially those organized by and for disabled people themselves, have a crucial role to play in the development of facilities and opportunities for the disabled, and in

alerting Governments and societies to the needs and aspirations of the disabled. In all Community countries they have played a leading role in activities associated with the Year.

51. The European Community and its member States support all the objectives of the International Year, as set out in resolution 31/123. I draw attention to three in particular, namely, the objectives of: first, promoting effective measures for the prevention of disability and for the rehabilitation of disabled persons; secondly, facilitating the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life; and, thirdly, educating and informing the public of the right of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to the life of the community in all its aspects.

52. In the long term, prevention of disability is undoubtedly the most important problem to be tackled. This applies both to developed countries, such as the member States of the European Community, where, for example, the prevention of traffic accidents is a serious concern, and, perhaps with equal force, to developing countries, and notably to rural populations and underprivileged population groups, where disability raises particularly serious problems in daily life. The European Community and its member States fully support the activities in this field undertaken by WHO and UNICEF.

53. Preventive measures are, as I have pointed out, of paramount importance. But work in this field should not result in the slackening of efforts to help those already disabled. Regardless of how high a priority is given to preventive measures, it has to be accepted by Governments and societies as a natural and normal thing that there will always be larger or smaller groups of disabled persons in their countries and that in our planning we must pay regard to and respect the interests of those groups. We must do so in the first place for humanitarian reasons, and also because the rehabilitation of those with physical disabilities and other socially generated handicaps is an investment on which interest can be earned through the contribution which handicapped people can make to society.

54. In relation to the second and third priority areas I mentioned—namely, the facilitation of the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life and educating the general public on the rights of the disabled—we must recognize that disabled people do not want to be regarded simply as a disadvantaged group, to which the community owes certain social and humanitarian obligations. They are a part of society and as such want to live an independent, full and dignified life within the community. We must see to it that this is possible. A disabled person should be enabled along with others to enjoy, in the words of article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”. Governments and societies should aim not to isolate disabled people from the community of which they are part, but to facilitate and to promote the integration of disabled persons into all spheres of life.

55. The European Community and its member States have devoted thought and effort to this end and to the other objectives set out in resolution 31/123. As a result, disabled people in our societies, as in many others, enjoy opportunities which would have been unattainable not so long ago for education at all levels, for advancement, for employment and for political, cultural and leisure activities, including sports.

56. Formerly the problem of disabled persons was regarded purely as a social security problem. This is an over-simplified and incorrect interpretation of the problem. Today our societies as a whole have become more deeply aware of the needs and aspirations of disabled people and of the contribution which they can make to the community. But we cannot be complacent. A great deal remains to be done, in our societies and in others, before we can honestly claim that we have reached a point of development at which all disabled people are able to enjoy the same overall opportunities as others. We hope that national Governments and the international community will not forget the lessons of this Year and that they will continue to strive to enable their disabled people to play a full and equal part, in dignity, in their communities.

57. Mr. MI Guojun (China) (*translation from Chinese*): In the present world, the question of disabled persons, who number hundreds of millions, is a social problem we cannot afford to ignore. The fact that the majority of the 450 million to 500 million disabled people in the world live in the developing countries deserves special attention and concern on the part of the international community. It is of immediate significance that 1981 has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Disabled Persons. The purpose and demand of “full participation and equality” put forward by the General Assembly has won the positive response of the international community. Meaningful activities on the global, regional and national levels have been carried out, exerting wide influence. We would like to express our appreciation and congratulations.

58. China is a country with a large population, including many disabled persons. For 32 years, since liberation, consistent efforts have been made by the Government at various levels and the mass organizations to prevent and treat cases of disability, alleviate the pain of disabled persons and rehabilitate them, as well as to improve the social status of the disabled and their living, study and working conditions. In this respect certain achievements have been scored. In order to carry out the work in this field even better, in this year—the International Year of Disabled Persons—a Chinese organizing committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons at the national level has been solemnly established in Beijing. It has the responsibility of sponsoring and organizing activities in China relating to the International Year of Disabled Persons.

59. The Chinese organizing committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons is composed of leading members of the Government and national mass organizations of workers, women, youth and children, and of organs of the mass media, such as the newspapers, radio, television, and film studios, and of the Chinese Association of the Blind and Deaf-Mute, the Red Cross Society and the National Committee for UNESCO, as well as a dozen other national bodies. The committee has formulated the programme of action for this year and studied the long-term requirements and follow-up measures. It has engaged in a wide range of activities. In Tienjing, a municipal organizing committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons has been set up. In Beijing, Shanghai, Tienjing, Shenyang, Guangzhou and other big cities exhibitions of industrial products turned out by disabled people have been held, fund-raising recreational and athletic performances for the disabled and sports meetings for the blind and the deaf-mute have been organized. At the moment, a documentary film “Song of the Disabled Persons” is in the process of being made. Some special com-

memorative publications are going to be published and commemorative stamps are to be issued. The activities organized in China for the International Year of Disabled Persons have been welcomed and supported by the Chinese people and have achieved fairly good results.

60. The full integration of disabled persons in social life and social development and their equitable sharing with other citizens of the fruits of social and economic development is the main purpose of all the activities organized in China to mark the International Year of Disabled Persons. It is also the long-range objective we strive for. The primary requirement of our activities for the International Year of Disabled Persons in our country is that competent Government bodies and mass organizations, taking account of the nature of our socialist system as well as the reality of overpopulation in conjunction with a weak economic base, formulate serious programmes and adopt positive measures so that, on the basis of the constant development of the economy and of science and culture, we can march step by step towards this objective. We must enable all members of society, the healthy and the disabled, to have a correct understanding of disabled persons, that is, to regard them not as peculiar people who are different from the rest of society, but as ordinary people having peculiar problems. The healthy should love and help the disabled and not discriminate against them. The disabled should have the will to prove that though physically handicapped, they are not mentally depressed and should not feel inferior. China's experiences show that, despite their physical defects and functional disabilities of one kind or another, they can overcome or remedy them if appropriate measures are taken, and that the majority of the disabled are capable of making progress and contributing like healthy people in various jobs suited to their condition.

61. In China many who are blind, deaf, or mute have made themselves useful though they are physically disabled, and through various channels they have been trained as cadres serving the people or have used their talents working for the welfare of society. Some of them have won praise as model workers or advanced producers, some have become engineers, specialists, or professors, and others have been elected as people's deputies to the National People's Congress or members of the National People's Political Consultative Conference. Their wisdom and talents have been brought into play through the training with which society has provided them and through their own efforts. In China, disabled people have the sympathy, concern and respect of society; as far as work, education, medical care, life and welfare are concerned, disabled persons, such as the blind, the deaf-mute, and those whose disabilities are caused by their occupations, have been given as much proper care as possible.

62. The government organs at various levels have seriously implemented the guideline of relying mainly on self-help through production and mutual assistance among the masses, with necessary relief from the Government. Whether in the city or in the countryside, those disabled, who are still capable of doing one job or another have undertaken different forms of work according to their capability; those who have completely lost their ability to work have been properly looked after. There are now over 1,000 social welfare production units in China. The number of schools for deaf-mutes has been increased to 292, seven times more than those before liberation, with students increased tenfold. We have adopted a unified Braille alphabet and expanded the programme of such publications. Efforts relating to the prevention and treat-

ment of blindness and deafness has gained some headway; the rates of incidence have shown a marked decline. Treatment of the mentally retarded or physically handicapped has produced fairly good results. The disabled workers in the city enjoy free medical care, while the disabled peasants in the rural areas enjoy collective-paid medical treatment. Like healthy people, they are able to marry, earn a living, lead a normal family life and have their proper place in society.

63. China is a developing socialist country. Its economy, science and technology are not yet developed, the living standard of the people is still relatively low; therefore we still have a number of difficulties in our work for the disabled and more efforts are to be made. The activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons have further promoted China's work in this field. We are confident that with the joint efforts of our Government and the mass organizations, with the support of the related international organizations, and with the growth of our socialist economy, the objective of "Full participation and equality" set forth in the programme for the International Year of Disabled Persons can certainly be achieved.

64. The Chinese delegation shares the views of many delegations that the question of the disabled persons in the world is not a temporary issue; rather, it is a long-term issue which cannot be solved in one International Year. "Full participation and equality" ought to be a continuous goal and a long-range objective. Therefore, following the International Year of Disabled Persons, the United Nations should continue to be concerned with and attach importance to this question. The international co-operation launched in this International Year should be carried forward. In the spirit of internationalism and humanitarianism, the Chinese Government and people welcome the exchange of information on follow-up activities with the organizations concerned in other friendly countries, and with the related regional and international bodies, and we are ready to learn from their advanced experience.

65. China has sent delegates to take part in the International Conference on Deafness and the International Year of Disabled Persons held at Rome in January 1981. We have also sent specialists on artificial limbs and Government observers to the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Technical Assistance in the Field of Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, held at Vienna. We have decided to send an observer delegation to the International Abilympics at Tokyo. The organizations concerned in China have received this year the Director-General of Rehabilitation International, the delegation of the Association of the Deaf Mute of Yugoslavia, and a tour group of disabled persons from Switzerland. We have exchanged information with other countries as well. In sum, we are ready to join the efforts of the international community for the realization of the goal of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

66. Mr. REICH (United States of America): The United Nations, by proclaiming 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), has aroused the hopes and aspirations of fully a billion people comprising the world's "disability family". This family is made up of half a billion persons who themselves are disabled, plus at least an equal number of family members who also live with the limitations and challenges of our disabilities. Thanks to the vision and leadership of the Member States, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, and the agencies of the

United Nations system, the disability family can now look more optimistically to the future. The response to the challenge of the IYDP has been gratifying. But having accepted the challenge, we must now intensify our efforts.

67. By promoting its five-point IYDP programme, the United Nations has created a framework for commitment and action by Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals throughout the world. While their responses have varied, reflecting different social structures, stages of development, and levels of resources, several significant common themes have emerged. They include a sense of compassion, a recognition that disabled persons are an important resource, and the active involvement of disabled persons themselves.

68. I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the United States and the world-wide response to the IYDP challenge and on the implications for the future. In the United States the IYDP initiative has led to significant programmes and results. As President Reagan stated in his IYDP proclamation on 6 February 1981: "All of us stand to gain when those who are disabled share in America's opportunities."

69. At the government level, 42 agencies have undertaken IYDP activities aimed at bringing Americans with disabilities more fully into the mainstream. Their efforts have included reviewing hiring practices, streamlining legislation as it relates to disability, and carrying out special information programmes. Of equal importance is the fact that the Government has encouraged the private sector in the United States to take advantage of the IYDP opportunity.

70. The private sector—comprised of disability organizations and business, religious, labour, youth, women's professional and other organizations—has responded with vigour and enthusiasm. The concept of partnership—between the disabled and non-disabled, between Government and the private sector, and between organizations at the national, state and local levels—has been a dominant theme. The IYDP mission in the United States, adopted jointly by the Government and the private sector, has been to increase public understanding of the needs and potential contribution of disabled persons and to accelerate progress toward our long-term goals. The corporate and disability communities together formed the United States Council, funded by non-governmental sources. Its purpose has been to carry the IYDP challenge of the United Nations to the towns and cities of America, where our 35 million disabled persons go about their lives. In more than 1,850 communities, concerned citizens have formed partnership committees which have identified needs, set goals and undertaken programmes to meet their own goals. The Governors of all 50 States, more than 330 national organizations and 270 leading corporations have joined in this partnership programme. Demonstrating tremendous corporate social responsibility, America's corporations have provided resources and enlightened leadership. They have realized that bringing disabled persons into the economic mainstream is in their own best interest. To cite one example of this corporate commitment, the Xerox Corporation last month donated \$3 million worth of sophisticated reading machines for the blind to 100 university libraries.

71. In American communities people from all walks of life have advanced the United Nations IYDP theme of full

participation for disabled persons. They have made public buildings and facilities more accessible, developed special transportation systems, modified churches and parks to accommodate disabled persons, facilitated voting by disabled individuals, passed new ordinances on housing for disabled persons, held job fairs to bring together employers and disabled job-seekers, and carried out locally devised awareness programmes. A common theme throughout America during the IYDP has been encouraging self-reliance and self-help initiatives.

72. In the United States the observance has been marked by the strong and enthusiastic involvement of disabled persons themselves. They have been stimulated by the IYDP to assume greater leadership in shaping their own destinies. Through a nation-wide advertising and media campaign aimed at changing attitudes, the public has gained a greater appreciation of the contribution of disabled persons. The result is that future efforts will be based less on charity and more on recognition that disabled persons are important contributors to society. The significance of this Year in the United States was expressed by one seriously disabled person: "Never again do I need to take a back seat, or to stay at home; I now feel I can participate like anyone else. I am grateful that the IYDP helped to open opportunity for me. The IYDP has given me dignity."

73. None of us anticipated that the International Year of Disabled Persons would be an end; the serious problems of disability go on. It has given impetus to new beginnings. It has accelerated progress; attitudinal barriers are coming down. At a recent conference in Washington of our IYDP representatives appointed by the Governors of all 50 States and of community representatives from throughout the nation, the participants unanimously urged that the IYDP momentum be continued. This initiative is of the healthiest kind. It is based on the feelings of people, most of them disabled, at the grass-roots level, in the towns and cities of America, and on the voluntary spirit of citizens. The response to date to the unanimous resolution of that conference has been twofold.

74. First, it is my great privilege to announce today a significant follow-up initiative growing out of the International Year of Disabled Persons. In January a new non-governmental organization, the National Office on Disability, will be opened in Washington, D.C. Its purpose will be to encourage and support the continuing momentum of the International Year of Disabled Persons in the United States. The launching of this organization is made possible by the generous contribution of a leading American corporation.

75. Secondly, a resolution has been introduced in the United States Congress to designate 1982 the national year of disabled persons. The United States is following the leadership of other nations, in Africa and in South America, which first developed plans to designate 1982 their national year of disabled persons. This designation will help further the full participation of disabled individuals at the national, state and local levels throughout the United States. From these efforts we—and you—can take heart.

76. Americans are not unmindful of the fact that the problems of disability are compounded in the developing nations. The greater seriousness of disability among those in poverty and in disadvantaged groups is apparent to us even in our own country. We are therefore greatly pleased by the initiatives of the United Nations and its agencies

which have taken advantage of the International Year of Disabled Persons to launch long-term programmes.

77. WHO, for example, is including the problems of disability within its long-term programme "Health for All by the Year 2000". This initiative offers promise for concerted efforts to prevent and eventually eliminate certain disabling conditions affecting more than 5 million newborn children in the world annually. We are inspired by the new efforts of UNICEF to assure that disabled children have a better chance at life. UNESCO's new programmes to reduce the burden of dependency through greater educational opportunity for disabled children offer hope for many. The ILO's expanded efforts to provide technical rehabilitation assistance will have a radiating impact in years to come. There now is greater recognition that organized labour has a real stake in reducing disability. UNDP has brought about in many countries realization of the importance of including disabled persons in the development process.

78. These few examples of action by the United Nations are encouraging to us all. The efforts of the IYDP secretariat in Vienna, under the direction of the Assistant Secretary-General, Mrs. Shahani, to promote the ongoing work of the national committees formed in 127 nations will continue to pay dividends. Despite limited resources, the secretariat has played a key role in expanding world-wide concern for disabled persons.

