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

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kravets (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 30

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

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

1. Mr. HUSVEG (Norway): On this occasion I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway.

2. Speaking as a disabled person myself, I am happy to say that the International Year of Disabled Persons has indeed been useful. The International Year has focused attention on the problems of disabled persons and has underlined the need to promote the realization of the right of disabled persons to participate fully in the social life and development of their societies. The International Year has had a wide-reaching effect in educating the public and has offered an occasion for an over-all assessment of the whole range of problems involved. Governments throughout the world have considered the problems, taken stock of the situation and formulated the goals to be pursued in the work ahead. The International Year has been reflected in the media. The message it has stressed to our fellow citizens is that disabled persons are human beings, with their rights and privileges. They too should enjoy their equal share of the improvements in living conditions resulting from social and economic development. The International Year has made people more aware of the scope of the problems and of the urgent need for special efforts to achieve full participation and equality for the world's 450 million disabled persons.

3. These self-evident principles were clearly stated in the draft resolution adopted by consensus by the Third Committee a few days ago [see A/36/764].

4. The Nordic countries' interpretation of the International Year of Disabled Persons might be summed up in the concept of "full participation and equality" or "full social emancipation and integration". This applies to all the plans and practical measures carried out in connection with the Year. Full participation and equality means that disabled persons should have the same rights and opportunities as those who are not disabled—nothing more, but

on the other hand nothing less. Disabled persons should enjoy the same rights, opportunities and privileges as those offered to other citizens—and on the same terms. For example, blind people should be able to borrow or buy the same books at the same price as sighted persons. The only difference is that the blind should have them in Braille or as talking books. Such practical measures would constitute an important step towards the fulfillment of what we see as the very essence of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

5. It is clear that in the long term, prevention of disability is without doubt the most important task to be tackled in the developed as well as in the developing countries. However, work in the field of prevention should not of course reduce efforts to help those already handicapped. The Nordic Governments, together with the organizations of disabled persons in the Nordic countries, have focused on five main areas of top priority.

6. The first and most important task is to work for changes in the attitudes of the public and to create awareness of what it means in practice to be handicapped. In this manner it will be possible to generate that understanding which is the first prerequisite for the acceptance of disabled persons by their fellow citizens. Without this acceptance there will be no genuine feeling of solidarity. Our message is clear and simple: disabled persons are just ordinary people. The only difference is that in addition we have to cope with the effects of one, or more than one, handicap.

7. Let me give a few examples of the attitudes we meet. There is a general tendency to concentrate on the handicap and its effect rather than on the positive personal qualities and capabilities; in other words, on what disabled persons cannot do rather than on what they can do. People tend to speak to the disabled person's guide instead of to the handicapped person himself: "How does she want her hair done?" "Would he like another sandwich?" A court in Europe awarded damages to a lady who complained that her holidays were spoiled because disabled persons were staying in the same hotel. We can easily imagine the effect of such a court decision on hotels in countries, for example Nordic ones, with a substantial tourist industry. It is of the utmost importance to fight against ignorance and prejudices, and patronizing and discriminatory attitudes. This is particularly important when it comes to handicaps which cannot be seen, for example mental handicaps.

8. Secondly, environment and physical surroundings may have a decisive effect on the way a disabled person copes with his handicap. Awareness of the problems of disabled persons should be an indispensable element in all political decisions in relation to the planning of social development, including the physical environment. We must learn to take account of the problems of the handicapped in our planning in all spheres of life. Stairs and inaccessible toilets, for instance, represent insurmountable obstacles to users of wheelchairs. Poor lighting and lack of

colour contrasts create serious problems for the partially sighted. In fact, in a world without stairs and narrow doorways the wheelchair user would be able to function very well indeed, and provided the partially sighted person could live in a world with the right lighting and colours he would practically function as a sighted person.

9. Thirdly, the Nordic countries have always stressed that disabled persons, like other citizens, should have the right and access to participation in decision-making. The organizations of the disabled should be heard and they should have an important say with regard to decisions that clearly affect the situation of the disabled. Disabled persons should have the right to representation on and participation in committees, commissions and boards where decisions affecting disabled persons are taken.

10. Fourthly, the Nordic countries emphasize the need for practical help, counselling and advice to families with disabled children. Possibilities for recreation and play in home-like surroundings are of great importance in this connection, and so are kindergartens and other pre-schools where disabled children are given the same opportunities for stimulation and experience together with other children. Such integration will be of great help when they grow up and are faced with the problems of practical life. Indeed, the importance of full integration and participation in education cannot be stressed too much. The Nordic countries have taken important initiatives in this respect. We have also tried to improve disabled persons' possibilities for employment. A disability pension and social welfare can never be a satisfactory substitute for full integration and a job. The Nordic countries have also tried to improve disabled persons' chances of obtaining better housing and living conditions. Disabled persons should have the right to their own apartments, with the necessary service facilities available. This necessitates practical and financial measures.

11. Fifthly, the Nordic countries attach great importance to support and practical aid to disabled persons in developing countries. We are all aware of the relatively high percentage of disabled persons in the developing world. We know, for example, that more than 80 per cent of the estimated 44 million blind in the world are to be found in developing countries. Medical and social care put a heavy strain on the already limited budgets of such countries. Aid to the disabled, therefore, represents an important contribution to society in general and may be considered a vital part of the official aid effort to developing countries. In consequence, we put great emphasis on the prevention and treatment of diseases leading to disabilities and on education and training with a view to achieving independence and rehabilitation.

12. Let me stress that we, from a developed and highly industrialized part of the world, have no wish whatsoever to pose as do-gooders, trying to export our own solutions to developing countries. This is not a question of automatic exports of Nordic solutions or a Nordic way of life. All our efforts have to be made in close co-operation with the Governments concerned and with the full participation and consent of local authorities. All practical steps are to be taken in close co-operation with the developing countries themselves, on their terms and according to their wishes.

13. Action to promote aid to the disabled in developing countries has been taken in all the Nordic countries during the International Year. Particularly encouraging has been the solidarity shown by organizations of the disabled

with their handicapped brothers and sisters in the developing countries. In one Nordic country the central committee of the organizations of the disabled has established its own secretariat for aid to disabled persons in developing countries. In another Nordic country three organizations of the disabled, together with the Red Cross, ran a campaign called "A New Life", which brought in approximately \$15 million in aid to the disabled in developing countries.

14. Definite projects have already been established or will be started during the next few months. Let me mention a few in southern Sudan: mobile eye clinics, a centre for the education of health personnel in the prevention and treatment of eye diseases, a school for the blind and a workshop for the production of splints, crutches and other technical aids. Nordic development aid agencies have lately taken an increased interest in projects for disabled persons in developing countries.

15. We are also pleased to note that within the United Nations agencies measures to improve the conditions of disabled persons have been integrated into the regular programmes. We wish in this connection to commend the activities of UNICEF, WHO and the ILO.

16. These aims and measures indicate a definite positive trend. A development has started which must continue and expand. In this respect, the International Year of Disabled Persons represents both encouragement and a step forward. None of us expected miracles in 1981. The International Year has, however, resulted in initiatives and concrete action. Considerable work has been done in 1981 in planning practical measures for disabled persons. This, I feel sure, will lead to definite results and will have a lasting effect in the years to come.

17. Let me conclude by stressing the need to secure proper follow-up and co-ordination of all the plans and programmes that have been made during 1981, both on a global and on a regional level. The United Nations has a unique role to play here. As we know, a number of temporary positions were established at the Centre for Social and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Nordic countries would like to emphasize that it is of the greatest importance that those positions be made permanent.

18. Mr. KOMATINA (Yugoslavia): The proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons is first of all an expression of understanding of the gravity of the problem of disabled persons and of the need to take effective measures to solve it. The fact that there are about 500 million disabled persons in the world today is ample proof of the seriousness of the problem. About 400 million of them live in the developing countries, and 350 million live practically without any professional services.

19. Poverty is one of the main causes of disability. For that reason almost 20 per cent of the populations of some developing countries suffer from various forms of disability.

20. The solution of the problem of disabled persons has both a humanitarian dimension and an economic dimension. The human dimension is contained in the truth that disabled persons have the right to work and live, and that society has an obligation to enable them to work and live, in equality with other members of society, with full respect for their human rights and dignity. The economic dimension resides in enabling disabled persons to perform

social activities in accordance with their working capability. Thus they not only cease to be a burden for others but through active utilization of their remaining working capabilities become useful members of their families and of society as a whole.

21. When we bear in mind that poverty is one of the main causes of disability, the solution of this problem in developing countries is inseparably linked with the creation of conditions for accelerated over-all socio-economic development. That means taking effective measures at the national level to mobilize all human and material resources in the implementation of the development plans of those countries, and carrying out appropriate social reforms. This also includes creating possibilities for the participation of all working people in the decision-making process regarding the formulation and execution of these plans and the distribution of national income.