79. The 800 international non-governmental organizations affiliated with the United Nations will continue their active efforts in the area of disability. They too have responded to the IYDP challenge. Again, to cite an example, Rotary International, which has 10,000 clubs in 150 countries, has developed many IYDP programmes. They include provision by the Rotary Club of Randolph, Massachusetts, in the United States, of a specially equipped bus for disabled youth to attend camp, and a project of the Rotary Club of Raninginj, India, which has sponsored a polio-immunization campaign for 2,400 children.

80. By proclaiming this Year the United Nations has done much to improve the human condition. This is a central role of the United Nations. But we would not be accurate or true to ourselves if we did not recognize another important dimension of the International Year of Disabled Persons. By focusing world-wide attention on this human concern the United Nations has opened an important area of transnational communication, across political boundaries, on a common problem affecting all peoples. This communication will continue. In the process it will further international co-operation and improve the climate for resolving other differences peaceably. The cross-cultural communication among the 127 national committees, the world-wide consideration of the world draft programme of action now in preparation by the United Nations and the ongoing communication in the area of disability among non-governmental organizations will continue to contribute to the climate of peace and co-operation among nations.

81. I am reminded of the words "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." The International Year of Disabled Persons is an idea born in the minds of men which is helping to build the human foundations of the structure of peace.

82. These two results of the International Year of Disabled Persons—the new commitment to improving the

human condition and the opening of a new area of transnational communication—are marvellous testimony to the moral force of the United Nations. The voluntary response throughout the world to the IYDP challenge and opportunity demonstrates the tremendous capacity of the United Nations to stimulate purposeful action and commitment. With almost no special funds the United Nations has fostered programmes with far-reaching implications in all countries. By focusing attention, the United Nations has created the opportunity, the continuing opportunity, for us all to attack the serious problems of disability on an ongoing basis. The United Nations truly has made a difference. But we must go on. To quote an old Russian peasant saying, "patience and persistence will conquer all".

83. I know I speak for many other disabled citizens of the world in applauding this initiative of the United Nations. We commend and thank the Secretary-General, and we commend and thank the representatives.

84. Let us no longer question the value of International Year observances. The International Year of Disabled Persons has demonstrated that it can, through them, unleash tremendous human and organizational potential. The future is in the hands of the United Nations. It is up to the Organization, and I urge it to provide the leadership and vision, bringing greater dignity to the one billion members of the disability family. All people and nations will be the better for it.

85. As Mrs. Marcos of the Philippines, who spoke at the 86th meeting, stated, human problems demand human solutions. I urge you, Mr. President, the Secretary-General and representatives to keep alive the quest you have started for human solutions to the staggering human problems of disability. In assuming the responsibility you have taken on for the International Year of Disabled Persons you have become the champions of half a billion disabled people. We need you. We need your vision and your leadership. We need your continuing concern, compassion and commitment. You are giving us dignity; you are giving us hope. Please do not let us down.

Mr. Adjoyi (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

86. Mr. GAUCI (Malta): Malta welcomes the observance of any international year as an attempt to focus world attention on problems of major dimensions and to seek solutions to these problems through the exchange of information, international consultation, joint action and international co-operation. The theme of international co-operation is particularly pertinent to the problems of the disabled and it is therefore fitting that 1981 has been proclaimed their Year.

87. The problems of the disabled know no national boundary, nor do the disabled themselves form a homogeneous group. Their problems demand recourse to a broad range of solutions. The potential for improvement in the lives of the disabled suffers if it is limited only to augmenting the disparate efforts of individual countries and organizations. There is obvious benefit to be derived from a fusion and a cross-fertilization of the efforts of all parties. Indeed, in these efforts regional co-operation could play an important role in bringing into effect the lessons learned during this Year.

88. The disabled and their problems present us with a constantly escalating dimension. Their number grows. Apart from natural disaster and conflict, factors such as

urbanization, industrialization and a deteriorating world food situation will augment the numerical aspects of the problem and will require a commensurate increase in the human and material resources required to cope with it. Moreover, approximately 75 per cent of the world's total disabled population comes from the developing countries. To ignore this segment of the population, or to consign it to the fringes of society, is to waste a vast reservoir of acquired talent and skill. Unless the disabled are fully integrated into society the world will be denying itself access to and utilization of a significant proportion of the major element in any development process, namely, human resources.

89. One quarter of the world's disabled are children; again, around 120 million of them live in the developing world. It is expertly estimated that the number of handicapped children in developing countries could be halved by the application of currently available, simple and relatively inexpensive technologies. Most disability is, in fact, preventable; much of it is reversible and curable. Recognizing the magnitude and diversity of this problem, UNICEF has launched an enlarged programme on the prevention and rehabilitation of childhood disabilities.

90. It would, we feel, be desirable for the programmes of action being planned in particular international years such as, for example, the International Youth Year, to take into account the positive elements of the International Year of Disabled Persons and apply them as appropriate.

91. Among the disabled may be included the elderly. Unfortunately, attention was not as sharply focused on this aspect of the problem as on the problems of other categories of the disabled population. We therefore very much hope that the World Assembly on Aging, which will be held next summer at Vienna, will give the disabled elderly their merited share of attention.

92. Above all, however, we must never lose sight of the fact that the disabled person is an individual, not merely another troublesome statistic with economic and social implications. His disabilities should not preclude his exercising and enjoying the full range of human rights he shares in common with the able-bodied. Protection, aid and facilities for rehabilitation are his as of right; they should be granted in an atmosphere free from overtones of paternalism or insensitivity.

93. In proclaiming 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons the General Assembly had a specific set of objectives in mind. These ranged from the prevention of disability to raising public awareness of the right of the handicapped to participate in and contribute to various facets of economic, political and social life in their own environment.

94. The report of the Secretary-General provides us with a concise synthesis of activities carried out during the International Year of Disabled Persons at the national, regional and international levels. There can be little doubt that the effort to attain the objectives of the Year has raised the level of public awareness about the problems and potential of the disabled. It has also resulted in an increasing level of international co-operation and understanding in the face of the magnitude of the problem.

95. General Assembly resolution 34/154 approved the Plan of Action for the Year and Member States were invited to establish, as a preparatory measure, national

committees to plan and co-ordinate activities in support of the objectives of the Year at both local and national levels. As the Secretary-General's report points out, the activities organized by the national committees have played a very significant role in the success of the Year.

96. In Malta our national philosophy is based on the conviction that human beings constitute both the end and the principal means of development. Full development of human resources is therefore twice blessed: it blesses the giver and the receiver. In consequence, social welfare and health have always been high on the priority list of successive Maltese Governments for many years since independence and there is yearly improvement in the range of benefits paid to beneficiaries, among whom the disabled receive very special attention. At the latest count over 30 per cent of Malta's national budget was devoted to health and social welfare and that percentage would rise to nearly 40 per cent if education were also included. The latest official economic development plan for the years 1981-1985 envisages, among other new projects, the expansion of residential homes for the elderly, special schools for the disabled and improvement in the pension and eligibility of the handicapped.

97. With this national philosophy and these governmental advances as a background, the National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons was appointed by the Minister of Labour, Culture and Welfare in Malta. Our Minister is Agatha Barbara, the first woman to be elected to Parliament in Malta and the first to be given a ministerial appointment. She gave the National Committee wide-ranging terms of reference. In his introduction to the report of the Committee, copies of which were made available to the secretariat of the International Year, the Chairman of the National Committee expressed the hope that the Year would serve as a catalyst for further action, since it was not possible in one year to deal with all the problems facing the disabled in their quest for a more satisfying life.

98. The National Committee in Malta took as its guiding principle that of positive balance and adjustment in favour of the disabled and considered it useful, as an initial step, to catalogue existing legislation with a view to extending it where necessary. The National Committee therefore turned its attention to Maltese legislation, particularly that dealing with pensions, and suggested ways by which the legislation could be amended to include certain categories of disabled persons so far precluded from receiving early pensions. It also made suggestions relating to increased income tax allowances and to strict supervision of employers who do not satisfy the quota of disabled persons that they should be employing in accordance with the labour legislation. Other proposals referred to the environmental needs of the disabled, such as, for instance, adequate structural facilities in public buildings so as to make them easily accessible to the handicapped. Malta's objective is not to remain static but rather to look forward and to develop. The Committee has therefore suggested that legislation of other countries in this sphere should be looked into.

99. One of the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons is to educate and inform the public of the rights of the disabled. With that in mind, the Maltese Committee proposed that the media should be harnessed so that the public could gain a greater awareness of the difficulties facing the disabled. Those are some of the areas from which Malta hopes to benefit from the international programme.

100. The International Year of Disabled Persons will soon be over. The measures adopted in the context of the Year should form part of an integrated long-term approach. The Advisory Committee for the Year in fact stresses in its report that a number of activities will continue beyond 1981. We must ensure that the lessons learned from the survey in 1981 on behalf of the disabled do not become merely past history, a closed chapter. The Year itself must be seen as a beginning in the efforts of the international community further to improve the well-being and the status of the disabled.

101. The realization of the full potential of the disabled is mainly dependent upon the executive and the legislative of national Governments and upon the benevolent understanding of the able-bodied members of society, starting with the immediate members of the family of the handicapped. Most of all, the disabled themselves must continue to insist on attaining their rights from a largely sanguine society that had until relatively recently presumed that it would never be called upon to grant them any. The opportunity to enrich their own lives as best they can should be facilitated, and exploitation and abuse must be completely eliminated.

102. This is a theme which unites and brings out the best in an individual, in a nation and in the Organization. It is an objective to which Malta is proud to contribute and to which it pledges its continuing best efforts for the future. Our national experience is available for others to study and we are anxious to learn from others and to advance regional projects of co-operation with shared resources.

103. I wish to end by conveying my sincere compliments to Mrs. Marcos of the Philippines for her stirring appeal this morning, and to Mrs. Shahani, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her enthusiastic efforts and her comprehensive report. Many others, too numerous to mention, have already rendered sterling service to the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons. We are off to a good start. Let us commit ourselves and our countries to doing even more in the future.

104. Mr. BUSCHFORT (Federal Republic of Germany):* The proclamation of a year for a special cause by the United Nations focuses world attention on especially important and urgent tasks. It urges us to do something about improving human relations in the different spheres of life. This is also true of the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981, now drawing to a close.

105. Needless to say, the proclamation in itself has not solved any concrete problems. Nevertheless, this International Year of Disabled Persons has been a step towards solving acute issues and ameliorating the position of the disabled. And that was precisely its purpose.

106. But the proclamation of a Year by the United Nations can become really effective and successful only if every country seriously attempts to achieve the aims in a way that will last, and to ensure the realization of the ideas and expectations associated with it. That is clearly not an easy task. The Member States of the United Nations are not only characterized by differing economic, social and welfare conditions; each Government must in

fact find its own ways of improving the situation of the disabled and they must be geared to national problems.

107. In spite of our differing national experiences and strategies, we can all learn something from each other. The policies of other countries on disabled persons can and should provide an opportunity for reflecting upon one's own approach; they may well inspire improvements in the situation of disabled men and women in one's own country.

108. In my statement today I should like to inform the Assembly about the most important problems facing the disabled in the Federal Republic of Germany and the attempts to solve them. This will be a short survey of our Government's past and present policy on rehabilitation measures for the disabled and, above all, of German activities to mark the International Year of Disabled Persons.

109. The proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons evoked a sustained response in the Federal Republic of Germany. As early as the summer of 1979, a national committee was set up in the Federal Republic of Germany to prepare for this International Year. The Chairman was the Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Herbert Ehrenberg. In addition to the representatives of the Federal Government and of the Governments of the Federal States, the Committee also included delegates from the Federal Parliament, the trade unions and employers' associations. The central associations for disabled persons, the welfare organizations and rehabilitation bodies and representatives of radio and television corporations also took part.

110. Our National Committee has set out to fulfil two tasks: first, to consider the given objectives and recommendations and, on that basis, to work out a national programme as a foundation for the development of policy on disabled persons in the 1980s; secondly, to initiate a large-scale programme of meetings and various other functions during this International Year in order to make the German public more aware of the problems of the disabled. The primary goal was a better understanding of the disabled and a less inhibited relationship between them and the able-bodied. Both those goals are indispensable for the complete integration of disabled persons. These two tasks were tackled by over 750 experts, including many disabled persons appointed by the National Committee.

111. A large number of working groups considered solutions to those problems of rehabilitation which are still unresolved in the Federal Republic of Germany. The outcome of their deliberations was the National Committee's concluding report, which was presented in good time at the beginning of the year. The report, adopted unanimously and now also available in English and French, evoked a positive response both at home and abroad. As can already be seen today, it will influence the further development of rehabilitation in the 1980s in our country. Its numerous recommendations effectively complement the Federal Government's views set out in the Second Programme of Action on Rehabilitation, introduced in 1980.

112. It is interesting to note that our Government's First Programme of Action on Rehabilitation dates back to 1970. This indicates the high priority which the Federal Republic of Germany has attached to the problems of disabled people for a good many years. Our goal is the com-

* Mr. Buschfort spoke in German. The English version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

plete integration of disabled persons at work, in professional life and in society. In the last few years, we have taken several significant steps towards achieving this goal. Moreover, my country has already attained quite a number of the goals pursued by the United Nations.

113. Apart from preventive medicine, early detection and early treatment of disabilities and greater provision for comprehensive local guidance for the disabled, in recent years there has also been a marked improvement in the working conditions and vocational integration of the disabled.

114. Let me give a few examples. Every employer in the Federal Republic of Germany with a work force of at least 16 persons is obliged by law to give 6 per cent of his jobs to severely disabled persons. If he fails to do so he is required to pay a compensatory levy in respect of every job within that percentage not filled by a severely disabled person. The funds resulting from this levy are used exclusively for the vocational benefit of the severely disabled. In addition, severely disabled employees enjoy a wide range of supplementary rights. They receive extra holidays and they have their own spokesman at work. Above all, they cannot be dismissed, except in very exceptional cases. Hence their jobs are not normally at risk.

115. Apart from the adequate provision of rehabilitation facilities, we have also been able to build a comprehensive network of training and retraining centres. Today, virtually every young disabled person can receive training for a modern vocation, while every adult, disabled person may be retrained for a different job from his present one. During the training and retraining period, the means of subsistence for the disabled person and his family are guaranteed, and he also enjoys full social security, such as health, old age and accident insurance. This also applies to disabled men and women in sheltered workshops who are unable to do a regular type of job.

116. In addition, blind and deaf persons have their own special training and retraining institutions, designed to meet their particular needs. The same applies to paraplegics with brain damage, and persons with cardiovascular diseases. During their medical rehabilitation, they are also prepared in special centres for their future vocational training or retraining.

117. As these examples show, the International Year of Disabled Persons did not mark a new departure in the policy of the Federal Republic of Germany for disabled persons. At least, the statutory arrangements and material provision for the disabled were already relatively well developed. Nevertheless, the proclamation of this International Year has also been very significant for the Federal Republic of Germany.

118. Public knowledge and information about the causes and effects of disabilities are in some cases still very fragmentary. More understanding on the part of organizations, public authorities, firms and private individuals of the problems of the disabled at their place of work, in their daily life and during their leisure hours is also very desirable. There are still various opportunities for improvement in the policy for disabled persons. Their complete integration at work, in professional life and in society has by no means been accomplished.

119. For instance, one of our most important problems is the large number of unemployed disabled persons in the Federal Republic of Germany as a result of the current

world-wide economic recession. It is particularly they who are hard hit by unemployment. Their integration into the working world is a prerequisite for attaining equal opportunities in modern society. With this in mind, the Federal Government is making joint efforts with the Federal State Governments to promote the employment of severely disabled persons by means of special programmes. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany envisages a new and uniform act on severely disabled persons to support this aim. It will provide for further financial benefits for those employers who take on very severely disabled persons over and beyond the obligatory minimum.

120. Admittedly, laws will not in themselves bring about the social integration of the disabled. The decisive factor is whether people learn to understand their special problems and come to accept them as equal partners. It is notably in this respect that the International Year of Disabled Persons has provided good and welcome assistance.

121. Allow me to mention some of the more significant activities which have taken place. Under the motto "Understanding and getting on with one another", the National Committee has emphasized the most important task of the International Year in my country and given it wide coverage in the media. Together with an impressive emblem depicting three persons supporting and helping each other, the motto has become very well known through millions of stickers, stamps and publications. Special postage stamps, television spots, briefing kits and brochures have helped to spread knowledge and understanding of this concern of the United Nations throughout the Federal Republic of Germany.

122. The information media have proved to be particularly helpful. A large number of articles have been published in newspapers and magazines on the problems of the disabled, while television and radio have also made a noteworthy contribution. Efforts to do more for disabled persons are noticeable everywhere. For example, architects are considering the construction of suitable dwellings; tour operators are now planning more holiday trips for the disabled; and a number of firms and public authorities are expanding their services and improving their technical aid for them.

123. The Ministry of Finance, for instance, will replace banknotes for vending machines by notes the value of which can be felt by the blind and those with visual impairments. In addition, the Ministry for Postal Services has introduced more facilities for disabled persons to assist them when telephoning.

124. Furthermore, a dedicated section of the population, and the disabled themselves, seized upon the opportunity afforded by the International Year of Disabled Persons to mitigate the widespread prejudices against such persons by means of organized meetings and action programmes. Apart from the associations of disabled persons, excellent help has been provided by a variety of organizations, ranging from school classes, clubs and welfare bodies to town and village communities. It is above all their commitment that has helped to speed up the integration of the disabled in our country. To illustrate this, I need mention only the example of a school experiment, inspired by parents, for the integrated teaching of disabled and able-bodied children.

125. But let me hasten to avoid any misunderstanding. The resistance and obstacles encountered by disabled peo-

ple and the prejudice against them, which has become entrenched over a long period of time, cannot be eliminated in a single year. This task will last well beyond 1981. The International Year of Disabled Persons has, however, proved that more dedication and more initiative in improving the working and living conditions of the disabled also generate more understanding of their special problems. At least, that has been my impression as regards the Federal Republic of Germany.

126. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany will make use of this knowledge. It will augment its information and guidance activities without thereby neglecting concrete assistance for the disabled. One such concrete step was taken at the beginning of 1981 when the Government appointed me Commissioner for Disabled Persons. This, incidentally, had also been requested by the disabled themselves.

127. Every disabled person in the Federal Republic of Germany who feels discriminated against in his legal rights and who requires more information or effective assistance, whether with regard to his workplace, health care or family environment, can apply directly to the officially appointed Federal Commissioner. As a result, he now has an additional and independent person to contact in addition to the administrative authorities, the Parliament and the courts.

128. As my personal experience to date has shown, the disabled themselves accept their new partner. They write many more letters than we had expected. And even though I cannot guarantee success, I can at least act in a non-bureaucratic and expeditious manner and deal with the individual circumstances of each correspondent.

129. This has been my report on activities in my country in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons. There has been much scepticism and much justified criticism, but on the whole this International Year of Disabled Persons has been a success. I have received confirmation of this in many talks and at many meetings.

130. The disabled persons themselves, in particular, have noted less indifference to and more open-mindedness regarding their everyday problems. Despite certain persistent difficulties, they have moved more and more into the centre of public interest. For many disabled men and women this has probably been their most significant experience during the International Year. This experience will continue to exercise a lasting influence on policy for the disabled and their working and living conditions.

131. I hope that this will also apply to the proposal before the General Assembly for an international identity card for disabled persons. Such a document would considerably facilitate and promote travel opportunities for disabled persons, which is why the Federal Republic of Germany took this initiative. This too is part of the process of securing their full integration and would enrich their lives in a manner that people with no physical incapacity take for granted. Whether the individual disabled person wants such an identity card and when he may use it are matters which we feel should be his own decision.

132. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany looks forward with interest to the further discussion of this question by the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons. I am sure that the Committee will eventually recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of an identity card for disabled per-

sons. This would be yet another way of helping them to develop their personalities. Nevertheless, I appreciate that this is a very special item and that other more global problems exist, especially in international co-operation on the disabled. One example of this is that, even though the overwhelming majority of disabled persons live in the third world, most of the financial assistance goes to the disabled in the industrialized countries.

133. Let me stress the following point in conclusion: all the industrial States, in particular, must widen the scope of their assistance to embrace the disabled in the third world. A good move in this direction was the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Assistance in the Field of Disability and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, held by the United Nations at Vienna in October of this year. I was gratified to note at the Symposium that co-operation between developing and industrial countries in this field is taking concrete shape. The Federal Republic of Germany will give all the support it can to this co-operative effort. It will also continue its bilateral co-operation with a view to preventing and eliminating obstacles in the third world. It has already promoted projects in many countries involving such tasks as the construction of sheltered workshops and medical facilities and the training of specialized personnel, and it will continue to do so.

134. We are deeply convinced of one thing: disabled men and women can only be helped by real deeds. Words alone are not enough. This is a challenge above all to the industrialized nations. By providing more material aid and supporting specific projects they may not be able to overcome the fate suffered by many disabled persons in the third world, but they can certainly help to mitigate it considerably.

135. Seen in this light, 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons, is in fact not coming to an end, because its goals remain a constant challenge. We should all try to attain those goals together.

136. Mr. NISIBORI (Japan): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly on the subject of the activities in which Japan is engaging in this the International Year of Disabled Persons. We believe that the United Nations is playing a pivotal role in effecting change in this important social and humanitarian issue. My delegation would also like to express its pleasure at the Third Committee's unanimous adoption of the draft resolution on the International Year of Disabled Persons [see A/36/764]. We hope and expect that the General Assembly will be equally enthusiastic when it considers the draft resolution tomorrow.

137. Since the Second World War, Japan has developed comprehensive rehabilitation systems in which medicine, special education, social security benefits, employment opportunities, institutional services and community care services are all utilized.

138. Before the war the primary thrust of legislation devoted to the disabled was to provide relief. The attitude of society towards the disabled was one more of pity and charity than of respect. With the progress made in rehabilitation research and the diffusion of new ideas over the last few decades, however, there have been legal, administrative and attitudinal changes which have affected the treatment of the disabled. Major laws relating to medical, social, educational and vocational rehabilitation give all disabled children and adults today, regardless of the

cause of their disability, their age, sex, or social status, the right to medical and para-medical treatment, education, training, social security benefits and various types of community care services.

139. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express again Japan's gratitude to the United Nations for its technical assistance in the fight against childhood disabilities. In 1960 there was a mass outbreak of poliomyelitis among infants in Japan. Health officials recognized the necessity of immunizing the entire infant population, but Japan did not have the necessary quantities of vaccine to do that. The problem was brought to the attention of WHO, which acted promptly to assist Japan in procuring vaccine from the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Thanks to the efforts of that organization the incidence of poliomyelitis has fallen dramatically. There are virtually no new cases of this type of disability in Japan today.

140. The types of disabilities the Japanese people have suffered from have changed with time and are continuing to change. Today, we in Japan are fortunate in that peace and medical advances have eliminated many disabilities. It is only necessary to look back on the progress achieved in the last decade to see that world peace is essential to making headway in this area. The major disabilities experienced in Japan today result from such childhood diseases as cerebral palsy, which are frequently related to accidents at birth, from sports accidents, which befall the young and active, from traffic accidents, from industrial accidents, which occur among the working population, from diseases of old age, such as strokes, and from cerebro-vascular accidents.

141. The approaches we employ today are no longer simple, they do not rely entirely on orthopaedic therapy, for example, but are rather comprehensive programmes of medical treatment in which patients work with teams of specialists in such fields as neurology, audiology and psychiatry. And clearly the goal of rehabilitating disabled people so that they can be reintegrated into society cannot be achieved through medical rehabilitation alone. It is essential to provide the education, the vocational rehabilitation services and the training in basic skills that will allow the disabled to be independent and to play active roles in society.

142. Japan provides nine years of free elementary and secondary special education to all children, including those with impairments and disabilities. Regular medical examinations and consultations are required for all pre-school children, and those services are provided free of charge, so that problems will be detected and treated as early as possible.

143. The law for the welfare of disabled persons and various other laws require the provision of a broad range of medical and social rehabilitation services for the physically disabled. In a work-oriented society such as Japan, vocational integration of the disabled is one of the prime concerns of the Government. Prefectural vocational training schools are required to provide basic and appropriate training to the disabled.

144. Japan has long sought to ensure that its labour market will be truly open to qualified disabled persons. Five years ago legislation was enacted to improve the effectiveness of these efforts by imposing quotas and introducing a system of grants and levies. It is now Japanese law that disabled persons must constitute at least 1.5 per cent

of the working force of all medium-sized and large private firms and 1.9 per cent of governmental organizations. A fee is levied on those employers failing to maintain this ratio and is collected by an organization representing the non-governmental sector. The revolving fund created in this manner is used on the one hand to encourage employers to hire disabled persons and on the other to prepare the disabled for employment. This system has been extremely effective.

145. Thus, Japan has striven to achieve a balanced approach to rehabilitation, one in which medical, educational, social and vocational services are all viewed as important. The achievement of a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for the disabled has become one of the major social welfare objectives of the Japanese Government, which has received the strong support and co-operation of rehabilitation agencies, professional personnel, civil rights associations of the disabled and other non-governmental organizations. Disabled people, among them people in positions of leadership—legislators, lawyers, scholars, engineers and musicians—have contributed to the attainment of this goal by effecting positive changes in the attitude of society towards the disabled. In this connection, we are proud to note that on 10 December a blind Japanese violinist, Mr. Takayoshi Wanami, will perform here in the General Assembly Hall in commemoration of the thirty-third anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

146. Japan has been energetic and innovative in its efforts to make life better and more rewarding for the disabled, and much progress has already been made. The United Nations decision to establish an International Year of Disabled Persons was thus particularly timely. The work that has been done in Japan in the past has prepared it to move towards the goals, articulated by the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, of co-ordinating national plans of action, promoting the participation of the disabled in the implementation of these plans, consulting and exchanging information with those nations concerned about this vital social issue, and extending assistance to developing countries.

147. Japan's campaign to ensure the attainment of the goals of the International Year of Disabled Persons will be directed by three organizations. The Government's effort will be led by the Government Headquarters for the International Year of Disabled Persons, which comprises representatives of the 14 ministries that deal with the problems of the disabled and is headed by the Prime Minister. Task forces charged with implementing the Plan of Action for the International Year of Disabled Persons have been established at the local government level.

148. In the non-governmental sector, the second organization, the Japanese Council for the International Year of Disabled Persons, represents 110 participating professional groups, civil rights organizations of the disabled, parental associations and service groups.

149. The third group, the Special Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, which is subordinate to the Central Council for Policy on Mentally and Physically Disabled Persons, is a joint governmental and non-governmental organization established to disseminate to all relevant agencies information or programmes recommended for the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Special Committee has 60 members, among whom are representatives from government professional associations, business, trade unions and consumer groups of dis-

abled persons. Fifteen Committee members are representatives of associations of disabled people, and thus the voice of the disabled themselves will influence the formulation of national policy.

150. The Special Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons is currently drawing up a long-term action plan, a systematic evaluation of the total environment in which the disabled of Japan live. On the basis of this evaluation it will formulate and publicize nation-wide measures for effecting basic structural change in the social, physical and psychological environments in which disabled people live, so that they may be integrated more fully into society.

151. The mass media are playing an important role in activities connected with the International Year of Disabled Persons in Japan. Providing an objective picture of disabled people both in Japan and overseas, they are helping the general public to understand the need of disabled people to live normal and active lives. As a result, in an opinion poll conducted six months ago by Japan's national broadcasting corporation, 80 per cent of those responding said they had some knowledge of the International Year of Disabled Persons. Since that time the publicity effort has increased and it can reasonably be expected that by now virtually everyone in Japan has been informed of the importance of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

152. In 1981 Japan played host to several important international events at which disabled people demonstrated their abilities and their independence of spirit. Over the past two years my delegation has had occasion to refer to the International Abilympics. The International Abilympics, the world's first international vocational skill contest and an event of great symbolic importance in promoting the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, were held last month at Tokyo. I should like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Mrs. Shahani, the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, for attending the Abilympics and speaking at the opening ceremony. The Abilympics were organized by the National Employment Promotion Association of the Disabled, with the co-operation of Rehabilitation International, a non-governmental organization that has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and were held under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and other governmental organizations. To this significant and successful event approximately 600 disabled contestants from 60 countries were invited, to participate in contests in such skills as architectural drafting, wood-working, typing, television repair, knitting and tailoring. The Abilympics clearly showed that the disabled have abilities, that they are not necessarily disabled vocationally.

153. Other international events devoted to the exchange of technical information to which Japan played host were the Seminar of Experts on International Rehabilitation, the Japanese Study Programme for Asian Rehabilitation Leaders, the International Seminar on Special Education, the International Seminar on Mental Health, the International Symposium on Developmental Disabilities, the Rehabilitation Administration Seminar and the National Sports Meetings of the Disabled.

154. These international conventions and seminars drew more than a thousand professionals and disabled people to Japan from around the world. It is also important to note that in each of the aforementioned events major roles were played by disabled persons. It is our belief that

these international events foster a spirit of mutual understanding and create a channel for technical exchange and the dissemination of professional information.

155. I should like to conclude my statement by summarizing the position of my Government. Japan firmly believes that disabled people are important and potentially productive members of society, whose rights are the same as those of non-disabled citizens. We are committed to working for the improvement of the conditions and well-being of the disabled, not only now, during the twelve months of the International Year of Disabled Persons, but until our disabled citizens are assured of an equal opportunity to live productive and independent lives.

156. In order to promote the formulation of effective programmes of assistance, my Government encourages experts in related fields and the disabled themselves to work together to give effect to the insights already gained and the techniques already developed, in such fields as medicine, social work, education, psychology, engineering and architecture. The Government of Japan has also worked to co-ordinate the services provided by the various departments concerned and has encouraged an interdisciplinary approach to rehabilitation.

157. Japan has learnt much about methods of rehabilitation from the world's developed countries; and today the Japanese Government, experts in the field and the disabled themselves are expressing an interest in sharing with other countries, and especially with our neighbours in Asia, the Japanese experience and the models for rehabilitation Japan has developed. As a result, Japan intends to initiate a variety of technical exchange and leadership-training programmes on a bilateral, regional and international basis.

158. The Japanese people are concerned about the problems of the disabled both at home and abroad. We shall do our utmost to make the goal of the International Year of Disabled Persons, "Full participation and equality" for all disabled people, a reality.

159. Mr. KLESTIL (Austria): In launching the International Year of Disabled Persons the United Nations has accepted another big challenge in the service of mankind. Disability has affected the human race since the beginning of time. At all times it was a problem to make life for the disabled easier or worthwhile, the task of integration into society being difficult on both sides, on the side of the disabled people themselves as well as on the part of those dealing with the disabled. In general, people have always cared for the less advantaged and assisted them to get along in life. What has been missing is an organized effort to face the problem in a systematic and co-ordinated manner, taking into account all the encouraging results of medical and technological research to offset the adverse effects of disability and with a view to benefiting fully from the valuable contribution towards the community which disabled persons can make.