22. At the global level it is indispensable to create conditions that would alleviate the present grave international economic position of developing countries. This implies the elimination of the existing unjust system of international economic relations, the establishment of the new international economic order and the further democratization of international relations generally, with a parallel increase of material and financial assistance to the developing countries.

23. The intensity of activities during the preparations for and in the course of the International Year of Disabled Persons has justified such action. The fact that national committees for the Year were established in 127 countries testifies to the significance given to the International Year of Disabled Persons and to issues concerning the protection of disabled persons throughout the world. The activities I have mentioned and the results achieved are but the beginning of broad and long-term action aimed at a comprehensive solution of the problem of disabled persons at the national and global level. The recommendations made by the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons at its third session [see A/36/471/Add.1] are of great significance in this regard, particularly the draft world programme of action, which is to be adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

24. For the reasons I have given, in the implementation of the goals of the Year particular attention should be paid to follow-up activities in assisting developing countries, first of all in the field of technical co-operation. In this connection Yugoslavia not only resolutely supports recommendation 3 (III) adopted at the third session of the Advisory Committee, as well as the appropriate recommendations of the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Technical Assistance in Disability Prevention, held at Vienna from 12 to 23 October 1981, but has submitted a concrete offer [see A/36/711] regarding assisting in the implementation of that recommendation. In that offer it is proposed, *inter alia*, that a technical co-operation support service be established for the rehabilitation of disabled persons. The basic aim of that service would be to back up regional and inter-regional technical co-operation activities concerning the promotion and rehabilitation of disabled persons and equalization of their opportunities, in particular the exchange of technical information in this field and the transfer of technology and know-how. During the initial stage the service would have an interorganizational body or task force as its programme consultative

organ. The service would be situated at the Institute for Rehabilitation in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

25. It is estimated that at present there are some 2 million disabled persons in Yugoslavia. Social care for these persons has always played a significant part in the policy of the Government of Yugoslavia. Social care for disabled persons is not only a humanitarian matter; it is a moral and constitutional obligation of the Yugoslav, socialist, self-managing society to create conditions for their rehabilitation and protection, which constitute an integral part of their human rights and rights as citizens and are at the same time an expression of the profoundly humanitarian basis of self-managing socialism. Thus our approach thoroughly embraces the social and political aspects of the status of the disabled person as an individual and as a citizen. The basic aim of this care on the part of society is the effective prevention of the occurrence of disability through widespread action and appropriate measures, and, when it does occur, rehabilitation of the disabled person for independent life and work through adequate programmes, measures and procedures in accordance with his or her remaining abilities and preferences.

26. The social care of disabled persons demands a modern system of rehabilitation and protection. A number of programmes have been initiated and various measures undertaken for the permanent promotion of the status of disabled persons, which are included in development plans at all levels. Significant results have been achieved in the constant improvement of the status of disabled persons in society, and their conditions of life and work, and in carrying out rehabilitation and protection.

27. Those mainly responsible for the policy and developments in this field are, as for social policy in general, the organizations of associated labour, self-management communities of interest, local communities, socio-political communities, socio-political and other organizations and associations of citizens. In this respect a special role is played by the organizations of disabled persons themselves.

28. In accordance with its policy and its approach to the social status of disabled persons, as early as in 1976 Yugoslavia supported the proclamation of the International Year of Disabled Persons [resolution 31/123]. That proclamation was assessed as a significant United Nations project aimed at urging all countries to contribute to the development and promotion of the prevention of disablement, rehabilitation, and the strengthening of the social status of disabled persons. The proclamation of the Year is for our country yet another reason and encouragement thoroughly to analyse the state of social care for the disabled and to bring the needs of disabled persons to the attention of society so as to facilitate the implementation of agreed policies and the initiation of new measures.

29. The Yugoslav National Committee was established at the very beginning of the Year. It consists of 34 members and a chairman, who are representatives of the Yugoslav Federal Parliament, competent federal administration bodies and federal organizations, republics and autonomous provinces, self-management organizations and communities, socio-political and social organizations, including organizations of disabled persons. Similar committees have been established at the national and provincial levels. There are eight of them altogether.

30. Activities in the course of the year have been conducted along the following basic lines: prevention of dis-

ablement; health care and rehabilitation; early detection of retarded physical and psychological development in children and young people; professional education and professional orientation; vocational training and retraining; employment in regular or protected conditions; social adaptation and integration into the work environment; material position and different monetary remuneration; sports and recreation for the disabled; assistance to families of disabled persons; housing, city planning, human settlements, architectonic barriers and transport; activities of organizations of disabled persons; and so on.

31. In the course of the year the programme of the Yugoslav National Committee has included programme activities concerned with, among other things: marking in an effective way dates of importance for the social status and protection of disabled persons; initiatives and action in legislative and other fields; consultations and scientific and other expert meetings; research projects, studies and analyses; information and publishing activities; sports activities for disabled persons; and participation in international gatherings in the country and abroad.

32. Apparently the activities carried out during the Year gave a strong impetus to the realization of the defined policy, regulations and agreed objectives, as well as to the initiation of measures and actions for the further promotion of the overall position of disabled persons in our society. In this connection, I should like to point out that the formal ending of the Year is not for us the ending of these activities, which are to be carried on at an even faster tempo in the future. In some of our republics, decisions have already been adopted on the continuation of the work of their committees and other co-ordinating bodies after 1981. Of particular importance is the fact that the Year coincides with the beginning of Yugoslavia's new five-year development plan for 1981-1985, so that measures for the protection of disabled persons have been included in development plans for this period.

33. In conclusion, I should like to stress that Yugoslavia will in the future continue to participate actively, as it has so far, in international action for the solution of the problems of disabled persons and in fruitful co-operation with the secretariat of the Year and other relevant United Nations bodies. In this connection we consider that the secretariat of the Year and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs have successfully carried out a number of activities and assignments and should continue to play this significant role, particularly in regard to assisting developing countries. Therefore, Yugoslavia supports the recommendation of the third session of the Advisory Committee that the secretariat and the Centre should be provided with the necessary conditions for the successful performance of their duties in connection with the follow-up activities after 1981.

34. Mr. CAMARA (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): In speaking on the question of the International Year of Disabled Persons, my delegation, like those which have preceded it, wishes first of all to welcome and praise the generosity and the responsible awareness which attended the proclamation of the International Year for Disabled Persons. The fact that the United Nations is sponsoring this important world-wide action is eloquent evidence, in addition to the confirmed humanitarian calling of the Organization, of the very clear perception by the whole of the international community of the obligations and responsibilities of society with respect to disabled persons.

35. The fact that 125 countries have set up national committees for the International Year of Disabled Persons and have organized within this framework numerous activities aimed at improving the circumstances of disabled persons is clear evidence that the objectives set by the United Nations for the International Year of Disabled Persons, even if they are far from being fully attained, have at least been widely accepted and have been the subject of an organized campaign to alert large sectors of public opinion in numerous countries.

36. This must be viewed as an important achievement, since indifference is thus progressively but irreversibly giving way to acceptance by the national community of responsibility for the specific needs and rights of disabled persons.

37. The results will largely depend on the commitment and the follow-up that we see in the pursuit and the attainment of the objectives set out in General Assembly resolution 31/123. That is why my delegation wishes to encourage the extension beyond the year 1981 of the programmes of action of national committees and of United Nations organs within the framework of the International Year of Disabled Persons. Moreover, the development of the draft world programme of action concerning disabled persons must be encouraged because it is intended to ensure longer-term activities more fundamentally concerned with the protection, rehabilitation and integration of disabled persons and their participation on a basis of fully equal opportunity with normal people.

38. Of the 500 million disabled persons throughout the world, approximately 400 million live in developing countries, and Africa alone has approximately 45 million disabled persons. These data indicate quite clearly the gravity of the situation of disabled persons throughout the world. The great majority of disabled persons live in countries which, because of their limited technical and economic resources, are not in a position to provide them fully with the social and material advantages which could compensate for their handicap.

39. This very worrying truth means that, if we want the draft world programme of action now being contemplated to be effective, the efforts of international institutions in this respect must be directed as a matter of priority towards those countries. The link quite appropriately established between the world strategy as defined by the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons and the implementation of the new international economic order becomes fully apparent. In view of the inequities which mark the present world economic system, which is entirely to the advantage of the developed countries, the situation of disabled persons in developing countries is frequently untenable. The tragedy is nevertheless tempered in numerous countries, such as my own, by the generous human values with which the communities of our countries are still deeply endowed. The sense of solidarity and the deep attachment to the spirit of justice and equality are such that the disabled person is never abandoned but is taken care of by the community of origin, which goes beyond mere participation and effectively integrates that person, ensuring his dignity as a human being. These humanitarian traditions are precious qualities which ensure that disability never really becomes a tragedy.

40. In the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea, a medical effort was undertaken very early in order not only to institutionalize those traditions but to develop

them with a view to making them more effective and better adapted to the requirements of development and social progress.

41. Advanced social legislation providing social security for the disabled and designed especially to prevent disability, in particular at places of work; free education and the will of the masses in education; the establishment of specialized training centres for disabled persons, such as schools for the deaf-mute; the establishment of a modern national orthopaedic centre; centres for mother and child welfare and prenatal and postnatal care; major decentralization of the health services—these and many other legal instruments and social provisions form a rich arsenal set up by the State in order to preserve the rights of disabled persons.

42. One of the striking successes of the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea with regard to support for disabled persons is unquestionably the establishment of "solidarity cities", which are centres both for the rehabilitation of and for active social participation by the disabled. The "solidarity cities" have the same social and political privileges and the same vitality as any other ordinary social community and are the subject of attentive care by the most responsible elements of society.

43. The National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, which is presided over by the President of the People's Assembly and was set up in the first quarter of 1981, has thus worked to inform and mobilize public opinion and has carried out its programme of activities in an environment in which the situation of disabled persons was already sufficiently understood in its specific features and largely taken care of by national solidarity and specific achievements of all kinds.

44. To conclude, my delegation fully shares the view that in legal and institutional terms disabled children should be given special attention. When we realize that throughout the world today one child out of 10 is born with an infirmity or acquires it later and that there are 120 million disabled children in the developing countries, we realize that the future of the world itself is threatened; the prospects of progress in the developing areas are restricted and perhaps totally threatened. Therefore, it is more than ever vital to increase support for the specialized agencies of the United Nations and for national and regional efforts to organize technical co-operation for the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the provision of equal opportunities for disabled persons. The project of the Organization of African Unity concerning the establishment of an African institute for rehabilitation deserves specific support and encouragement, as do all similar initiatives that may be contemplated at the regional level in developing countries.

45. Mrs. JONES (Liberia): The International Year of Disabled Persons has been observed in Liberia this year because we in Liberia believe that 500 million persons in the world disabled as a consequence of physical, mental or sensory impairment, are entitled to the same rights, privileges and opportunities as all other human beings. Not only are they allowed to become unnecessarily dependent and are incapable of performing activities that are economically and socially productive, but their dependence is also a drain upon the energies and resources of family members and society as a whole. Every human being born into this world is destined to suffer some disability at some time in his life, either at birth, in youth,

in the middle years or in the twilight years. That is the fate of everyone.

46. Approximately 5 per cent of the productive citizens of Liberia have permanent disabilities which severely limit their independence. As a result, the Government of Liberia is providing community support services, aids and equipment to enable them to live normal lives as far as possible. A school for the blind is being run in the country, where students can acquire knowledge in various disciplines, including secretarial skills, music, home arts and carpentry. In addition, social welfare institutions are located in the capital city of Monrovia, one of which cares for orphans and crippled children from all over the country. Another institution takes care of mentally disturbed persons of all races, while others care for the aged, disabled and underprivileged citizens of our communities.

47. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 31/123 designating 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Government of Liberia appointed a national committee for planning and implementing programmes and activities in observance of the Year. Appropriate activities, including the establishment of a home and a training centre for disabled persons, were carried out. The highlight of our national programme for disabled persons was a keynote speech delivered by the head of State, Commander-in-Chief Samuel Kenyon Doe, in which he stated, among other things, that Liberia would continue to provide fully the services needed by our unfortunate citizens living in the rural and urban areas. Greater efforts would be devoted to providing for the participation of disabled persons in adult education programmes so as to enable them to take an active part in national development.

48. In the course of its operations the National Committee for Disabled Persons prepared special materials designed to inform disabled persons, their families and the general public of the rights, benefits and services available to them and of steps to be taken to correct any failures and abuses. Such materials were also made available in forms that could be used and understood by those citizens with visual, hearing or other communication limitations.

49. The delegation of Liberia feels that the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons established by the General Assembly should be used to respond to the urgent and rapidly multiplying requests for assistance from developing countries, which are experiencing increasing difficulties in mobilizing adequate resources to meet the pressing needs of their disabled citizens. The efforts of developing countries should, therefore, be supported by the international community as required by the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. My delegation also appeals to all international organizations whose activities have a bearing on financial and technical co-operation to ensure that the highest priority is accorded to developing countries in assistance for the prevention of disability and to provide for rehabilitation, integration and equal opportunities for disabled persons.

50. In order to eliminate any physical and social barriers and to prevent insult to their human dignity, my Government is fully dedicated to initiating further programmes designed to achieve global strategies for disabled persons. The welfare of disabled persons will always be treated by my Government as an integral component of our national policy for socio-economic development.

51. Mr. DIACONU (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): In speaking on agenda item 30, the Romanian delegation would like to recall that from the beginning it has associated itself with the initiative aimed at declaring and celebrating 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons. The delegation of Romania was a sponsor of the draft resolution which was adopted by consensus by the Third Committee. We should like to take this opportunity of performing the pleasant duty of expressing our thanks and warm appreciation to the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the other delegations directly concerned for the contribution they have made to the promotion of this idea.

52. As we have emphasized in other circumstances, the Romanian delegation is convinced that this far-reaching and important international event of a humanitarian character, which is taking place under the aegis of the United Nations, will contribute to the adoption of effective national and international action to provide disabled persons with assistance, training and protection, thereby helping them to become fully integrated into society and to undertake suitable activities.

53. Ever since the preparatory stage, Romania has associated itself with the realistic and practical approach according to which, in the framework of the programme of the International Year, emphasis would be given primarily to national activities aimed at ensuring broad and effective participation as far as possible by disabled persons in the economic, social and cultural life of society.

54. We believe the draft world programme of action in support of disabled persons meets the increasingly felt need to undertake effective action in this area throughout the world. In this respect we feel that special attention should be given to the granting of assistance to developing countries in the preparation and implementation of national programmes for disabled persons. The role of the United Nations also should be strengthened in the promotion of international co-operation in this regard.

55. Action to prevent and combat temporary and permanent incapacity to work, caused by either sickness or accident, receives constant attention in Romania, as indeed do medical and educational measures, professional training and social integration for children and young people with physical or mental handicaps. Our activities in this area have been steadily increasing especially since the adoption of a special law in 1970. Thus, practical action is constantly being taken in support of disabled persons, both adults and children, and various measures have been adopted to bring them back into society and make them feel fully part of it.

56. Within the framework of the national programme for recovery of capacity to work, which was prepared for this purpose, an important place is given to the problems of physically and mentally disabled persons.

57. Following up the recommendations of the General Assembly, Romania participated this year in several international events devoted to disabled persons, including the European regional seminar on the International Year of Disabled Persons that took place from last 27 May to 2 June in Finland. National meetings and other events devoted to certain specific aspects of the rehabilitation of disabled persons have also been organized.

58. In the opinion of Romania this problem is of such great social and humanitarian scope that it will remain

topical in the future and the United Nations must continue to give it the necessary attention. For this reason we would suggest that at future sessions of the General Assembly the Third Committee devote itself to a specific evaluation of the results of the implementation of the draft world programme of action and formulate practical and useful conclusions with the aim of carrying out further action in this area.

59. Miss BROŠŇÁKOVÁ (Czechoslovakia): The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic warmly welcomed the decision to proclaim the year 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. A problem faced by all countries, whether developed or developing, and which affects 500 million persons in the world, is indeed deserving of the attention of international organizations as well as individual Member States, for both humanitarian and economic reasons. As was stated in General Assembly resolution 34/154 of 17 December 1979, the principal objective of the International Year was to achieve the full participation of disabled persons in the development of each society on the basis of the principle of equality with other citizens.

60. For the preparation and organization of the International Year of Disabled Persons in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Czechoslovak Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons was established. It consists of representatives of various specialized ministries and social organizations and is presided over by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The Committee has been meeting regularly to consider important tasks in the further development of the care of disabled persons and has submitted proposals for their solution to the highest organs of the Party and the State. The activities of the Czechoslovak Committee have been based on the premise that the care of disabled persons in Czechoslovakia is not a "one-shot" or occasional action. Disabled persons in Czechoslovakia are given free, long-term and systematic care by the whole of society.

61. In that respect, Czechoslovakia has reached a high level of performance. Anybody visiting Czechoslovakia can see with his own eyes the results that we have achieved in providing all-round assistance, care, vocational training and guidance to disabled persons. Having no problem of unemployment, Czechoslovakia provides every opportunity to disabled persons for self-realization by the performance of suitable work and it is making maximum efforts to meet the specific needs of these citizens. Currently the number of permanently disabled persons involved in the work process amounts to almost 270,000, which is 3.7 per cent of the economically active population. An important role in that respect and in the social activities of disabled persons is played by the Czechoslovak Union of Disabled Persons.