160. My Government has followed with great interest the activities which have been deployed by the secretariat of the International Year of Disabled Persons at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna. We are extremely pleased with the results of the various programmes initiated by the Centre in celebration of the International Year of Disabled Persons, which are highly appreciated by Member States as a great success.

161. In particular I should like to pay a tribute to the dedicated and whole-hearted personal effort by Assistant Secretary-General, Mrs. Shahani, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the International Year of Disabled Persons, who has led the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in one big step towards its goal, namely, to be the focal point for social affairs within the United Nations system. We feel proud and privileged to host the Centre at Vienna and pledge that we will continue to support its central role in these most important United Nations activities.

162. Let me also say how much we appreciate the important and constructive work which has been accomplished by the members of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons during its sessions.

163. My Government was particularly involved in the preparations for the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Technical Assistance in Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation which was held at the Vienna International Centre from 12 to 23 October of this year. We note with great satisfaction the important conclusions on technical co-operation and technical assistance which emerged from the discussions during the Symposium. We are convinced that the so-called Vienna Affirmative Action Plan adopted by the Symposium will constitute a very necessary and useful supplement to the future world programme of action concerning disabled persons.

164. Since the International Year of Disabled Persons is almost over, we shall now have to concentrate on maintaining the momentum which has been achieved by the various activities carried out during the Year. We should not disappoint the hundreds of millions of disabled persons who are now waiting for continued action to achieve the objectives of the Year. In this context, we believe that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should receive every possible support and co-operation in order to facilitate its task to put the future world programme of action concerning disabled persons into effect. We feel that the draft resolution which has been adopted this year by the Third Committee will be of great help in this direction.

165. It is a long-standing tradition in Austria to help to integrate weaker or disadvantaged groups of the population. This is particularly true with respect to disabled people. In observation of the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Austrian Government has added to the special emphasis on the problems of the handicapped. I should like to indicate only some of the features of our national programme for the handicapped.

166. They include: the extension of the right to rehabilitation; the promotion and support of the work of organizations for the handicapped and of other independent welfare institutions; a more widespread availability of prophylactic medical services; an extension of facilities for early diagnosis and treatment of the handicapped; more attention to the situation of handicapped women; programmes to create and support facilities for the integration of mentally disabled persons; the promotion of welfare programmes for small children through the creation of pre-school facilities for handicapped and retarded children; the expansion of opportunities for secondary education and vocational training for handicapped youth in regular schools and in special educational institutions; improved professional integration of the handicapped by

creating jobs and adapting them to the requirements of handicapped employees and the provision of more workshops for handicapped people; improved care for the handicapped at their place of work; better design of buildings in order to take care of the needs of handicapped people; and an extensive review of the entire legislation with a view to eliminating any discrimination against the handicapped and reinforcing their legal situation within society.

167. The achievement of the full participation and equality of the disabled still lies ahead of us. It will be the task of the entire international community, of Governments and ultimately of every individual.

168. Let me conclude by quoting the President of Austria, Mr. Rudolf Kirchschlaeger, who has been taking an active interest in promoting our national activities throughout the year. He said:

“Just as the quality of a chain is always dependent upon the quality of its weakest link, so the quality of life in a society will always depend on the level of integration of the sick and the disabled.”

169. Mrs. BÉGIN (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): It is a pleasure and an honour for me to speak today on behalf of Canada in the debate at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly celebrating the International Year of Disabled Persons.

170. There can be no doubt about Canada's commitment to this International Year. Canada was one of the sponsors of resolution 31/123, which proclaimed 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. Our country is also one of the 23 Member States represented on the Advisory Committee for the Year, established by General Assembly resolution 32/133 to guide it in its efforts in connection with this important international event. Canada also made an extrabudgetary contribution of \$100,000 in support of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

171. I must admit today that my country—like several others, I am sure—found itself somewhat embarrassed by the establishment of yet another International Year aimed at a special group in society, especially because of the additional financial burden necessarily created by such an event. On the other hand, the moment was well chosen for in the past three or four years handicapped Canadians have shown more and more clearly their impatience with those traditional professional associations which represent them. As a result, some had even begun to regroup themselves in organizations similar to consumer associations.

172. We are now approaching the end of this International Year of Disabled Persons. It is appropriate that we reflect on the Year and what has been accomplished, as well as on activities and measures to ensure an adequate follow-up.

173. An impressive amount of goodwill, energy and resources has been assembled to make a success of this Year and we have established many mechanisms, but much remains to be done. Attitudes have begun to change, proposals aimed at improving the environment and social conditions have been implemented, non-governmental organizations have developed their information and co-operation programmes and, finally, many laws and regulations have been adopted.

174. Our aim is full integration, but we are as yet far from that goal. We all wish to encourage human productivity and enrichment as essential elements in the progress of our societies. Unfortunately, however, the prejudices of the non-handicapped and general indifference too often make it difficult for the handicapped to become fully integrated into society. Present forecasts suggest that within the next 20 years approximately 750 million persons will not be able to participate fully, because of a handicap, in activities similar to those of their brothers and sisters. Such a situation is unacceptable.

175. I do not want to enumerate all the activities that have marked the International Year of Disabled Persons in Canada. However, I believe I should cite one or two examples.

176. In May 1980 a Canadian organizing committee was created to pursue the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons within Canada. The Committee, which is independent of the Government, represents many sectors of Canadian society, including disabled persons, private-sector organizations for the disabled and the governments of the provinces and territories. The Government of Canada contributed \$800,000 to the Committee for it to carry out a community liaison programme, and a further \$1 million to fund special projects. The public response to this initiative and the degree of participation by disabled persons has been overwhelming.

177. Also in May 1980, the House of Commons in Ottawa established an all-party special committee to study the needs of disabled persons in Canada and to recommend ways to improve their condition. In February 1981 this Committee tabled a report containing 130 recommendations aimed at all levels of government. The Canadian Federal Government has already responded positively to 56 of those recommendations, and has indicated its intention to announce very soon its decisions on the others.

178. Another initiative that I should particularly like to be undertaken in recognition of this important international year concerns an increase in the benefits paid to the 90,000 severely disabled persons under the Canadian pension plan. I have just made such a proposal to provincial ministers responsible for social affairs, which would almost double the maximum benefits payable to disabled persons under that programme. Under the proposal they would be guaranteed a level of income support approximately equivalent to support payments now available to retired Canadians. This income would be fully indexed, which would allow them to live decently.

179. I have been speaking so far of severely disabled persons who are excluded from the work force. However, we must recognize also that there are many people with lesser degrees of disability who may also require varying amounts of assistance through government programmes. I have therefore also proposed to my provincial colleagues that we give immediate study to the possibility of establishing a comprehensive national disability insurance scheme which would replace our numerous existing programmes and cover all forms of disability.

180. Like all citizens, disabled Canadians would prefer their income to come from a job. To this end the Canadian Government has introduced an experimental programme of partial wage subsidies to help the private sector hire disabled persons. It is estimated that this programme would cost \$25 million in the present fiscal year and \$34 million in the next fiscal year. We hope thus

to place 2,300 handicapped and 4,600 employment-disadvantaged Canadians in permanent jobs in the private sector. More important, we hope that the programme will help change attitudes. The programme also includes grants to assist businesses to restructure workplaces or to purchase special equipment.

181. Obviously all these measures have large financial implications, but there are numerous other initiatives which involve practically no cost and also greatly assist the handicapped by facilitating their contacts with government administrations. As an example I should like to mention an initiative taken by my Ministry in publishing in Braille, in large-character print and on cassette tape all our documentation on family allowances and old-age security.

182. Perhaps the most important success of the International Year of Disabled Persons is that it has helped to foster awareness of the need and the right of disabled persons to shape their own lives. The handicapped themselves have been the principal architects of this new awareness, aided by their friends in Parliament, government and the business world.

183. I would like to confirm Canadian support for the draft resolution adopted by the Third Committee last week, especially for the idea of a long-term programme of action in the follow-up to the International Year.

184. Let there be no doubt that we are pleased with the progress recorded so far in the International Year of Disabled Persons. We will of course continue to respond with enthusiasm both to the United Nations plans for the remainder of this year and to the forthcoming programme of action. We are, however, as we said at the 68th meeting of the Third Committee, concerned about the level of expenses outlined in the report on the financial implications. Without going into detail I should like to recall my Government's support for the Secretary-General's objective of achieving zero real growth in the overall budget for the next biennium; we would not want that aim to be undermined. However, we recognize that within that constraint there must be flexibility in shifting existing resources to meet priority needs.

185. The draft long-term programme of action is undoubtedly the best vehicle for follow-up to the Year. We should like to see the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the non-governmental organizations and, of course, the Member States of the United Nations channel their efforts into its implementation. In this connection, my delegation thinks that the declaration of a symbolic decade might serve to diffuse support for activities related to the disabled, rather than to enhance them. The addition of yet another decade to an already very busy United Nations calendar of decades might also further dilute the value of such designations by the Organization.

186. I would also have reservations concerning the continuance of the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons. Canada believes that programmes for and by the disabled are of such importance that they should be integrated into the programming and regular budgeting of the United Nations. In this spirit we fully agree with the draft resolution that specialized agencies and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations, should be requested to ensure increasing co-operation and co-ordination of their activities and operations relating to the disabled and to undertake measures or to expedite the

measures already under way to improve employment opportunities and access to their buildings and facilities for disabled persons. Without going so far as to ask that a given percentage of jobs in international organizations be set aside for the handicapped, it is none the less important to adopt specific targets to be worked towards as the years go by.

187. We are pleased to note that the draft resolution would also encourage the development and implementation of strategies that would, we hope, reduce the incidence of disability in the world. In this regard, through the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada has centred its attention on the prevention of disability, including the promotion of safe drinking-water, sanitation, immunization against communicable diseases and the training of para-medical personnel. In addition many Agency-supported non-governmental organization projects place strong emphasis on rehabilitation. It may be of further interest to note a special initiative begun this year whereby a programme of embassy-administered funds gives special attention to projects involving disabled persons.

188. The role of the United Nations will nevertheless, remain vital in the pursuit of those objectives. The United Nations must continue, and with renewed vigour, motivate Member States. Why do we stress the role of the United Nations? It is because this prestigious institution is relatively free from the electoral concerns and need to attain short-term results which weigh upon national Governments. I hope that a politician may be allowed to insist that, when it is performed well, the role of the United Nations reinforces the work and initiatives all of us must undertake to change mentalities and attitudes.

189. In conclusion, I express the wish that our joint efforts in the years ahead may make it possible for disabled persons throughout the world to participate fully and equally with their fellow-citizens in the lives of their communities. In so doing, disabled persons will benefit themselves and the community in which they live, and all of us will be the richer.

190. Mr. SCHELTEMA (Netherlands): I have the honour and privilege of reading to the Assembly the following message from Her Royal Highness Princess Juliana, former Queen of the Netherlands, Honorary Chairman of the Netherlands National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons:

“In this Year, a genuine awareness of the problem of what it is to be disabled has awakened the conscience of the world. In all countries the people who have a real and protracted disability are one tenth—one in every 10—of the whole population, even though the causes and appearances may be very different. But all these individuals have a handicap and therefore are dependent on help and understanding.

“This Year is the starting signal for us from now on to attain and increase help and understanding for these roughly 1 billion fellow-citizens. We hope that by ‘full participation and equality’ they will be integrated into society and that they may have full scope for the expansion of their human worth and dignity.

“Their sometimes great talents and often wonderful human qualities can enrich this society. And, as for them themselves, more happiness will be their share.

“An example of the fact that a man with a handicap can be judged and appreciated for his personality was evident when Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President of this great country.

“During this year it has become much clearer that an enormous section of the world’s population has much ground to make up. This is now being discovered everywhere, in more and more places. There is still an endless amount to be done in care and rehabilitation in all these innumerable kinds of handicap—and especially to prevent them.

“For each of these persons with a disability, help is, of course, a difficult task—sometimes an exceedingly difficult one—but in a welfare State there are an ever increasing number of possibilities for this help. Unfortunately, however, in a number of countries much less can be achieved. I believe that it is the moral duty of these welfare States to do their utmost to assist those countries in their predicament. This aid can be given, to the best of the donors’ ability, by fostering rehabilitation and prevention schemes. And obviously the entire responsibility of the recipient countries must then be fully respected.

“Now, what does it feel like to be disabled? It is a sadness, a terrible sorrow, and yet it is a matter of fact. You have to live with it through bright and dark days; you may or may not hope for improvement, and sometimes you fear the contrary.

“Other people are often very shy about your suffering, and then they prefer to avoid or to forget you. And so you have this additional handicap. Or they are too kind, or even patronizing. All these things wound deeply, because all such attitudes prove that people only see your handicap and not your personality. After all, you are just as much a person as anyone else. You, too, have a soul like everyone else. But people make you an outcast. Nevertheless, you are their equal. You have, of course, the same rights—in theory, because much too little thought is given to the fact that you must be able to use your rights and that there must be access to enable you to do this. For example, some places are open to the public, but you cannot go in. Once again you experience an additional handicap.

“And you can do without all that pity. Your handicap is a fact which has to be approached in a matter-of-fact way. You do want human sympathy. Only this leads others truly to understand you and to bring them to a proper and just relationship with you.

“Those who are mentally handicapped require a different approach from those with a physical or sensory disability. Nevertheless, we have the same responsibility towards them. In spite of their being different, they are as much complete human beings as we are. Their hearts crave for human love and sympathy—not for compassion.

“Are not able-bodied people shy in relation to the handicapped because of a very real anxiety which they themselves feel? Because, although one would rather not think about it, each and every one of us knows that we ourselves, too, can at any time become disabled, and that in old age there is a rather greater possibility of this happening. It would be wonderful to be assured that, if this befalls us, a warm and understanding reception will be awaiting us all.

“The United Nations has endeavoured to make the world aware of the happiness this security would mean and of the misfortune of so many. Above all, the United Nations wishes to recognize the disabled just as so many valuable members of the community, with full appreciation of the qualities they possess. This year the United Nations wanted to open our eyes to all this, everywhere in the world, in order that from now on we might strive towards this goal after a real and forceful start. Much has already been set in motion in this year. May the world in 1990 look clearly different from what it does today.

“This year can be the beginning of a process leading to the emancipation of this tenth part of the family of man. Many of them have already created their own organizations, but one can hardly call them emancipation groups yet. Other disabled people are too discouraged or timid for any such endeavours, since they feel excluded as outcasts. It takes courage, after all, to show oneself in public if one's appearance is obviously different from what is regarded as the standard. Who does not understand that feeling of embarrassment that prevents contact with others, as well as the tragedy that this implies?

“It is hard to expect that this large group of the disabled will march with purpose towards emancipation. But how much one hopes that this one person in ten, side by side with the other nine, will dedicate himself with great willpower to the attainment of that goal.

“This is the Year of Disabled Persons—their own Year. It has already led to the very first beginnings of their emancipation, a first awareness that they, in all their diversity, belong to this multitudinous group of humanity which can rise and stand up for itself. This demands a good dialogue between the one and the other nine. And this will have to happen if ever able-bodied and disabled men and women are to live together in harmony.

“And together now, everywhere, we must do all that is humanly possible to prevent the causes of handicaps in the future.”

191. That is the message from Her Royal Highness Princess Juliana.

192. Sir John WILSON (United Kingdom): I am honoured to have this opportunity, on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to join in the discussion on this very special day when the needs of the disabled are at the focal point of world attention. I am blind, and so the aims of this Year have a very personal importance for me. But their objectives also form the basis of all the policies for disabled people in the United Kingdom. I realize, of course, that achieving these aims can pose some very particular difficulties for those countries where the massive scale of the problem of disablement is only now being fully revealed. And for that reason, as so many persons have said in this discussion today, it is of particular importance that in this International Year the Member States have shared each other's experiences and skills.