62. The proclamation and organization of the International Year of Disabled Persons provided an additional impetus to us to strive for still greater qualitative as well as quantitative improvement of all-round care for the disabled persons. Attention is being concentrated on the following priorities: systematic research into the causes and consequences of disability and the application of the results to the improvement of prevention of disability; continued growth of the capacity of the rehabilitation facilities and in the numbers of qualified personnel; continued efforts to provide employment opportunities for partially disabled persons or persons whose ability to work has been affected, as well as for severely and permanently

disabled persons; further expansion of the educational and vocational training facilities for disabled persons and, in particular, for severely disabled children and young people; the building of apartments in public housing projects that are specially adjusted to the needs of severely disabled persons and the elimination of such architectural design features as are unsuitable for disabled and elderly persons; the securing of more suitable recreation facilities for disabled persons and families with children whose health is seriously impaired; further improvement and expansion of social-welfare facilities for disabled and mentally retarded persons; consistent development of comprehensive services for persons with impaired health, provided by experienced and qualified personnel of the appropriate departments of the national committees.

63. An important role in the psychological and physical rehabilitation of disabled persons can be played by the mass information media. The Czechoslovak Commission for the International Year of Disabled Persons has in this respect enlisted the valuable assistance of the press, radio and television. A number of sensitive and impressive programmes prepared on the occasion of the International Year have been received with interest and appreciation by both disabled persons and the general public. Disabled persons were given to understand that the whole of society deeply appreciates their contribution to its advancement, that they are not a burden on society but equal participants in the creation of its spiritual and material values.

64. During the International Year, a number of important international projects have been organized in Czechoslovakia with the aim of creating the prerequisites for the further improvement of the care of the disabled and for their integration into society. As far back as October last year, an international symposium was held in Czechoslovakia on physical training activities of disabled persons. In November 1980 the Federal Committee of the Union of Disabled Persons, in co-operation with the European Regional Committee of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind organized a European conference in Prague on the use of residual vision. The conference was attended by 99 foreign and 32 Czechoslovak specialists. Apart from other projects, this year the second international competition for visually impaired composers was organized in Czechoslovakia by the Federal Committee on the Union of Disabled Persons, as well as the third international interpretation competition for visually impaired musicians, the first World Theatre Festival of the Hearing-Impaired, and the seventh Festival of Deaf Mime.

65. The draft resolution submitted this year on the International Year of Disabled Persons states that a large number of disabled persons are victims of war and other forms of violence. That text also notes that of the estimated 500 million disabled persons in the world, no less than 400 million live in the developing countries. It is hard even to imagine that any marked improvement in the position of these persons could be possible without a comprehensive amelioration of the economic situation of the developing countries. As is the case with other social ills such as starvation, disease and illiteracy, to achieve improvement it is important to strive for the safeguarding of lasting peace and the achievement of tangible disarmament measures which not only would remove a major cause of disability but would also create the prerequisites for improving the care of persons already disabled.

66. In conclusion, I should like to stress that the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic recognizes and highly appreci-

ates the praiseworthy activities of the United Nations and its relevant bodies, in particular the Centre for Social and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna and the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, which have played an important role at the national, regional and international levels in raising interest in the care for disabled persons. The great number of projects organized on various levels and on different specific problems related to disability fills us with the conviction that the current International Year of Disabled Persons will not remain a "one-time" project but will have a lasting impact in all countries as a stimulus to systematic, comprehensive and long-term interest in disabled persons and to efforts aimed at their full and equal participation in the development of each society.

67. Mr. ROA KOURÍ (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Ever since the General Assembly declared in 1976, in resolution 31/123, that 1981 would be the International Year of Disabled Persons, Cuba has supported this initiative which arose from a proposal by the Libyan delegation, which we at once co-sponsored because we considered it to be very important.

68. From then on, on the basis of subsequent recommendations adopted in the Organization in respect of activities which should be scheduled by countries as they celebrate this International Year, Cuba began preparations which led to the creation, in September 1980, of the National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons, under Agreement No. 609 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. A member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba and Minister of Public Health, Mr. Sergio del Valle, was appointed chairman. The Committee consisted of representatives of the various bodies concerned—the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the State Committee for Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as non-governmental organizations, such as the Federation of Women of Cuba, the National Association of the Blind, the Association of Persons with Physical and Motor Handicaps and the Association of the Deaf.

69. Activities under the national plan which was elaborated included the opening this year of six new institutions for disabled and handicapped persons, providing for 100 children on a permanent basis, and accommodating 50 outpatients. Notable among them is the first institute for deaf children.

70. Other projects carried out in the present year included the issue of commemorative stamps designed by disabled children at the "Frank Pais" orthopaedic hospital; sports competitions for people with motor and sensory handicaps; literary competitions for handicapped people; the inauguration of four special education centres for slightly mentally handicapped people; exhibitions of paintings, sculpture and handicrafts by disabled persons; the holding of seminars on health education for disabled persons; the dissemination of information by the mass media about contributions the public could make towards better treatment of the disabled; and the development of literacy programmes for blind persons, using the Braille system.

71. In addition to the new institutions created in 1981, there are nine other centres for seriously mentally retarded people and those suffering the after-effects of poliomyelitis or cerebral palsy, with 985 beds for complete hospi-

talization and 296 places for outpatients who are partially mobile.

72. The importance that Cuba attaches to the International Year of Disabled Persons is proved not only by what I have just said but by the specialized attention that is constantly given to physically and mentally disabled people within the economic and social plans of our country, in order to ensure their full integration in society in conditions of equality with other citizens.

73. The rights, duties and fundamental guarantees set out in our socialist Constitution provide the primary legal basis on which attention to the disabled part of the population is founded. The right to health and education and to receive these benefits free, like all other citizens, determines a body of measures which have been adopted in this area. The right to work and to remuneration in accordance with the quality and quantity of the work and the right to social security and social assistance benefits are also constitutionally established and made effective by various provisions.

74. It is vital that all Member States work not only to rehabilitate and integrate disabled persons in their respective societies but to ensure the prevention of disabilities. For this purpose it is necessary that national public health plans contain preventive measures to help eliminate various illnesses which can be controlled, particularly during infancy. In Cuba, directly after the triumph of the revolution in 1959, important successes were achieved in this respect in the eradication of poliomyelitis and its tragic after-effects, thanks to various plans of preventive vaccination carried out by the Ministry of Public Health, which also made it possible to control and eliminate a series of other illnesses.

75. The Cuban delegation considers that the praiseworthy efforts being made by a number of countries in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons should not stop at the end of 1981 but should continue in the coming years, in an attempt to continue to improve the status and well-being of disabled persons in the future. It was in that spirit that Cuba sponsored the draft resolution adopted by the Third Committee on 1 December, which urges Member States to make every effort to consolidate and build further on the results of the International Year of Disabled Persons in order to assure the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of the disabled and their full integration in society and, to this end, to consider maintaining, where appropriate, the national committees or similar bodies already established.

76. In Cuba the work being done by the National Committee created for the Year has led our Government to decide that it is desirable for the Committee to continue to operate, to undertake activities in connection with the World Assembly on Aging, which, on the recommendation of the General Assembly will be held in 1982, and to continue to concern itself with complementary action to be taken after the conclusion of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

77. It should not be forgotten that, of the 500 million persons who, it is estimated, suffer from disability in one form or another, 400 million live in developing countries and that the origin of their disability is basically the hunger, poverty, unhealthy conditions, lack of medical services, malnutrition and illnesses of which they are victims precisely as a result of economic underdevelopment. It should not be forgotten that in addition many disabled

persons are victims of wars of aggression and other forms of violence from which the world has suffered and continues to suffer. For that reason, in order to achieve the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons it is necessary that there be full guarantees of peace and international security and the sovereign right of all countries to develop their societies free from threats and pressure.

78. Mrs. THORMAN de AGUILAR (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of my Government and the Dominican delegation and on my own behalf, it is my privilege to offer congratulations to the President of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the efficient way in which he has conducted proceedings.

79. Since the Dominican Republic was one of the countries which took an active part at the thirty-first session in the process leading to the proclamation of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, we wish in this important debate to express our great interest in the question.

80. We acted in the conviction that the idea would be supported unanimously by Member States, on the basis of the inalienable principle that all human beings have a right to participate fully, in conditions of equality, in the development of their people.

81. We are a small country which for 18 years has been creating a positive attitude towards persons suffering from physical, mental or sensory disabilities. Undoubtedly this has been a difficult, and why not admit it, at times discouraging task. But the fruits of our efforts, as a result of this heightened awareness, are encouraging.