193. The United Kingdom was one of the sponsors of the resolution which inaugurated this International Year of Disabled Persons. Since then we have taken an active part in the work of the Advisory Committee, work which we wholeheartedly support. That is why we are so pleased

that the Third Committee has adopted by consensus a draft resolution endorsing these proposals. We see it as so vital, as others have said today, that the impetus of this Year should continue, even though many of the structures which have been created for it must necessarily be discontinued.

194. Within the United Kingdom the challenge of the International Year has been met with very real enthusiasm. We have had for some years a fairly sophisticated system of support for disabled people, but this Year has given all of us an opportunity to take stock of what has been done and, even more, of what remains to be done. Our focus has been on the abilities of the disabled and on increasing of public awareness, particularly of the needs and aspirations of the disabled. In Britain and throughout the world we, the disabled, have cause to be grateful to the United Nations, to the Assembly, to the Governments and, if I may say so, to you, Mr. Secretary-General.

195. We in the United Kingdom have laid great emphasis on the role of voluntary organizations, especially organizations of and for the disabled. In every part of the Kingdom committees have been established to stimulate and co-ordinate the effort. Most of the members of these committees, I am glad to say, are themselves disabled or are the parents of disabled children. The Prince of Wales is Patron of these committees and his active interest has contributed very greatly to the Year's success. These committees have been extraordinarily successful; indeed, I would say that there is hardly a town or a village where this Year has not been marked by some special activity. The logo is instantly recognized and is everywhere to be seen. These committees have had sensitive support from the media, which have played an invaluable role in helping their readers, listeners and viewers to break through those frightful age-old prototypes and to see real individuals behind the disability—behind the white cane, the hearing aid, the caliper, the stammering tongue. And at the end of this Year these voluntary committees and the voluntary sector are that much more efficient and that much more competent.

196. The Government, too, has played its essential part. I believe that the United Kingdom is one of few countries in the world which has a specially designated Minister for the Disabled, Mr. Hugh Rossi. He has ensured, with the full encouragement of the Prime Minister and his ministerial colleagues, that all our major government departments have taken special action to mark this year. In July the British Parliament unanimously passed a resolution supporting the objectives of the Year. It led to legislation improving access for disabled people, furthering integration of disabled children in schools, improving parking concessions and, very recently, legislation has strengthened the requirement for all new public buildings to be fully accessible to the disabled.

197. There have been awards, exhibitions, conferences, publications, films—a mass of information directed to the people who need it most.

198. But our Government has been particularly conscious that this is an International Year and that one of its main aims is the prevention of disability. To mark this our Department of Health and Social Security convened an international seminar at Leeds Castle in November. It was under the chairmanship of our former Prime Minister, Lord Home—himself no stranger to the Assembly. The participants—some of whom are here today—were a unique group of international scientists, clinicians, health

administrators and politicians. They were able to concentrate an extraordinary wealth of international experience and skill on practical measures that could be taken to prevent disablement. Their recommendations for immediate action have been promulgated in the Leeds Castle Declaration on the Prevention of Disability. May I commend this Declaration to all the representatives here today. It is being distributed and I hope that all of them will find time to read it.

199. Let me underline some of its main points. It begins: "Disablement is a tragedy in terms of human suffering and frustration, and in terms of numbers." Even to the Assembly, accustomed as it must be to global statistics, there is surely something startling and obscene in the realization that 450 million—perhaps even more—people in the world are disabled. Please do not let that statistic simply wash over us. It is a tenth of the world's population; it is twice the population of the United States.

200. We have been called the world's largest minority, but disablement on that scale must be one of the world's largest reservoirs of human waste and human deprivation. UNICEF has said that a third of this multitude are children; four fifths of them live in the developing countries. Even more alarming as the representative of Malta said just now, the number is increasing: it is increasing with age in the industrialized countries; with population growth in the developing world. The prediction of our Seminar is that unless decisive action is taken very soon the number of the disabled will double by the end of this century.

201. And yet, we undoubtedly have at our disposal today simple and inexpensive technologies which could prevent or cure most of that disablement. Each year 5 million of the world's children are disabled by six preventable infections. These could be controlled in 10 years through immunization, at a cost of about three dollars for each immunized child—three dollars. You might say that is the cost of not being disabled.

202. It is estimated that each year 20 million people are disabled by diseases arising from malnutrition and deprivation. A deliberate attack on these conditions through an inexpensive addition to primary health care could literally save millions from impairment long before any radical change is possible in general economic conditions. Simplified techniques of mass surgery—which can now be performed at minimal cost in improvised village clinics—could save the sight of 10 million people blind from cataract. And that is not just a guess: last year alone, in one programme 165,000 blind people in Asia had their sight restored by a cataract operation, at a cost which worked out to about eight dollars for each person with sight restored. The same sort of technology could improve the hearing of millions of deaf people. It could arrest impairment from leprosy, which at present afflicts 3 million people in the world's leprous area.

203. Disabilities resulting from environmental hazard can often be controlled at a cost which seems ludicrously small. As Mr. Morse said this morning in that excellent presentation for UNDP, what many Governments have been doing in West Africa in controlling the frightful scourge of river-blindness is an excellent example of that. But there are other examples. In areas where goitre is endemic, thousands of children each year could be saved from deaf-mutism and from imbecility by the addition of a microscopic grain of iodine to their daily diet.

204. Avoidable disability afflicts all countries, whether they are industrialized or developing. The world is one, at least in its vulnerability. Many of the disabilities of later life can be postponed or averted. Millions of people—indeed, I believe, 2 million here in the United States—are disabled by heart disease and stroke. The main risk factor there is hypertension, which is nowadays simple to diagnose and treat. Avoidable road accidents disable 15 times as many people as they kill. Each day, more than 100,000 people are injured by occupational accident and, as the representative of the Soviet Union said just now, so many of those accidents are easily preventable.

205. The conclusion of our Seminar—and it is elaborated in convincing detail—is that avoidable disablement, with all its appalling consequences in wasted resources and frustrated lives, need no longer be an inescapable part of our human predicament. What is needed, in the Seminar's view, is not a separate vertical programme: that could be prohibitively expensive. What is needed is the inclusion of the prevention of disability as a precise and attainable objective in all relevant health and development programmes. By such means, we are convinced that prevention on an unprecedented scale, and at no great cost, is one of the options which are now available to the international community over the next 20 years.

206. May I quote from the final part of the Declaration:

"The programme of action to prevent disablement is a logical and essential part of the follow-up to the International Year of Disabled Persons. It would ensure that the next generation did not suffer from the present degree of avoidable disablement and would constitute the most appropriate, effective and long-lasting contribution to the health and happiness of mankind."

207. I have been proud to speak in the Assembly, on behalf of my country, which has such a long tradition of concern for the disabled. But may I end with a personal word in my more accustomed role as one of those 450 million people. This year the United Nations has given the leaders of the disabled an opportunity, for the first time, to bring their aspirations before the world community, in the moving words of the Charter, "to share the right of all humanity to grow, to learn, to work, to love and to be loved". But the mass of the disabled are not rehabilitated, educated, eloquent: they are destitutes; they are mendicants, exposed to the brutalizing trivialities of mendicancy; they are outcasts; they are amongst the loneliest people in this world. Many of them are victims of diseases which should be an obscene anachronism in our modern world.

208. The United Nations, this year, has given them a voice and a platform, and we are eternally grateful. But we recognize that in this perplexing modern world there are limitations even on the options for action of the Assembly, perhaps the greatest of human institutions. But, as Mrs. Shahani said in her speech this morning, this surely is one of those universal causes which can transcend those limitations, commending itself to North and South, to East and West.

209. Thirty years ago, the Assembly formulated the grave Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is within the spirit of that Declaration that this International Year has taken place. Amongst those rights must be something so basic as the right of a human being to move, to hear, to see. And yet, it is understandable if to that disabled tenth of the human race some of those rights

have at times seemed so postponable. The United Nations has given them this year, and it will indeed be the year of the disabled if, following it, Governments, to the best of their ability, reaffirm its principles in their actions and in their budgets, and if the world community can now restate some of those philosophical human rights in terms of achievable, scientific goals.

210. Mr. DJALAL (Indonesia): As is well known, there is a large and growing segment of people disabled by physical, mental and sensory impairment. With rare exceptions, such people are everywhere exposed to physical barriers and social indignities that have greatly handicapped their lives. Owing to variations in socio-economic conditions, the different provisions that each society makes for the well-being of its peoples and the interaction of disability with poverty, the number of disabled persons has constantly increased in both proportional and absolute terms. Consequently, the organization of services for the disabled and the improvement of their position in society continue to pose problems of great magnitude that call for urgent solutions. They have increasingly attracted the attention of the Organization, the specialized agencies, the non-governmental organizations and the various national Governments.

211. It was in that context that my Government welcomed the International Year of Disabled Persons. It has provided an occasion for a world-wide observance of the problems of the disabled and has focused our attention on increasing efforts to deal with the obstacles that have hindered the integration of the disabled into society. Its theme of "Full participation and equality" has created a greater public awareness of the problems in order that more effective strategies and approaches to this problem may be developed and in order to increase the capacity of disabled persons to make constructive contributions to the economic, social, cultural and other aspects of life. Those developments, in my delegation's view, constitute important milestones towards the removal of obstacles in our continuing effort to achieve the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons.

212. As part of the Plan of Action for the International Year and to ensure better and more adequate treatment of the disabled, I should like now briefly to describe the role and activities of the Indonesian National Committee for the Disabled. In Indonesia, the number of disabled persons is currently estimated to be approximately 3.5 million persons out of a total population of 145.7 million. The National Committee, established for the purpose of improving the condition and well-being of the disabled, performs a number of useful functions. First, it provides valuable information to the community regarding different aspects of the problems faced by the disabled and the need to overcome them. Secondly, it explains the rights of the disabled to the enjoyment of life and of the opportunities available to them in leading useful and satisfying lives in society. Thirdly, it appeals to the community effectively to overcome the problems of the disabled by increasing their participation in society and thereby facilitating the achievement of the goal integrating the disabled into society.

213. Furthermore, the Indonesian National Committee has embarked upon a number of important activities intended to provide proper guidance in bringing about the full integration of the disabled into society. The Committee has established working groups to deal with social affairs, rehabilitation, medical and vocational education, information, surveys and research. In accordance with their

mandate, those working groups provide assistance in the form of material aid; they have sent contingents of Indonesian disabled persons to the International Abilympics and to the sports gathering at Osaka, Japan; they have established 30 community-oriented base stations for implementing programmes of social integration and rehabilitation and they have provided special training for medical doctors to treat the disabled. Through those measures, the National Committee has facilitated the development of community support services, aids and equipment to enable the disabled to live normal lives, both at home and within the community. In short, the activities of the Indonesian National Committee of the Disabled have contributed substantially to a greater public awareness of the issue of disability in society and to a greater realization of the potential of the disabled for contributing to the multifaceted activities of society. The experiences gained by the National Committee indicate that it is essential to co-ordinate the activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations, either at national, provincial or local levels.

214. Indonesia, like many other developing countries, has a long way to go in improving the social position of the disabled, in improving vocational rehabilitation and employment conditions, in changing the attitudes of society, in creating public awareness and in ensuring the right of the disabled to normal life, to equality and to full participation in social life. There is a lot to be done in the field of information and data-gathering, in training personnel, in increasing equipment, services and other aids and in enacting legislation on social security, safety and other regulations in various fields.

215. In this connection, the need for effective co-operation between the developed and developing countries through the promotion of technical co-operation and the exchange of information must be stressed. Assistance by UNDP to the on-going efforts to help disabled persons must also be accelerated. Equally, UNDP assistance in the establishment of training institutes and research centres, as well as in the establishment of an inter-organizational task force to support national and regional activities, must be encouraged.

216. The prevention of disability, the rehabilitation of the disabled and the equalization of their opportunities are priority concerns of the developing countries. My delegation therefore strongly recommends the establishment of an international institute for rehabilitation in developing countries. This would ensure the necessary support services for increased technical co-operation in preventing disability and in increasing opportunities for rehabilitation.

217. Finally, as far as the world programme of action is concerned, my delegation believes that it will require a global strategy. The programme should be more realistic and could be readily implemented. It should be defined within a time-frame and allow individual countries to assess their progress within the parameters of their targets, over specified intervals of time. Technical assistance should be designed so as to help the developing countries to support the implementation of the programme. With that approach, the objectives of the world programme of action for disabled persons, namely to help them in their physical and psychological adjustment and to give them the opportunity to share the benefits resulting from their greater participation in daily life, can be fully realized.

218. Mrs. NGUYEN NGOC DUNG (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): For the hundreds of millions of

persons on this earth impaired by physical or mental disabilities, the year 1981, proclaimed the International Year of Disabled Persons by the General Assembly, under the theme "Full participation and equality", will have been a year of hope. Indeed, within the framework of this International Year, remarkable efforts have been made in various countries, by Governments as well as by private non-governmental organizations to achieve its aims. Viet Nam, which is a member of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, is delighted with the interest awakened in the public by the Year and with the establishment of national committees for the Year in 125 countries and territories.

219. Numerous national and international initiatives—competitions involving various professional talents, exhibitions of arts and crafts, special sports events for the blind and for the paraplegic—have helped to draw the public's attention to the abilities and potential of disabled persons. Such initiatives have made a meaningful contribution to changing peoples' attitudes towards them, helping people to understand that the disabled, despite their physical, intellectual or mental disabilities are human beings like everyone else, who have legitimate needs and who are entitled to enjoy the protection of society.

220. However, it is distressing to learn that there are 500 million persons suffering from disabilities throughout the world, of whom 400 million are found in developing countries. For them the situation is particularly acute, because the vast majority must meet the difficulties imposed on them by their disability without any support systems or any means of rehabilitation. They are the victims of poverty, disease and chronic malnutrition. That situation is due to the economic conditions in those countries, aggravated still more by the current economic crisis and by the population explosion. In those countries production is not yet sufficient to provide a decent living for the people. One should also mention another reason in some countries: the absence of adequate government policies to help the disabled, whose care, it must be recognized, requires considerable funding.

221. In this connection, we should like to point out that the transfer of resources and technology from developed to developing countries envisaged within the framework of the new international economic order, economic and social development, and the redistribution of resources and income are indispensable factors to ensure a fundamental solution to the problem of the disabled.

222. With respect to Viet Nam, at the end of the war we did not await the revival of our economy before we ministered to the many wounded and disabled who required urgent care. Most of them who had not received proper care during the war are now receiving medical rehabilitation treatment. In order to discharge the enormous task of protecting and rehabilitating the wounded and disabled, several ministries are providing aid and people's organizations and religious bodies which traditionally promote humanitarian social programmes are actively participating in that work.

223. The proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons is fully in accordance with the policy of the Vietnamese Government. That is why our country was among the first to set up a national committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, under the aegis of Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho, the Acting President of the Republic. The Viet Nam National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons is working in close co-

operation with other branches of the Government to encourage their role in allocating funds or raw materials for centres for rehabilitation and professional training, in setting up production units to ensure the full participation of the disabled, and in educating young parents in order to prevent the birth of disabled children and reduce the neglect of children, which is frequently at the root of much infant disability.