82. The Dominican Republic, as a Member State of this prestigious world forum, has during 1981 been pursuing a programme of action to implement the recommendations contained in the resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons. A programme of action has been drawn up which takes into consideration the limitations imposed both nationally and regionally by requirements having greater priority and by the means at our disposal.

83. The Rehabilitation Centre in the Dominican Republic has been recognized by international organizations as a model centre for complete rehabilitation, because, under one and the same administration, programmes are being carried out in perfect co-ordination and interaction for physical rehabilitation, special education, professional rehabilitation, and placement of the rehabilitated in the labour market and in protected workshops.

84. Another reason why it is considered to be a model institution is the complete harmony that exists in its operations between the efforts of the State and the pioneering voluntary organization concerned with rehabilitation services in the Dominican Republic—the Dominican Association for Rehabilitation. The State provides the funds to help maintain and expand programmes throughout the country, and the Dominican Association for Rehabilitation manages and administers those funds and, at the same time, tries in other ways to obtain economic and technical assistance.

85. This is a clear example that where there is the will Governments and private institutions can and should work

together in pursuing a common goal: that every individual, regardless of his physical, social or economic status, should be considered as being important and thus should have the right to be integrated into society and to participate fully in its rights and obligations.

86. The proclamation by the General Assembly of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons was aimed at having the Member States of the United Nations promote more effective policies, and thus meet the real needs of this sector of the population, which is increasing day by day due to a whole host of factors which need not be mentioned.

87. This year, which has been proclaimed as the International Year of Disabled Persons with the theme "Full participation and equality", must yield positive fruits through the plans of action established at the world, regional and national levels. Activities undertaken by the Dominican Republic during this Year are the following. At the national level, the Dominican Republic has created a national committee made up of representatives of non-governmental organizations and governmental officials representing various ministries. In the future this Committee will oversee the expansion of programmes for physical, mental and sensory rehabilitation throughout the country, and will endeavour to obtain the necessary funds and technical assistance from the State and international organizations, in order that the rehabilitation programmes will be maintained at a high professional level.

88. We have constantly used all existing means of social communication in the country to promote the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons and to reaffirm their right to participate in the political, economic and social life of their country. In July of this year two postage stamps featuring the International Year of Disabled Persons were issued, sports competitions for people in wheelchairs have been held at the national and international level, and there has been a national seminar in which governmental and non-governmental sectors involved in these matters participated. During the year courses have been conducted at all levels in order to train new professionals and technicians in the field of full rehabilitation. In this respect, agreements have been reached with universities, schools and other centres of technical training, which made it possible to implement the programmes planned at the national level.

89. With regard to the elimination of architectural barriers, I am pleased to say that the Ministry of Public Works and Communications has drawn up and approved regulations, which we hope will soon become law, regarding the requirements for future construction in the country to be free of such barriers.

90. At the regional level, the Dominican Republic hosted two important courses this year, designed to train staff involved in various aspects of the rehabilitation of the disabled. One was the first Latin American course on orthopaedic shoemaking, which was sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands through the International Co-operation Office of the Organization of American States and by the A. D. Berkemann Company of the Federal Republic of Germany. Thirty-one shoemakers from the Latin American countries were given specialized training. In addition, we held the first Latin American course for the training of instructors in workshops for the mentally retarded, which was sponsored by the Dominican Republic, the Dominican Rehabilitation Association and the Latin American Group for Professional

Rehabilitation. Thirty-five scholarship students from nine Latin American countries participated in that event. This confirms our conviction that when common goals are pursued there are no insurmountable barriers.

91. The situation in the Dominican Republic is like that of many developing countries. With the resources available, we have undertaken what we can say are good programmes aimed at rehabilitating persons with physical, mental and sensory disabilities, but we can and must do more to ensure that the disabled gain the place which, as human beings, they deserve in society, as the Charter of the United Nations proclaims.

92. We are aware that there are certain negative factors, such as the lack of economic resources and of organizations asserting the rights of the disabled, the lack of clear criteria concerning the right of the handicapped to education, to work and to full participation in the life of the country, the lack of co-ordination between institutions carrying out programmes of rehabilitation for persons with physical, mental and sensory disabilities and the lack of minimal facilities in educational centres for the integration of the disabled into regular teaching programmes, certain deficiencies in preventive medicine and in health care at the primary level, and a lack of precise statistics regarding the disabled population. For all these reasons full participation and equality, the theme of the International Year of Disabled Persons, is difficult for us to achieve, but not impossible because it is mainly a question of internal factors, which can be overcome if we have the necessary political will. Proof of that political will is demonstrated by the inclusion in the population and housing census, to be held in the Dominican Republic on 12 and 13 December 1981, of a specific heading which will give precise data regarding the number of disabled persons and their particular disabilities.

93. As a result of our experience in trying to integrate disabled persons in the process of national development, we would put forward a few concrete recommendations at this forum: first, that Governments endeavour to see to it that when educators are being formed they receive precise information that will equip them to accept disabled persons into regular education; secondly, that they should arrange with the universities that rehabilitation be included as a subject in medical courses, with special emphasis on conceptual aspects, recognition and assessment of disabilities and the use of residual abilities; thirdly, that active participation of the entrepreneurial class in the process of social integration of disabled persons should be sought, not only in training programmes but also in job placement programmes.

94. Before concluding, I should like to express our concern regarding certain regrettable factors beyond our control, at both the regional and international levels, which stand in the way of the goals and targets that we have set for ourselves during the International Year of Disabled Persons. I am referring to the continued delay in implementing the new international economic order, to the global negotiations, to wars, to terrorism, to the abuse of law and the fragile state of world peace at the present time.

95. We hope that that goodwill, solidarity and co-operation among the States Members of the United Nations will lead to ways and means of eradicating as a matter of urgency these evils, which can only lead to an increase in the present number of disabled persons in the world.

96. Mr. MAYOR-ZARAGOZA (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to be speaking before the General Assembly, which has proclaimed this year, 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons. But before proceeding to my statement, I should like to say that I come before the General Assembly not only as the representative of the Government of Spain—as is natural—but also with a mandate from the World Conference on Actions and Strategies for Education, Disability Prevention and Integration of Disabled Persons, over which it was my honour to preside and which a month ago prepared a declaration that I shall submit to the General Assembly on behalf of my Government and of that Conference.

97. More than 500 million human beings, equal in dignity to any other human beings, are suffering as a result of physical, psychological or sensory disabilities and, because of these, from one form or another of social segregation, forgotten in varying degree by the public authorities. Yet for some time the United Nations has been proclaiming the need for universal recognition of human rights. In the same context, it has solemnly proclaimed the rights of physically or mentally disabled persons. It is necessary and a matter of urgency that continued stress be laid on the need to recognize those human rights and further relentless efforts be made to defend the dignity of every man, regardless of the colour of his skin, his religious or political views, his social status or his mental capacity, physical impediments or sensory disabilities. It must also be stressed that the fight for human rights, inasmuch as it affects the handicapped, is also a fight against ignorance, poverty, hunger, war and disease and against all those problems which violate man's fundamental dignity and cause oppression, human degradation and isolation from the mainstream of society. Individual dignity and social freedom are unrenounceable goals for peace. And war, as always, continues to be one of the primary causes of disability, invalidity and incapacity. It has so often afflicted men and peoples that it seems that we are unable to free ourselves from its permanent threat.

98. No country can consider itself completely free if it is not able to ensure the human right of each person, regardless of his individual circumstances, to those services considered fundamental for everyone; just as no man can attain his full dignity until he can exercise and enjoy his human rights. It is possible to achieve this goal only through committed action on the part of the public authorities, making free societies truly democratic, where exclusion and segregation are minimized to the benefit of the participation and equality of all citizens, in accordance with the theme so aptly chosen by the United Nations.

99. This then is the spirit that my country has tried to project in its plans and projects during this International Year of Disabled Persons, and looking towards the future, we bear this in mind as we try to offer these persons a future that is more in keeping with their dignity and rights.

100. In speaking about my country, I would not be complying with the most elementary principle of justice and truth if I did not mention the momentum provided to this matter for years by Her Majesty the Queen of Spain, who in addition to being Honorary President of the Royal Foundation for Education and Assistance to the Disabled—which brings together under its auspices the ministers concerned, the representatives of associations of disabled persons and national experts—took on the

presidency of the National Committee for this International Year.