224. An overview of the activities undertaken by the Viet Nam National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons in observance of this Year is provided in its report [see A/36/726]. I should like to mention the essential features of that report.

225. With regard to legislation concerning disabled persons, the Council of Ministers adopted a decision in March 1981 on the direction and organization of activities to provide professional training to the war-wounded and to disabled persons. Various national conferences were organized by the National Committee in co-ordination with the different ministries—the National Conference on the Education of Deaf-Mute Children was organized in co-operation with the Ministry of Education; the National Conference on Mental Diseases was organized in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health. With respect to the organization of local committees for the International Year of Disabled Persons, these local committees were established throughout the 40 provinces and large towns of the country, where basic surveys are being carried out on conditions for the disabled.

226. With respect to the prevention of disabilities, seminars on work safety were arranged for factory managers and workers. The State has promulgated rules and procedures concerning dangerous work.

227. With regard to functional rehabilitation, during the first quarter of 1981, the Ministry of War-Wounded and Social Protection's six centres for plastic surgery received 7,634 persons for functional rehabilitation and supplied 6,712 pieces of equipment and 215 wheelchairs. With respect to education, besides the school of the Ministry of War-Wounded and Social Protection, 12 towns and provinces have set up schools for deaf-mute children. In addition to traditional education, some towns provide disabled persons with an opportunity to take special courses, particularly in the following areas: dressmaking, embroidery, basket-weaving, book-keeping, carpentry, radio repairs. With respect to production and employment, the local authorities in numerous provinces have drawn up a list of jobs and occupations reserved exclusively for the disabled and are providing facilities to production centres which employ the labour of disabled persons, for example, by granting loans, supplying equipment and seeking trade outlets.

228. In the framework of activities undertaken during the International Year of Disabled Persons in our country, we found that social services for the disabled cost five to ten times as much as those for able-bodied persons. However solicitous one may be towards them and however judicious policies on their behalf may be, their suffering can be only partially mitigated, as in the great majority of cases it is practically impossible to give back to these unfortunate persons what they have lost. On the basis of these considerations, my Government feels that the prevention of disability is of major importance and must constitute an essential part of State policy towards the disabled.

229. The causes of disability are numerous, as I have already mentioned, but it cannot be denied that a large number of disabilities are caused by war, by the use of sophisticated anti-personnel and chemical weapons, such as Agent Orange which causes chromosome disorders and leads to serious genetic problems, including congenital malformations. Millions of persons in Viet Nam who survived the war have been affected or mutilated by them to varying degrees. The United States war did not only leave victims among the Vietnamese people. The press and the mass media of this country have frequently reported the harmful consequences of the war for the Viet Nam veterans, of which, among other disorders one might mention post-traumatic stress, an illness Viet Nam war veterans brought back home with them. It is characterized by nightmares and nervous depression, which has been traced to the guilt feelings of the survivors, and in extreme cases it may lead to murder—a large number of such cases have appeared in court. According to experts of the American Psychiatric Association and the Veterans Administration, this syndrome affects 700,000 soldiers who served in the Viet Nam war. One cannot deny the urgent need to make every effort to prevent wars from breaking out, with their inevitable toll of disability and mutilation.

230. As regards the prevention of work-related accidents, Governments must adopt appropriate measures and simultaneously combat ignorance and neglect, which in our modern society frequently lead to fatal consequences.

231. In several respects, therefore, my delegation considers that the International Year of Disabled Persons will have had an important impact in an area of profoundly humanitarian activity for the promotion of human rights and the rights of the disabled throughout the world. Most of them have paid with their own bodies, working to serve their society or to defend their country; others have been the victims of poverty, neglect or ignorance or of the war politics of governments; but all, without exception, and whatever the reason for their handicap, have the right to assistance.

232. The solution extends beyond borders and calls for international aid. My delegation expresses its heartfelt thanks to all countries and all non-governmental humanitarian organizations that have so far given precious aid to the legion of disabled in my country. We should like to cite here only a few examples among many. With the aid of the German Democratic Republic, we were able to build the Centre for Rehabilitation and Orthopaedics in Hanoi, which provides prosthetic devices for the entire country. Organizations in the Netherlands have helped us to establish a Braille printing press and have provided us with machinery for building wheelchairs. Projects are under way to build a centre for rehabilitation and orthopaedics for paraplegics and polio victims with the aid of non-governmental organizations in Norway. Ambulances for disabled children have been sent to us by humanitarian organizations in the Federal Republic of Germany. There are many others.

233. The task remains enormous and it is in inverse ratio to our means. The Viet Nam National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons would therefore like closer co-operation and to exchange experience with its counterparts in other countries in carrying out this extremely humanitarian task of helping to ease the suffering of persons with disabilities in our respective countries.

234. The proclamation of a United Nations decade of disabled persons for the period 1983-1992 might help in this respect, and we trust that the Advisory Committee will consider that possibility at its next session.

235. My delegation, which became a sponsor of the draft resolution adopted by the Third Committee, is convinced that the momentum generated by the International Year of Disabled Persons will continue in the coming years and will rally an increasing number of persons throughout the world to action on behalf of those millions of unfortunate human beings who, despite their infirmities, have every right to a worthy place in our hearts and in this world in which we all live.

236. Mr. ANDERSON (Australia): Australia joins with other delegations in welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Disabled Persons.

237. I should like to note first of all that Australia endorses the establishment of a long-term programme of action as a follow-up to the activities of the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Australian Government believes that the objectives of the Year of full participation and equality will be achieved and indeed can be realized only if the momentum established during 1981 is translated effectively into continuing programmes in the years ahead.

238. In recognizing that the International Year of Disabled Persons is only a beginning, the Australian Government has implemented continuing measures which, it is hoped, will ensure that disabled people are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life. I should like to touch very briefly upon some of these initiatives.

239. Recognizing the central role of government in facilitating the removal of inequalities experienced by disabled Australians, the Australian Government has introduced new measures to ensure examination of the effect of all Government policies on disabled persons. Under these measures, every government department and statutory authority will review new policy proposals to identify areas which could have a direct effect on disabled people.

240. In recent years much has been achieved by education authorities in Australia in seeking new approaches in the pursuit of maximum fulfilment for all disabled children. New programmes have included early diagnosis and intervention, the creation of special facilities for isolated handicapped girls and boys, the appointment of additional resource teachers to schools, the provision of special services to children in hospitals and the building of special schools or units within regular schools. Common to all these initiatives is a belief that children should not be isolated from the mainstream of educational activities on account of their handicaps, but that these children should be integrated with others, to the extent consistent with the interests of both. During the International Year of Disabled Persons, a particular concern of the Australian Government has been to provide additional funds to facilitate the integration of handicapped children into regular schools.

241. In the crucial area of employment, special training programmes for disabled people have been established by the Government, to enable the handicapped to take their place in the workforce. The Government reimburses employers for any approved modification needed to make the

workplace suitable for training in employment. Work preparation projects for unemployed disabled people are also provided.

242. Finally, I mention the Government's national publicity and community information campaign for the International Year, which was designed to raise the public's awareness of disabled people and their needs. The latest survey commissioned to test the effectiveness of the campaign showed that by July 1981 77 per cent of Australians were aware of the Year.

243. In focusing the attention of the world community on the plight of disabled people in society, the International Year of Disabled Persons has highlighted the particular incidence of disability among developing countries arising from malnutrition, communicable disease and other related problems. The Australian Government acknowledges and supports the objectives of the Secretary-General's report in encouraging Member States to explore new ways of furthering technical co-operation between developed and developing countries in the field of disability. In line with these overall objectives, I am pleased to record that over one million Australian dollars has already been disbursed or programmed by Australia, as part of our 1980-1982 overseas aid budgets, in support of a multiplicity of projects designed to equip, train and in other ways assist disabled persons and organizations for the handicapped in developing countries.

244. Australia would like to take this opportunity of placing on record its appreciation for the sustained efforts of the Secretariat in ensuring the success of the Year, and we would note in particular the special contribution made by the staff of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

245. In these closing stages of what may justifiably be described as a truly great International Year, let me re-echo the concern of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in Australia that the momentum achieved will not be lost but will continue to result in effective programmes designed to assist all disabled people to take their rightful share in an international community which respects a wide variety of human differences.

246. Mrs. RACHID (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Morocco welcomes the significance attached by the international community to the problems of disabled persons by devoting two days of discussion in the General Assembly to this question. This occasion will enable us to take stock of activities carried out in this sphere, to lay down new strategies and to determine ways and means for concrete action which above all requires a contribution on the part of all Member States, in particular the developed countries. Indeed, the latter, through their experience in this area and the advanced stage of their technology, can, through close and effective co-operation, aid the developing countries, which have great need of such assistance.

247. Such action, moreover, is fully justified after the activities undertaken in the course of the International Year of Disabled Persons. We should be particularly satisfied with the concrete results obtained by these activities, which have been reflected, *inter alia* in such positive work such as the fruitful debate in the Advisory Committee, which submitted a complete report to the General Assembly, and in the World Conference on Actions and Strategies on Education, Disability Prevention and Integration of Disabled Persons, organized by UNESCO at

Torremolinos, Spain, from 2 to 7 November 1981. That Conference achieved great success, for it profited from the participation of disabled persons, who together produced a Declaration known as the Sundberg Declaration, which represents a new landmark in the action taken by the international community. The delegation of Morocco would like to voice the wish that this Declaration, which was adopted by representatives of 130 countries, be the subject of a specific study of the General Assembly at the present session.

248. This attention on the part of the international community also responds, in part, to the needs of disabled persons of whom the overwhelming majority are in the developing countries. United Nations statistics attest to this: as is known, 80 per cent of the disabled in the world, or some 400 million people, live in the developing countries. Moreover, of these 400 million, 350 million reside in countries where there is no support system for them and where the population explosion inevitably increases the number of disabled persons.

249. In particular, we should emphasize the African countries whose historical, geographic and, in particular, ecological situation makes essential an intensive and continued highlighting of the critical situation of disabled persons in that region. If we consider that poverty, misery, hunger, malnutrition, wars, lack of education for children and in the family are factors which engender disabilities, and that that continent has the greatest number of States considered by the United Nations to be the least developed, and if we reflect also on the fact that average life expectancy there is the lowest and infant mortality the highest in the world, then the tragic situation of the disabled in Africa will be easily understood.

250. It is in the interests of all countries to prevent a worsening of the situation of disabled persons who, through a combination of circumstances beyond their control, find themselves physically and mentally disadvantaged within their own society.

251. There is reason to welcome the fact that the international community has finally begun to consider their fate, but there is a danger that, as years pass and enthusiasm wanes, disabled persons may once again be consigned to oblivion, in particular if, confronted with the need to solve major development problems, the developing countries find themselves obliged to make priority choices, which is surely not the case for the industrialized countries. What is more, as opposed to the situation in advanced societies, disabled persons in Africa do not have an opportunity to form unions that could defend their interests, and clearly they cannot rely on pressure groups capable of making their voices heard and of giving a true idea of their situation.

252. That is why it is indispensable for the international community to follow their situation very closely and to become more and more involved with their fate and for the industrialized countries to pool their efforts in order to render material, technical and financial assistance and to bring hope finally to millions of blind, deaf, paralysed and mentally handicapped persons, in various parts of the world. The United Nations, which is ever present wherever co-operation is required, through dynamic and positive action on behalf of disabled persons, can bring about better understanding between governments and peoples and the establishment of an international social and humanitarian order that will not fail to promote justice

and peace, factors that are indispensable for the well-being of all, and particularly disabled persons.

253. My delegation makes an urgent and solemn appeal to the United Nations, to its institutions, specialized agencies and to governmental and non-governmental organizations and to philanthropic individuals and associations to grant increased assistance, within the framework of regional programmes envisaged in the world programme of action, for disabled persons in developing countries in general and the countries of Africa in particular. Bearing in mind the size of the problem, we believe that a great deal still remains to be done; hence the attention of the international community must in no wise be relaxed. The Moroccan delegation hopes that the General Assembly will proclaim a United Nations decade for disabled persons, as it has proclaimed such decades in other cases.

254. The actions to be undertaken in regard to disabled persons are enormous and very varied. The Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, of which Morocco is a member, will in the course of its next session be considering in greater depth measures likely to guarantee the full participation and integration of disabled persons in all levels of the development process.

255. My delegation particularly wishes to stress prevention and rehabilitation in rural areas where there exists no support system, the training of specialized personnel in the education and health sectors, and introduction of methods of disability prevention methods notably through the establishment of vaccine laboratories, through research and the development of artificial limbs and equipment.

256. Morocco welcomes the joint project of the Organization of African Unity [OAU] and the ILO to establish a regional pan-African centre for disabled persons and hopes that it will receive the technical and financial assistance needed for it to function.

257. Despite the limited resources at its disposal and the difficulties with which it is confronted, my country has made immense efforts in this respect. It is honoured to be able to offer the international community a contribution, albeit modest, of its experience in prevention, rehabilitation and social reintegration. Thus a national committee for disabled persons has been set up. It is presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Meryem, who launched a significant information and awareness campaign throughout the country, proceeded to study the setting up of a national bureau for disabled persons, finalized a bill for disabled persons and received the support of the Government, which also shows its interest in the work of the voluntary associations of the country.

258. A unique event in the annals of the third world was organized by Morocco—special national Olympic games in which 150 children from various centres for the disabled throughout the country successfully participated. Those games had a particular impact and a striking effect in serving the cause of disabled persons. Finally, Morocco will celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons throughout its provinces on 11 December of this year, with conferences, round-table discussions, interviews with disabled persons, artistic and cultural activities and exhibitions of paintings by disabled artists.

259. It is with legitimate pride that we view the activities undertaken during the International Year inspired by the close co-operation between OAU and the League of Arab States. We also hope to see the General Assembly

proclaim a world day for disabled persons which, on the international level and above all on the national level, would assist in promoting interest and keeping the attention of all members of society unflinchingly fixed on the lot of disabled persons. This attention and interest are indispensable if we wish to see disabled persons participate fully on an equal footing at all levels and in all areas of social life. Their dignity, their respect, their freedom and their well-being are at stake.

260. Everything must be set in motion to implement the objectives of the International Year and, we hope, of the future decade. No one can remain insensitive to the tragedy of millions of disabled human beings bent under the weight of their destiny. The Latin poet Terence said, "I am a man, and nothing human leaves me unmoved." We should like to hope that all the countries represented here will respond to that thought of the poet and act together in this noble task on behalf of disabled persons.

261. Miss KHAPARDE (India): It has been variously estimated that some 500 million persons around the world are in one way or another disabled. In other words, one person in every ten in the world suffers a disability. Of those an estimated 80 per cent live in developing countries. In the developing countries, an estimated 120 million children are disabled. Those figures should make us realize the timeliness of observing this year as the International Year of Disabled Persons.

262. Disability places limitations upon the activities of an individual. Due to the prejudices and perceptions accumulated by society over the centuries, the disabled are seen as either burdens on society or incapable of normal human intercourse. The prejudices of society are reinforced through stereotyped portrayals in literature and art forms, legends and fables, fairy tales and horror stories. Such perceptions and prejudices tend to create in the disabled a sense of incapacity and even fear of participating in normal human intercourse.

263. Only very recently has there emerged the awareness that disabilities of various kinds are the results of factors such as birth difficulties, inadequate nutrition, unsanitary conditions, preventable diseases, infections, accidents and several other factors which could have made a disabled person of any one of us. Necessary prevention and rehabilitation strategies, special education and suitable training, the application of technology and the use of technological aids can enable the disabled to participate as full and productive members of society.