101. In this way, on the initiative of Her Majesty the Queen, my country implemented in advance the recommendation on the organization of public institutions made at the World Symposium of Experts on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries and Technical Assistance in Disability Prevention at Vienna from 12 to 23 October. This was to the effect that Governments should create specialized bodies to prevent disability and to rehabilitate disabled persons. It would be desirable, it was added, that by the year 2000 an eminent person be appointed, who would be responsible to the head of State and have the fundamental task of developing the application of comprehensive plans of prevention and rehabilitation and that that person be assisted by a national advisory body, on which disabled persons would be duly represented, to constitute the nucleus of all action in this area. Such a national body would be assigned the important function of inter-ministerial co-ordination in matters of health, social service, work, employment assistance, and the like.

102. In my country this body is known as the Royal Foundation for Education and Assistance to the Disabled, to which I have just referred. It has been responsible for the development and implementation of the national plan for the prevention of subnormalcy and the promotion of scientific and technical research in directly related areas, such as the perinatal and aetiological aspects of cerebral disorders, activities to which I have devoted myself from their very beginning and which have made my being here today such a moving experience. That body has been functioning for a number of years and is fulfilling the wish expressed in various quarters during this International Year that the bodies set up in connection with the International Year of Disabled Persons should continue to function permanently, looking towards the future.

103. The Royal Foundation, acting as national committee for the Year, has adapted its functions to the objectives which the United Nations has fixed for the Year. They may be summarized as follows: first, to encourage hard thinking regarding the status of certain human groups which have been constantly forgotten, abandoned or neglected and to draw attention to the unjust situation in which they find themselves; secondly, to take urgent action to alleviate or remove the injustices of which those persons are victims within their own communities; and thirdly, to contribute through international co-operation to the solution of these problems in our world.

104. The efforts of the National Committee during this Year merge with those of the Royal Foundation and of Spanish society in past years to constitute a global strategy to confront in general and at all levels the basic problems of disabled persons. This global strategy consists of the following: at the constitutional level, express recognition in article 49 of the Spanish Constitution of the rights of disabled persons to all the services of the community; at the legislative level, preparation by all political groups in Parliament of a law specifying the rights of disabled persons; at the administrative and political level, existence of an overall agency at the highest national level, presided over by Her Majesty the Queen and under the Government which brings together the ministries most directly responsible for the question of disabled persons as well as the national sector of the handicapped and experts; at the practical level of implementation, preparation of national plans for action in the areas of prevention, special educa-

tion and employment for disabled persons, and of information, documentation and studies; at the financial level, allocation of specific resources through a special tax on gambling, in addition to the relevant budgetary allocations, to raise funds to implement the strategy.

105. As regards international co-operation, the Government of my country has taken two initiatives of great importance, one of a regional and the other of a world-wide nature.

106. At the regional level, the initiative for Spanish participation has been implemented basically within the framework of co-operation with our Spanish-American sister-countries. International meetings were held recently at Madrid between both experts and administrators and at the highest level between ministers from almost all the American countries, in the areas of education, health and social security. At those meetings, which produced highly important conclusions for the regions in question, standards were set and positions were adopted by the Ibero-American countries, as their specific contribution to the World Conference. The Declaration of the Conference of Ibero-American Ministers of Health and Welfare of 28 September 1981, is one of the most useful instruments for the implementation of measures which could alleviate the present tragic situation in the short term.

107. The World Conference on Actions and Strategies on Education, Disability Prevention and Integration of Disabled Persons met at Torremolinos, at the invitation of the Spanish Government, within the framework of the International Year of Disabled Persons and in accordance with resolution 7/08 of the twenty-first session of the General Conference of UNESCO, held at Belgrade in 1980.

108. In preparing for the World Conference, UNESCO, which took the lead in this important initiative, enjoyed the assistance of the United Nations through its secretariat for the International Year, WHO, FAO, the ILO and especially UNICEF, as well as other intergovernmental regional organizations, in particular the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in the preparation of a basic working document to define the present situation in Member States and to guide discussion at the Conference.

109. The World Conference was attended by 463 administrators, representatives of ministerial departments, educators, university scholars, researchers, representatives of associations of disabled persons or their families, social workers and therapists, and others, from 104 countries, together with the representatives of 29 international organizations—13 governmental and 16 non-governmental—27 international specialists and 95 national observers.

110. The Conference deliberated in plenary meetings and in three committees and concluded on a permanent basis of consensus, which enabled it to attain its purposes in an exemplary manner. These were not only to provide a forum for the exchange of information, experience and views, but also to adopt a series of conclusions and suggestions for national and international organizations regarding strategies and future activities, which were condensed and set forth in a solemn declaration—which it was agreed to call the Sundberg Declaration—incorporating principles, criteria, rules and standards for the prevention of disabilities and the education and integration of disabled persons.

111. The Declaration of the World Conference [A/36/766, annex] places special stress upon education, training, culture and information, all of which unquestionably constitute the main gaps in the international panorama of recommendations relating to the item before us. After making detailed reference to existing documents and declarations regarding prevention, rehabilitation and integration, the Declaration affirms that when any short- or long-term activity regarding disabled persons is elaborated public authorities, competent organizations and society as a whole should bear in mind the fundamental principles of participation, integration, personalization, decentralization and inter-professional co-ordination.

112. As I have already said, the articles of the Declaration refer to the fundamental right of full access, in every case, to education, training, culture and information. The Declaration, together with the conclusions of the committees, was the most important element of the World Conference, which is specifically mentioned in the draft resolution adopted by the Third Committee and which my country co-sponsored.

113. It is my earnest hope that the Declaration will be considered in depth by the General Assembly at this session or, failing that, at the next session, when it studies the item entitled "World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons", as recommended by the Third Committee in its report [A/36/764], so ably introduced yesterday at the 86th meeting by the Committee's Rapporteur, Mr. Fujii of Japan.

114. Spain will continue along this path in the conviction that it is a matter of urgency that all disabled persons should enjoy the fullest possible exercise of human rights. In keeping with the mandate of the World Conference, Spain urges all countries to bear in mind the Sundberg Declaration and to carry out, giving them all the necessary priority, measures that will make possible better prevention, education, rehabilitation, integration and care for disabled persons, with special emphasis on preventive action, since we believe that the first right of every disabled person is the right not to be disabled.

115. Mr. MOREAU (France) (*interpretation from French*): At the outset may I address to all the disabled persons of the world and the delegates representing them here today the greetings and fraternal feelings of the people of France.

116. We are now approaching the end of the International Year of Disabled Persons. But for France and for its new Government, elected in the general elections held at mid-year, this Year is the year of a new departure in policy towards the disabled. That is the will that I have come here solemnly to affirm.

117. Chance, accidents and inequalities are the causes of disabilities. Thus disabled persons *par excellence* call for the exercise of solidarity on the part of the community. To give it new impetus, to amplify it in spite of the economic crisis is the challenge facing France and also the international community.

118. But what is important is not so much good intentions as the right way of thinking and the development of concrete action. What is more, we must understand each other properly: today it is recognized that a person with a physical or mental disability is disabled only to the extent that society does not make allowances for the disability. Of course that is not always possible, but if the problem

of disability is presented in that way, a new look is in fact being taken at it, and international society is obliged to show that it is able to take the diversity of its members into account. That is where we see emerging the risk of societies so technical that they lose their humanity and drown individuality in the mass, in the final analysis excluding all that is not common. Thus little by little the average becomes the norm and diversity becomes marginal.

119. The International Year will not have been useless if it makes us perceive that risk and if it makes us understand that the way in which the disabled are dealt with is the touchstone and measure of a society's quality. In saying this I do not think I am exaggerating the scope of this subject, because when you tackle the question of disability you find yourself at the very heart of a multiplicity of policies that concern all a country's citizens, and in which general social aspects and the specific aspects of disability are indissolubly linked.

120. The prevention and treatment of disabilities involves examination of all the policies that raise so many problems of social organization—for instance, health policy. It is through health education—as many previous speakers have stressed—and the care of mothers and their children that it is possible to prevent disabilities and France has made important efforts in this field, and it could increasingly participate in programmes of international co-operation. France has a well-established organization, birth-control policy, tested methods of care during pregnancy and perinatal care that make it possible to prevent many disabilities.

121. As regards family and educational policies, disabilities are often aggravated or even triggered off in a child through lack of a balanced family and school life. Yet such balance concerns everybody, and if disabled children are to be properly welcomed both in their families and at school it is for the families and the schools to be open-minded and to learn the rich meaning of difference, which is not far from learning about fraternity or the rejection of racism. Thus it is necessary to follow all the paths which are opening up in this direction.

122. As regards labour policies, industrial accidents and diseases cause numerous disabilities in all countries. But is it not a general goal to prevent them? That goes well beyond the problem of disability as such. The French Government has begun to reflect anew in this regard with a view to better prevention and better treatment of work-related ailments, which might enable it to reach its objectives. Is this not also a subject for international co-operation?

123. There are other examples which have already been repeated on numerous occasions. In the field of transport, road accidents injure hundreds of thousands in France every year, many of whom remain disabled. Then, in regard to urban planning, accessibility to towns, public buildings, schools, housing, pavements and so many other things in daily life is not only a requirement and a right of the disabled, but also a requirement and a right of all persons whose mobility is reduced: the convalescent, the aged, pregnant women and any person carrying a heavy burden. The problem is technically resolved today. In France there are numerous texts; the matter has been properly studied. But it is in people's heads that things happen, and who can say today that all the technicians who design and build throughout the world really think and will continue to think about the problems of the dis-

abled? For every properly prepared document and study, for the few successful examples, how many still remain to be undertaken? And yet it costs no more to anticipate and very little more to provide accessible facilities. But who will guarantee that the new investments in 1982, regardless of the country concerned, will meet the requirements that I have just mentioned? Much is to be expected of technological progress. All the advances of robot technology, miniaturization and computer technology have great implications for the handicapped. Specific research must be carried out in this field and, here again, barriers could and must be removed.

124. Many other examples could be found, if only in the context of social security systems. But, since we are thinking in terms of a 10-year period and a world-wide programme for the disabled, I think that the content of this should be found, and I think this is possible, in the subjects to which I have just referred. In a word, it is clear that in deciding on an international year for disabled persons the General Assembly focused its attention on the crossroads of economic and social policy.

125. It was done in full knowledge of the facts, that General Assembly resolution 3447 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 had already affirmed that "disabled persons have the same civil and political rights as other human beings". It is in reference to this resolution that the French Government, for its part, affirms the citizenship of the disabled, the full citizenship, so that the disabled may have the same fundamental rights and the same duties as all other citizens, no more and no less. I shall not enumerate the numerous achievements in France with regard to this goal. What we must do is make progress towards a political goal and in this respect I suggest three key words: programming, responsibility, integration.

126. It is through well-programmed action over a period of time and not through decisions of the moment that we shall make progress. In this field, as in so many others, we need a good social planning tool. The Minister for National Solidarity in France is drawing up a balance sheet of the work done so far. In order to prepare this he has called on all the organizations which are operating in the field of the disabled, and, in contributing to the balance sheet, all these organizations illustrate the importance which should be attached to the participation and leadership of the disabled themselves. This balance sheet could be the basis of the programme of action that will be established.

127. The citizenship of the disabled presupposes their responsibility and the rejection or progressive disappearance of assistance measures, where they exist. For a country like France, which has very complex social legislation, a new reading of the texts is called for, and this might be profitable also for other countries which are trying to establish such legislation, so that the same errors are not repeated. This new reading is a difficult task which raises difficult questions. For instance, how do we pass from a legal system based on the source of the handicap to a new system based on the potential of the person and upon his or her needs? Or again, how do we restore the free use of his resources to a disabled person who has only partial autonomy and who because of this is in receipt of social services for which certain allocations are precisely earmarked? In brief, how do you organize collectively what is also in fact an individual responsibility? The question is all the more difficult since, in certain cases, France has reached the stage of over-protection of individual disabled persons, and this will have to be re-

examined. But responsibility presupposes also decentralization of action; throughout the whole of the International Year the work and the action of regional groups have multiplied in France, as elsewhere. This would probably not have happened without it. What is needed is to seek to draw as much benefit as possible from all these initiatives, which are all the more welcome since they originate with the disabled themselves.

128. Finally, integration, to the extent possible, and not segregation, is the third element. We should no longer specialize or categorize institutions; neither at school—where it is desirable for the children to mix, in ordinary schools, in the same classes if possible—nor in outside life—where we have to avoid the idea of special places, special shelters, removed from ordinary areas, and closed-off boarding institutions. On the contrary, small living units such as therapeutic apartments, home-care institutions and everything which promotes meetings and exchanges should be encouraged.

129. Leisure, sport and culture must be open to the disabled, not apart or separately but, on the contrary, paying attention to the differences, bringing them nearer, not concealing them. I would not express surprise at any cultural or sporting performance by a handicapped person. On the contrary, we must say that this is ordinary, it is normal; it must become commonplace. The disabled must be able to do things other than those which are directly related to their handicap. When will television finally open its cameras to the handicapped, not only in special broadcasts but in ordinary broadcasts, with sub-titles for the deaf, or simply think of appealing to the disabled as they do to others in ordinary broadcasts which deal with ordinary subjects? Is it utopian to put forward such ideas today?

130. Lastly, there must be integration at work because it is necessary to affirm the right of the disabled to employment. Yet, the percentage of unemployed disabled persons is far higher than that of the ordinary unemployed in France, as elsewhere. The economic crisis is, of course, partly responsible for this. But the solidarity which we must learn anew today also affects public and private enterprises. The employment of the disabled is part of the social obligations of the enterprise just as integration of the disabled worker among ordinary workers is an obligation of solidarity. To be sure, protected work structures are inevitable; but should they not be limited today either to when they are really necessary—and this is nearly always more rarely than one would believe—or to a limited period of rehabilitation before complete reintegration?

131. Action for the benefit of the disabled makes us appreciate the terrible gap that exists between words and deeds. Too many gatherings, too much analysis and too much research have never led to specific projects. We do not wish to be among those who talk but do not act. So, may this session of the General Assembly help to make the international community move in the right direction; not that of answering the appeal of the disabled who say: "Do not let us down, help us", but, rather, that of true citizenship for the disabled or, quite simply, that of equality.

132. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly adopted at its 4th meeting on 18 September 1981, I now call on the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

133. Mr. SARAF (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations): Mr. President, on behalf of the Director-General, Mr. Edouard Saouma, I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

134. Let me begin by saying how much we welcomed the decision of the Assembly to launch an International Year which would increase awareness in the international community of the plight of millions of disabled persons in the world and of the contribution they can make as full members of society. The Year will also draw attention to the need to develop strategies and policies on disability prevention and rehabilitation.

135. The prevention of disability is not a new feature in the programme of work of FAO. Indeed, the fight against hunger and malnutrition is also a fight against such disabilities as blindness, mental illness, restriction of mobility and effective participation in working life. Disability prevention is a continuing concern in FAO activities and finds its place in programmes such as food policy and nutrition and in plant protection, through the prevention of the side effects of toxic chemicals and the safe use of pesticides.

136. The control of river blindness is another major area relevant to disability prevention. This programme is conducted in conjunction with WHO, UNDP and the World Bank, and the first results are convincing: the transmission of the disease has been interrupted in 80 per cent of the programme area. For fishery resources, relevant activities are mainly concerned with the control of pollution levels in commercial species. In the forestry industry, disability prevention is aimed at the prevention of accidents in forestry work and the study of the nutritional needs of forestry workers. There are other relevant activities which I could mention; for instance, the development of safety factors in agricultural mechanization, or the introduction of the concept of prevention in rural extension programmes.

137. The activities which I have just mentioned are of a continuing nature. The International Year of Disabled Persons has, however, provided an opportunity for specific types of action.

138. In May this year the FAO money and medals programme issued a medal designed by a disabled artist on the theme of the Year, "Full participation and equality". The net proceeds from the sale of those medals will serve to support development projects. A paper on nutritional deficiencies and disablement was prepared for the World Conference on Actions and Strategies on Education, Disability Prevention and Integration of Disabled Persons, which took place in Spain in November 1981. Special measures have been taken to improve the accessibility of FAO premises to disabled staff members and visitors. Furthermore, personnel policy recommendations are being made to take into account the situation of disabled staff members.

139. The value of the Year, as we see it in FAO, is not so much that it has generated specific activities with the risk that these might be confined to 1981, but rather that it has aroused greater concern about disability-prevention and rehabilitation. In the case of FAO, the Year has provided an opportunity to take the measure of our contribution to disability-prevention and has led us to ask ourselves how that contribution could be enhanced in the

future in all relevant programmes of the Organizations. Even if this were the only result of the Year, we feel it would have been worth the efforts of all those who promoted it.

140. The PRESIDENT: (*interpretation from Russian*): In accordance with the same decision of the General Assembly to which I referred earlier, I now call on the representative of the World Health Organization.

141. Mr. ACUÑA (World Health Organization) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As Regional Director for the Americas of WHO, it is my great privilege to appear before the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session to transmit on behalf of Dr. Mahler, our Director-General, his message regarding the contribution of WHO to the International Year of Disabled Persons.

142. As you are aware, in 1976 the General Assembly, in resolution 31/123, proclaimed 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons with the theme "Full participation". Subsequently, in 1979, the General Assembly, in resolution 34/154, expanded this to "Full participation and equality".

143. The central objective of the International Year of Disabled Persons is to promote increased awareness of the problems of disability, to present it as a challenge to the international community and, through co-ordinated efforts, to carry out practical efforts aimed at changing the situation regarding all disabled persons, especially those who are most seriously affected and are without access to services in the rural areas of developing countries.