264. In India, in preparation for the International Year of Disabled Persons, my Government set up a national committee last year under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Education and Social Welfare. The Committee held its first meeting in May 1980 and approved the National Plan of Action. The specific objectives in the National Plan, to be achieved in the light of our present resources, include evolving a national policy on the disabled which would encompass education, training, employment, measures to achieve full social integration and protection and guarantees under the law; preparing a prospective development plan for rehabilitation to provide, eventually, comprehensive rehabilitation services; initiating practical programmes of immediate and significant benefit for the disabled; initiating programmes for the integration of the disabled into the community; giving a positive rural bias to services to the handicapped; developing and putting into operation a comprehensive and pragmatic national programme for the prevention of dis-

abilities; providing for research and development, through our national research institutions, of techniques and technologies for the rehabilitation of the disabled; developing a network of information and publicity services to disseminate information on new techniques and equipment, to create awareness of the potential of the disabled and to eradicate social prejudices; and collecting relevant data on the disabled in the country.

265. The focus of the programme under the National Plan would be to develop a nucleus of services for disabled children under 14 years of age, to extend employment opportunities for the disabled and to build a reliable national data base on disabilities. These areas have been selected since, given our limited resources, it is necessary to lay emphasis on sensitive areas which are likely to yield the best results.

266. A broad programme covering various sectors, including employment disability prevention, vocational training, rural programmes, research, legislation and publicity has been included in our national programme, to stimulate national action on a wide front.

267. We have arranged for copies of our National Plan of Action to be made available to delegations and I would not, therefore, wish to go into more detail. I should, however, like to say a few words about activities in India.

268. It is our view that equal emphasis should be given to prevention and rehabilitation. We have undertaken various measures for the prevention of disability as well as for the social and economic rehabilitation of the disabled.

269. In the field of prevention, my Government has undertaken massive programmes for the eradication of diseases such as polio, blindness, smallpox, filaria, malaria and leprosy. For the duration of the Sixth Plan, 1980-1985, the outlay for the control of these and other communicable diseases is Rs. 5,240 million. An additional Rs. 7,200 million is being provided for medical care, including hospitals and dispensaries, medical education and research, and for promoting traditional systems of medicine. I should emphasize that the total allocation of Rs. 18,210 million for the five-year period represents an increase of more than 250 per cent in the outlay for these sectors over the 1974-1979 period.

270. In keeping with our programme's focus on children below 14 years of age, we are extending the programme of the Integrated Child Development Services scheme to provide a package of services which includes nutritional intervention and immunization help in the prevention of disability. We hope to increase the number of Development Services projects from the present level of 200 to 600 by the end of the Sixth Plan period, in 1985-1986.

271. With regard to rehabilitation, new programmes are being created and existing ones strengthened. While there are already national institutes for the visually handicapped and the orthopaedically handicapped, national institutes for those with hearing handicaps and for the mentally retarded are currently being set up. Institutes which are currently functioning in India include the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, the Training Centre for the Adult Deaf, the School for Partially Deaf Children, the Model School for Mentally Retarded Children, the Institute for the Physically Handicapped, the Rehabilitation Centre at the Safdarjung Hospital and the All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. These institutions provide a wide range of educational and training

programmes and also perform research activities. Some of them also manufacture technological devices and appliances in collaboration with the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of the Government of India and various Indian institutes of technology.

272. As part of the rehabilitation programme, we are initiating a massive programme to place disabled children in ordinary schools, where they will be provided with special support from trained teachers and through special equipment and materials. We initiated experimental programmes of integrated education in 1974 and the results have established their value.

273. The interaction of disabled children with normal children has led to mutual understanding at a very impressionable age. At the same time, the disabled child is spared the sorrow of parting with his or her family. This also avoids costly institutional care which, all too often, leads to a lasting sense of dependence. We intend to cater for half a million children in this category over the next 20 years.

274. To promote the education of the disabled, the Government provides for fellowships and scholarships from the primary to the post-graduate level. The central Government provided Rs. 6 million this year under this scheme, which also covers engineering, medical and professional courses.

275. In order to provide employment opportunities for the disabled, the Government of India has already established 18 special employment exchanges in different parts of the country, while special officers have been posted in several other employment exchanges. There are 12 vocational rehabilitation centres in different parts of the country to provide vocational training and psychological evaluation for the disabled. We propose to expand these existing services during the Sixth Plan period. As a measure for promoting the employment of the disabled, the Government of India has already reserved for them 3 per cent of the vacancies in certain categories of posts in Government offices and in public-sector undertakings. We are also encouraging training programmes for self-employment. Another scheme, operated over the last five years, provides for the disabled to receive in-plant training in industrial and commercial establishments. This programme is being further expanded. Under another scheme, banks are providing loans at reduced rates of interest to the disabled for undertaking economic ventures.

276. We are also providing assistance to voluntary organizations for the establishment of institutions for the education, training and rehabilitation of disabled persons. The involvement of voluntary organizations in such services have proved to be extremely valuable, and we believe that it is essential to enlist their support, given the magnitude of the problem in India. During this year Rs. 11.2 million was given in assistance to 114 such organizations in different parts of the country.

277. The virtual absence of data in regard to the disabled has been a major problem in designing realistic programmes. The estimate of 10 per cent of a country's population being disabled is a useful frame of reference; but, in the case of a country like India, with its large population, it is not adequate to assess the magnitude and size of the problem. We have therefore undertaken large-scale sample surveys of disabled persons since July of this year. The surveys being conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization are aimed at gathering information in

rural, as well as in urban, areas about the size, needs and other characteristics of the disabled population. The surveys are designed to provide information also on the magnitude of the problem of disability, its probable causes, the extent of facilities available for medical rehabilitation, and the gaps as felt by the disabled themselves. It would also include information on social adaptation, developmental milestones and behavioural patterns, particularly of children in the age group of 5 to 14 years. The sample survey would cover 1.2 million households in 6,000 villages and 4,000 urban blocks. We expect to have the results of that survey in the near future. In addition, the decennial census undertaken this year will provide us with information on the total number of totally crippled, totally blind and totally mute persons in India.

278. I have spoken in some detail of the efforts being made in India to deal with the problems of disability and to help the disabled become fully integrated in society. I have not been able to touch on all the activities that are going on in India, but what I have said should give some indication of our efforts. I would be most happy to share further detailed information with interested delegations or anyone else.

279. We are happy to note that the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Assistance in the Field of Disability and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries was held at Vienna in August. We are also happy to note the convening of the World Conference at Torremolinos by UNESCO. We intend to study the recommendations and conclusions of those two meetings to determine their relevance and applicability to Indian conditions.

280. We attach great importance to international co-operation in solving problems relating to disability. In particular, I should mention the need for a greater flow of technology, technological information and know-how. Such a flow of information would be of particular help to developing countries and enable us to provide to the disabled the benefits of technology in the form of artificial limbs, aids, and so on.

281. The International Year of Disabled Persons is drawing to a close. In three weeks it will become a part of history; however, the disabled themselves and their problems will continue to remain with us. We hope that the efforts initiated this year will soon show results. Let us re-dedicate ourselves with renewed vigour in the years to come to the task of meeting the challenge posed by the problems of disability and of ensuring the full integration of the disabled within society.

282. Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since 16 December 1976, the date on which the General Assembly in its resolution 31/123 proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, my Government has welcomed that initiative with enthusiasm because it considers this the first time that attention has been drawn at the international level to a problem which is an everyday crisis, in particular in the developing countries where its causes are more serious. My Government has worked tirelessly to meet the five objectives set forth in the resolution. To that end, President Luís Herrera Campins, in his address at the end of the year 1980, stated:

“With the slogan ‘Full participation and equality’, an attempt is being made to awaken a sense of collective responsibility, with widespread participation in

planning and implementing actions to meet the two focal points of these problems—prevention and rehabilitation. We must resolve at the Venezuelan level to respond humanely and patriotically to the five major objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons.”

283. The proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons was welcomed by all Member States, in particular the developing countries, where, as I have said, this problem is assuming alarming proportions. We have no doubt whatever that for the international community it will indeed be a challenge to promote the total integration of 450 to 500 million disabled into society—the only way that the theme for the Year of “Full participation and equality”, will become reality.

284. In the report submitted by the Secretary-General one notes that the observance of the Year has awakened greater public awareness of the ability and aptitude of the disabled to participate in economic, cultural and other aspects of social life. The report also emphasizes that the theme of the Year, “Full participation and equality”, and its objectives are a goal that will have to be achieved in the long term, particularly in the developing countries, where most disabled live.

285. The creation by the General Assembly, in resolution 33/170, of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons gave impetus to the preparatory work for the Year, since at its first session it recommended to the Assembly the adoption of the Plan of Action. At the second session the Committee studied the implementation of the Plan of Action and its public information programme, as well as various ways of enhancing the participation of the disabled and their organizations in the International Year of Disabled Persons, and a long-term world plan of action to supplement the activities of the Year. At its third session, besides assessing the complementary activities of the Year, it examined the possibilities of continuing the activities of the International Institute for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Developing Countries.

286. One of the major aims of the Advisory Committee was to promote the formation of national committees in various regions, with all activities of those national committees co-ordinated by the Advisory Committee, which has provided them with the guidelines for improving the social and economic status of the disabled and providing them with equal opportunities. In this connection, my delegation would like to make an appeal that all of the experience and success achieved by the International Year of Disabled Persons be put to good use and be pursued within the framework of the world plan of action, in the certainty that above and beyond achieving its aims we will be rendering justice and performing a profoundly human work.

287. The report of the Secretary-General also praises the national committees for having prepared national programmes for equal opportunities, the prevention of handicaps and the rehabilitation of the disabled, as well as creating working groups, selecting areas of priority and initiating new projects or reactivating already existing programmes which serve as a basis for future activities and for policies relating to the social integration of the disabled.

288. The Year has also afforded an opportunity to define new measures and adapt existing legislation to the needs and requirements of the disabled.

289. As far as Venezuela is concerned, the National Committee has worked with a great sense of vision and enthusiasm and has established state committees. In implementation of the projects included within the world plan of action, a series of events have taken place, of which I will mention those we consider the most important.

290. The Sixth Venezuelan Congress of Public Health was held, the major topic of which was the disabled. A draft law was submitted to fill a legislative gap and provide shelter and legal protection for the disabled so as to promote their full integration into the social context to which they belong, and to meet the economic and political necessity of enhancing that human potential to its maximum—conditions required for Venezuela to speed up its entry into the workings of a developed system.

291. The legal tradition of a country is related to the juridical provision it makes for its disabled, which is a demonstration of its social level and cultural development. The degree of a nation's civilization can be judged by the attention it pays to the least favoured of its citizens. The integration of the disabled into the social environment and the further development of their potential, can only be achieved if there is a range of conditions that provide quality and quantity to all its beneficiaries. This would lead to enhancement of the disabled's capacity to serve the nation.

292. The draft law for the protection and rehabilitation of the disabled includes long-range and short-range provisions relating to education, medical assistance, social welfare, legal rights, labour and recreation for the improvement of the living standards of the disabled. Its implementation would set in motion an entire process of raising the awareness of the public concerning acceptance of the rights and duties of the disabled as citizens and full-fledged members of and participants in society. It will also encourage and stimulate the disabled to take part in remunerative production and social activity, allowing them to participate as active partners in a changing society.

293. The objectives of the draft law are as follows: the State should ensure the implementation of all social rights so as to eliminate and compensate for any possible inequalities existing between the disabled and other citizens; measures be promoted for the prevention of all disabilities; the disabled must be given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of education, rehabilitation, vocational training, medical assistance and recreation; early encouragement should be given to the adaptation of the disabled to their communities, to the development of their abilities and skills and to their introduction into the market of remunerative labour; publicity campaigns should be carried out to make the public more aware of the need to integrate the disabled into their environment.

294. The draft law is designed to serve as a legal tool, a support for the physically and mentally disabled, that will enable them satisfactorily to meet the inherent need of every human being to grow spiritually, to develop his innate capabilities to the maximum, to move about freely in his environment, to know what is going on around him, to interact with his peers, to communicate, to be able to give and receive, as well as to be useful to his

community. Its limitations are those of meeting only the needs common to all the disabled; it does not yet cover the full range of specific measures needed for each one of the categories of disabled.

295. Efforts have been undertaken to increase public awareness through the use of television in order to topple the barriers preventing the disabled from living in their society. It is necessary to evince a political will to assert and implement the norms required to achieve this goal. States that do not meet this challenge are thereby wasting authentic values.

296. A charter for the 1980s has been drafted and promulgated, with the following objectives: to initiate in all countries a plan for the prevention of as many disabilities as possible and for providing all families and individuals with appropriate preventive services; to ensure that every person affected, and the family of every such person, receives the appropriate services of rehabilitation, assistance and necessary support so as to reduce the hardships that are caused and to make it possible for everyone to enjoy a full life and constructive work in society; to adopt all necessary measures to ensure maximum integration and participation of the disabled in all areas of collective life; and to disseminate information concerning the disabled, their potential and their limitations, as well as on the prevention and treatment of disabilities, so as to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of these problems and their social importance.

297. Similarly, my delegation is most pleased to announce that the Senate of the Congress of Venezuela, at its meeting on 30 October 1981, made the following proclamation, and I quote:

“The Senate of the Republic of Venezuela,

“Considering that the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons,

“Considering that there are approximately 450 million persons who are unable fully to participate in daily activities owing to physical or sensory disabilities;

“Considering that the situation is particularly serious in developing countries, where the basic facilities for rehabilitation are few or non-existent,

“Considering that many of the disabilities of children could be prevented and that the majority of them need not become incapacitating,

“Considering that it is necessary to promote and develop programmes for prevention, assistance, special education and rehabilitation of the disabled through coordinated activities and by combining the efforts of the public and private sectors,

“Considering that Venezuela, by presidential decree, supported the declaration of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons and established the National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons in order to carry out programmes designed to achieve its goals,

“Agrees to support the programme of work and the activities carried out by the Committee, as well as any other initiatives that might be taken by public or private sectors to aid disabled persons;

“Encourages public and private bodies to utilize the services of disabled persons who have received training and rehabilitation enabling them efficiently to carry out the activities for which they have been prepared;

“Expresses the will of the Senate of the Republic to study draft legislation submitted in order to update and modernize existing legislation concerning the disabled;

“Decides to publicize this agreement.”

298. My delegation is also pleased to report that the Venezuelan Postal Administration, to initiate and give its support to the International Year of Disabled Persons, issued a commemorative stamp with the logo of the International Year of Disabled Persons and bearing its theme, “Full participation and equality”.

299. All this demonstrates my country's interest in the problem and the fact that we shall spare no effort to give it all possible support in order to ensure that such persons may be integrated into society.

300. Before concluding, I should like to ask all delegations here, when reporting to their Governments, to encourage them to continue to co-operate in order to assist this category of persons, who, because they are disabled, are deprived of many of the things to which they have a right. Five hundred million disabled people place their hopes in what we may be able to do. Let us not betray them.

301. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 4th plenary meeting on 18 September 1981, I now call upon Mr. James Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF.

302. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund): I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the General Assembly on behalf of UNICEF and to speak on the important subject before it.

303. Last year, I reported: “Of the 122 million children born in the International Year of the Child, one in every ten is now dead”. Now, as the International Year of Disabled Persons draws to a close, there is unfortunately another “1 in 10” statistic. Of the 110 million children born during this International Year of Disabled Persons who survive their first year of life, one in 10 will become disabled. Of those 12 million who do not survive their first year, and of the 5 million additional children under the age of 5 who also die each year, the percentage of disabled is far greater than one in 10, with their disability being a principal contributing cause of their premature death. Indeed, there is a trait common to many of those who do not survive and those who only barely survive: they suffer the consequences of the hunger, disease, ignorance and lack of support which condemn far too many people in the developing countries—infants, children, their mothers and many more—either to death or to hopelessness.