144. The general strategy of WHO fully reflects the objectives of the central theme of the International Year of Disabled Persons, namely, "Full participation and equality". WHO and all its member States have pledged to achieve the goal of "Health for all by the year 2000" as a result of devoting primary attention to health. The objective is to achieve for all citizens of the world a degree of health that makes it possible for them to lead a socially and economically productive life.

145. Primary health care is the key to achieving that objective as an integral part of the process of development in a spirit of social justice. It is important that essential health care be available to all persons, with their full participation, and include promotion, prevention, cure and rehabilitation services. Therefore, the prevention of disability and rehabilitation constitute an integral part of the strategy and the global approach of WHO.

146. The International Year of Disabled Persons has given us an opportunity to appreciate the magnitude of the problems of disability. The most accurate estimates indicate that approximately 10 per cent of the world's population is made up of disabled persons and that 80 per cent of those are persons living in developing countries. If immediate action is not taken to prevent disabilities and if new measures are not adopted, a dramatic increase in the number of disabled persons will take place in the coming years.

147. The disabilities which exist in developing countries are caused primarily by malnutrition, communicable diseases, deficiencies in peripheral areas and accidents, including those caused by acts of violence. In developed countries, chronic somatic illnesses, mental problems,

alcoholism, drug abuse and accidents are the principal causes of disability.

148. The major proportion of disabilities are preventable and, for that reason, WHO is giving the highest priority to preventive action. The prevention of disability, within the framework of general attention to health, has been promoted in a large number of WHO programmes, such as the expanded programme of immunization, with the task of vaccinating all children by the year 1990 against the six diseases which are the primary causes of mortality and disability; the special programme of research and training in tropical diseases, which tries to identify possible ways of preventing certain tropical diseases for which there is still no effective immunization or cure; the programme on prevention of accidents, which encourages the use of security measures, the development of techniques of educating the public regarding traffic accidents and the collection and dissemination of relevant information; and the programme on the prevention of blindness and the programme on the control of onchocercosis in the River Volta basin, which are devoted to the prevention of the primary causes of blindness. One of the primary initiatives of the Maternal Health Division is to provide better perinatal care. The Mental Health Division participates in many activities for the prevention of mental retardation, mental illnesses, alcoholism and drug abuse. The cardio-vascular illness programme has many elements, related to studies of primary and secondary prevention of cardio-vascular illnesses. The nutrition programme is involved in activities for the prevention of malnutrition through improved nutritional education and the production and distribution of foodstuffs.

149. However, it is obvious that it will be many years before a reasonable degree of success can be achieved. In the meantime it is necessary, and it will continue to be necessary in the future, to promote rehabilitation.

150. At present rehabilitation services are quite inadequate, especially in developing countries. There are rehabilitation services and institutions which, although they do excellent work, reach only a minimal percentage of disabled persons—perhaps not more than 5 per cent—in the developing countries. The expansion of these services in the immediate future, so as to make them available to all disabled persons, is beyond the capacity of most countries, because of limited financial, technical and human resources.

151. Consequently, it has been necessary to adopt a new approach, and WHO has accepted this challenge. New policies have been established and a new programme has been adopted more clearly focused on community action within the context of primary health care. The fundamental principles of this programme are: using the primary health care approach, to extend prevention and rehabilitation services to all the population suffering from disabilities, instead of promoting the services of highly sophisticated institutions; to encourage the use of methods and techniques which are practical, acceptable, reasonable in cost and suited to local conditions; to encourage community participation and mobilize resources for the special purpose of ensuring that disabled persons and their families will take part in the rehabilitation process.

152. In order to promote programmes with community participation, WHO, together with its member States and in consultation with other United Nations agencies, has produced a series of manuals entitled "Integration of the

disabled into the community". This practical operational instrument suggests what can be done and how to do it, in order to promote essential rehabilitation services in the community. We have proposed to some member States the establishment of projects to promote rehabilitation activities, to test, adapt and evaluate the usefulness of this approach. At the present time there are a number of projects of this type, which are the result of the combined efforts of the member States, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations.

153. Now I should like to bring representatives up to date regarding the specific contribution WHO has made to the International Year of Disabled Persons. A special committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons was established at WHO headquarters to promote activities within WHO and to co-ordinate them with those of other bodies within the United Nations system and non-governmental agencies.

154. WHO has been providing full support and all possible resources to the secretariat of the International Year at Vienna, including the services of consultants, technical information and advice on specific technical matters.

155. WHO convened and served as host for an inter-agency meeting on the International Year, which was held at Geneva on 11 and 12 August 1980, and participated actively in meetings on the subject organized by other bodies, such as the Interagency Meeting on the International Year of Disabled Persons, held in Paris on 24 and 25 February 1981 and the World Symposium of Experts held at Vienna in October this year. It also participated actively in a series of international meetings, seminars and conferences. WHO was host to a meeting of non-governmental organizations held in August 1980 with the aim of defining the role these organizations would play in support of activities relating to the International Year at the global and regional levels, and especially at the national level.

156. Our regional offices co-operated actively with the regional economic commissions of the United Nations and vigorously promoted regional and national activities relating to the International Year. A number of countries benefited from the services of consultants, who co-operated in the formulation of national programmes for disabled persons and their rehabilitation and also in plans of action and follow-up programmes. As a result of this, programmes and plans of action have already been prepared.

157. WHO's activities in connection with the International Year were discussed at the 67th meeting of the Executive Board, in January this year, and at the thirty-fourth World Health Assembly, last May. The Assembly adopted resolution WHA 34.30 emphasizing that disabled persons must benefit from prevention, treatment and rehabilitation activities which will make it possible for them to share effectively in the normal tasks of society, and that efforts relating to permanent programmes of the International Year would be increased as an integral part of activities to achieve the goal of "health for all by the year 2000". Furthermore, the Assembly called on the Director-General of WHO to help member States to establish programmes of prevention of disabilities and rehabilitation within the context of primary health care, especially in the developing countries.

158. A WHO committee of experts on disability prevention and rehabilitation met in February 1981 at Geneva,

with the participation of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. That committee fully accepted the WHO strategies on this subject and laid down guidelines to integrate those activities within existing national health and development systems, especially as part of primary health care. An advisory group met at New Delhi in January 1981 with the specific purpose of revising the global strategies of the programme for the prevention of blindness.

159. The last meeting of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy, which was held at WHO headquarters in February this year, prepared a scheme for a joint programme relating to illnesses causing infantile disability. A certain number of programmes being carried out in countries, such as the testing of the WHO manual regarding the integration of disabled persons into the community and the introduction of rehabilitation services, have in fact been supported jointly by WHO and UNICEF.

160. In 1981 a number of countries in all the regions, among them some of the Caribbean countries, Mexico, Botswana, Nigeria, India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, have already begun to develop the testing, adaptation—including translation into the local language—and evaluation of approaches based on community participation in the prevention of disability and in rehabilitation, as suggested in the manual I have just mentioned. It should be pointed out that the programmes have been given considerable extrabudgetary resources. In addition, intercountry training workshops were organized in the Caribbean in May and June 1981 and in Botswana in August and September of this year, in order to support those programmes.

161. To give more emphasis to permanent programmes for the prevention of disabilities and rehabilitation, we have co-operated with a number of member countries, such as Nigeria, Botswana, India and Pakistan, in the development of their plans for training, research and the provision of services. Research has been promoted, including home surveys. In 1981 studies of disabilities carried out in India and Indonesia were given additional support by WHO, to enable them to be concluded before the end of this year. We hope that the results of these studies, including those on the Sahel, Rwanda and Jordan, will be published during 1982.

162. The WHO manual on the international classification of impairments, disabilities and handicaps has been broadly disseminated for study and evaluation. Translations into other languages, including French and German, are at an advanced stage.

163. Finally, I should like to mention something of primary importance, which is public information. In this connection, the Director-General of WHO and the Executive Director of UNICEF published a joint declaration on the International Year of Disabled Persons during the first week of January this year. The January edition of the review *World Health* is devoted entirely to the International Year, and in subsequent editions there will be articles on the specific problems of the disabled. In addition, special programmes for broadcasting in English and French have been prepared, as have exhibits of photographs, pamphlets and posters.

164. In conclusion, I should like to share with you my firm conviction that, as a result of the combined efforts of the specialized agencies and other United Nations

bodies involved in the International Year, all disabled citizens in the world will, as Dr. Mahler mentioned in his message, achieve a degree of health that makes it possible for them to lead a socially and economically productive life. Unquestionably this would guarantee their "full

participation and equality" and would meet the challenge which prompted the General Assembly to proclaim 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.