304. Is hopelessness the only future for the disabled child? In a world that has already left behind in poverty one quarter of its people, must one in 10 be left even further behind, in despair, particularly in the current prolonged global recession? No! In the view of UNICEF that need not be so.

305. Just as the world has it within its capacity, at a cost that is meagre relative to the stakes involved, to bring an end to the gross poverty afflicting one quarter of humanity, so too have we within our capacity, likewise at modest cost, to bring an end to the mass disabling of lives as a consequence of malnutrition, disease and ignorance. Indeed, each effort contributes to the other. In each case, the return on the world's investment is three-fold, two elements of which can be measured in tangible economic terms: first, in reduction of the subsequent costs of treating the consequences of disability; secondly, in a geometric expansion of the productive contribution of those who have been assisted by the initial investment; and, thirdly, in the moral decency of enabling millions more people to share fully in the opportunities of life. In a mid- to long-term perspective, the economic return on cost-effective approaches to disablement can equal or even exceed that on comparable sums invested in factories, ports and roads.

306. In a very real sense, UNICEF's mission is the prevention of mental and physical impairments and disabilities. The vast majority of UNICEF's activities, as a global advocate for children and as a co-operator with Governments, are geared towards assuring the necessary inputs to children's lives—before they are born, in their infancy and through their childhood—which could prevent the occurrence of unnecessary impairments and reduce the consequences of those impairments that do occur.

307. The International Year of the Child, in 1979, prompted the most comprehensive examinations of the needs of children ever undertaken in many countries, and, in country after country, our attention was called to the special situation of disabled children, and also to the fact that extension and enhancement of our regular programmes supporting basic services and primary health care are the most effective approach to the prevention and rehabilitation of disabilities. Attention to disabilities is not “a side issue” which “maybe we will get to later on, but right now our business is development”. Attention to disabilities, as preceding speakers have noted, is integral to development and development itself, especially social development rooted in poor communities aimed at involving poor people themselves, is the world's best weapon against disabilities.

308. There is a matter of priorities. The problem of disabilities can be addressed in two contexts: prevention and rehabilitation. Practical and reasonable approaches to both prevention and rehabilitation involve, first, identification of priorities. How do we get the most value, the most help for the most people, from our extremely limited resources? Among the priorities which we at UNICEF have identified and to which we are directing our attention are the following six.

309. Priority 1 is an emphasis on prevention over cure and rehabilitation. In short, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. World-wide expansion of a programme of immunization could save 5 million children a year from disabilities caused by poliomyelitis, measles, tetanus, whooping-cough, diphtheria and to a limited extent tuberculosis, at a cost of only \$3 for each child.

310. Priority 2 is the early detection of impairment and intervention to prevent disability, rather than waiting until too late and needing to cure serious disability or endure it, or, as is often said, “a stitch in time saves nine”. At least 100,000 children currently lose their sight each year

as a result of nutritional blindness, caused mainly by vitamin A deficiency, which Sir John Wilson, who is with us this evening, has correctly called "needless blindness".

311. Priority 3 is, when curative measures are required, emphasis on those for whom relatively small investment can offer the greatest benefit. Thus, one dollar can provide enough antibiotic ointment to treat seven children afflicted with trachoma, which, if left untreated, can lead to blindness. Application of the ointment requires neither hospitals, doctors, or even health workers, but simply the caring hands of a parent or even a brother or sister.

312. Priority 4 is attention to the normal development of the attributes of the child as well as to limiting the disability, with particular attention to integrating the disabled into the development process. Far too much harm has been done undermining a child's ability to take his place in his family, his community and his world, focusing too much attention on his disability, assuming that he is destined to be dragged down by his disability and to be a permanent burden on his family and his community and too little attention has been placed on enhancing his abilities. Ninety per cent of all disabled children can be integrated into regular schools and primary education programmes.

313. Priority 5 is attention to the role of the family, including sibling children, and the community in the prevention, detection, and treatment of disabilities, as compared to reliance upon more costly, and usually distant, institutions. Institutions, while necessary for very serious disabilities, are costly to establish and maintain, inaccessible to the great majority of people, and too often a distraction of resources away from applications which can offer the most assistance to the most people. Community-based measures, which can often rely upon parents and, again, even younger brothers and sisters in a "child to child" effort, can reach far many more disabled, often in time, as with early identification of on-coming blindness, to prevent the compounding of impairment into serious disability and handicap.

314. Priority 6 is the prevention and reduction of impairments of children rather than priority for adults, because the burden of a disability in childhood must be borne, by the individual, the family and society, far longer, and at far greater cost to society, than the disability of an adult, and the child is far less capable of coping with the challenge and limiting its consequences. The challenge before us, of course, is how do we catalyse action along the lines of those priorities.

315. National will—political will, as some call it—is required if additional funds are to be mobilized and if present practice is to be reformed to give genuine priority to the measures recommended above for securing the most from available resources in preventing and rehabilitating the disabled.

316. One body deserves special mention for its work in contributing to global will, to catalysing organizations such as UNICEF as well as the other organizations of the United Nations system, governments, organizations, the media, and the public. I refer, of course to the General Assembly. It was the Assembly which, six years ago, adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and later proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons. It was the Assembly which, on 30 January 1980, adopted the Plan of Action for the Interna-

tional Year of Disabled Persons. It was the Assembly which one year ago adopted the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. And it is the Assembly which next year, I am confident, will adopt a world programme of action for continuing activities aimed at the prevention of mental and physical disabilities and the rehabilitation of those already unfortunately disabled. Those actions by the Assembly which we have seen around the world play an indispensable role in influencing the climate in which the attention and resources devoted to those issues can be increased. They also encourage the restructuring of systems of development, systems of education, health services and community organization which is necessary in order better to prevent impairments and rehabilitate the disabled.

317. I should stress that UNICEF's capacity to catalyse, to stimulate others, is in turn heavily dependent on the work of those who catalyse us: the General Assembly, whose policies have a profound impact on us; the Governments that serve on UNICEF's Executive Board as well as many other Governments that spur us on and guide us; the non-governmental organizations with which we work; and the National Committees for UNICEF and other citizen efforts which focus public attention and generate public support for UNICEF's endeavours.

318. I make this statement at a time when the world's financial resources are affected by two factors: first, increasingly difficult economic conditions in all countries, and secondly, the unabated—indeed, intensified—arms race among many countries. Those factors, together, result in even greater constrictions upon the resources available to address the basic needs of poor people, and the special needs of people afflicted by additional burdens such as disabilities.

319. It is not within UNICEF's mandate to advise on the priorities of Governments with respect to the balance between arms expenditures and civilian needs. But we are invited by Governments to counsel them in the application of those limited resources which are available to address the needs of those who are most in need, and we seek this to derive the most benefit possible.

320. A world which is willing to spend some \$500 billion a year on arms to deter global military conflagration ought to recognize the imperative of combating the war which gross underdevelopment and abject poverty already wage against so many hundreds of millions of the earth's inhabitants. The most tragic victims of that war, surely, are the more than 40,000 infants and small children who die each day on its front line, and the millions more who suffer mental and physical impairment and disability from the insidious weapons of malnutrition, disease, ignorance, and inattention. Devoting an additional amount of even 10 per cent or less, and applying the aforementioned six priorities to waging war for human decency could not only save the lives of most of those millions of children, but also give dignity and purpose to a billion more people—the 500 million, of whom one third are children, who suffer disability, and the quarter of humanity who suffer abandonment. A victory in this war would not bring spoils, but would contribute importantly to economic growth and security, as well as peace of heart, to all countries that share this earth.

321. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with the General Assembly decision adopted at its 4th plenary meeting, I call on Mr. Smyser, the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

322. Mr. SMYSER (Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly at this plenary meeting in observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons. As we gather here, in this closing month of the Year, it can safely be said that the eyes of the world's disabled and of many others are turned to the outcome of our deliberations.

323. This session gives us the opportunity to review what has been done and what has been achieved in accordance with the Year's theme—"Full participation and equality" of the disabled. It is an appropriate occasion to reaffirm our commitment to the objectives of the Year. It is equally important to reflect on how we can carry forward the effort in order to ensure full and equal participation of the disabled in the life and the development of their communities.

324. All refugees are handicapped. They suffer from fear, persecution, homelessness, want and uncertainty about their future. Yet those refugees who suffer in addition from a mental or physical disability are the victims of an added handicap. UNHCR has, therefore, a special concern towards those refugees who suffer the double anguish of being a refugee and of being handicapped. Those refugees above all others need our help and that of the international community.

325. This year UNHCR has made special efforts to assist disabled refugees. I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly of the measures that we have undertaken. We have tried to respond to the International Year of Disabled Persons. We have also taken measures as part and as an extension of our regular programme of assistance towards handicapped refugees.

326. The International Year of Disabled Persons has helped sensitize all towards the needs of the disabled. It has also given all of us a special responsibility to understand and to meet the special needs and problems of disabled refugees. I am proud to be able to report that nations all over the world have supported these efforts.

327. At our headquarters at Geneva, we established a focal point for co-ordination of all activities to assist handicapped refugees. In particular, we conducted a survey of handicapped refugees in order to assess their number and their needs. Our branch offices in the field, frequently working in collaboration with Governments or non-governmental organizations, made special efforts to learn the numbers and problems of the handicapped refugees. Our survey revealed that where there are many refugees asylum countries often find it difficult to identify those who suffer from particular disabilities. Therefore we have undertaken to institute a particular mechanism to identify handicapped refugees.

328. Mainly, UNHCR focused special attention on creating awareness everywhere about the special needs of disabled refugees. In addition, we supported and sponsored measures to create special facilities in order to assist them adequately. Such new kinds of centres provide diagnosis, treatment, skill training, and rehabilitation of disabled refugees. In some cases refugees are brought to the centres with their families, who also receive needed assistance in order to become self-reliant. More specifically, we have responded to the needs of disabled refugees in four ways, as follows.

329. First, we have made use of existing facilities in asylum countries in order to treat, train and rehabilitate the refugees. We have covered, where necessary, the costs of medical fees, hospitalization, surgery, vocational training and other therapy.

330. Secondly, where there were no adequate facilities in an asylum country, we have helped move the handicapped refugees for the period of treatment to countries where the required treatment and rehabilitation facilities could be found. We are attempting to institutionalize such arrangements in countries where the required facilities are available. For example, cases with special medical needs in Africa are referred to the Jomo Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, and cases in need of special psychological and psychiatric treatment are referred to the Aro Hospital in Lagos.

331. Thirdly, we have developed specific on-site programmes of accommodation, assistance, treatment and rehabilitation in camps and other temporary facilities. We try to enhance the productive capability of the disabled and of members of their families so that they can attain self-sufficiency and integration into a new community.

332. Fourthly, we have promoted special resettlement programmes, both as part of "The Ten or More Plan" first instituted in 1974 and as part of other arrangements. Under "The Ten or More Plan", several resettlement countries admit 10 or more handicapped refugees and their families per year, in addition to their regular resettlement programmes. Some countries, both within and outside this plan, have given preference to admitting handicapped refugees and have made special efforts for their integration. Other countries admit handicapped refugees as part of a general resettlement quota, if they are otherwise eligible.

333. I hope the following brief examples will illustrate the range of activities on behalf of handicapped refugees and will show how countries all over the world have been helping to support these efforts.

334. In Thailand, for example, a survey completed in the opening months of the Year showed that there were 336 refugees suffering from various disabilities. Including family members, 1,448 persons were affected. Among the disabled were persons who suffered from chronic physical ailments, psychological stress and other illness. To help the refugees, they were clustered and moved with their families to a special handicap-processing centre. Simultaneously, existing clinical facilities in the camps and holding centres were augmented. In addition, mobile prosthetic and physical therapy were provided, as were rehabilitation counsellors to ensure that all refugees got the coverage that they needed. In the centres for the handicapped, mental health consultants, rehabilitation counsellors and welfare officers work together under the direction of a senior health co-ordinator seconded to UNHCR from WHO. They all work closely with doctors who determine what care is required. A number of voluntary agencies jointly run the centre, with each agency responsible for a part of the operation. Some of the staff are seconded by voluntary agencies for the period of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

335. In Malaysia, a survey made last year discovered 325 handicapped refugees, with their families adding another 1,100 persons. To assist them, a special centre for handicapped persons was established at a transit centre eight miles outside Kuala Lumpur. This centre provides

medical, social and psychiatric services. It operates under the aegis of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. Services are provided by international voluntary agencies. The staff includes medical personnel as well as medical and psychiatric social workers. The centre provides comprehensive services. Although the programme in Malaysia came into operation a few months before the start of the Year, its operation has received special emphasis and attention because of the Year of the Disabled.

336. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a special project to provide treatment and rehabilitation services to the handicapped has been established at Katumba to assist handicapped refugees from Katumba, Ulyankulu and Mishamo refugee resettlements. The Japanese UNESCO Association for the Care of Handicapped Persons has offered to raise the required funds for this project. The project is based on the findings of a survey made earlier by the French non-governmental organization, Médecins sans frontières. In addition to providing medical and social services, the project will also undertake to train local paramedical personnel.

337. The list could go on and on. In Spain and in Venezuela, projects have been established. The Scandinavian countries have undertaken special commitments to resettle handicapped refugees, as has Switzerland. A project for studying the integration of similar cases is also in progress in Belgium. So many countries are supporting the effort that it is impossible here to enumerate them all. However, I can assure representatives that this effort is truly international in character and practice.

338. I should also like to remind representatives that the High Commissioner made a special appeal in August of this year. He asked in that appeal for further resettlement opportunities for handicapped refugees as part of the International Year of Disabled Persons. I am happy to say that favourable responses are being received, and we hope that there will be others before the end of the Year and in the future.

339. Handicapped refugees are not a new phenomenon. The appeal I just mentioned is the third appeal that

UNHCR has made in favour of resettling handicapped refugees. The first was made during the World Refugee Year in 1959, and the second in 1974 when UNHCR launched "The Ten or More Plan". Nevertheless, the response to this year's appeal, and the world-wide scope of the effort, have shown the world community responding generously and in a solemn spirit to the special needs of handicapped refugees during the International Year of Disabled Persons.

340. To help create this awareness, UNHCR has helped finance the production of a United Nations film on the handicapped. The film, entitled, *It is the Same World*, was made by the Department of Public Information. We have also co-produced, with Swiss television, a film entitled *Trois pas hors des frontières*, to show the situation of handicapped refugees and the process of their integration in resettlement countries. Another film is being offered by Swiss television for intergovernmental syndication. UNHCR has made materials available to non-governmental organizations in order to help them dramatize the plight of the handicapped refugees. We hope that these efforts, along with others, will help generate the necessary attention and support.

341. The High Commissioner for Refugees believes that the International Year of Disabled Persons has illuminated issues that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or been passively contemplated. It has generated positive responses and definitive action. It has raised hopes among the world's disabled. It has also shown that, given the opportunity and help they need, many disabled persons can attain self-sufficiency and can participate effectively in community life. Instead of living in a state of dependency, the disabled can contribute to the well-being of their own selves, their families and their communities.

342. I can assure you that we will continue to help handicapped refugees. We hope that they, and indeed all refugees, will be able to live in dignity, equality and peace.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.