



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria)

later: Mrs. de ARANA (Peru)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 69: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE  
(continued) (A/35/361 and Add.1; A/34/855; A/C.3/35/3)

AGENDA ITEM 81: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH (continued) (A/35/503;  
A/C.3/35/3)

AGENDA ITEM 71: PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY AND THE AGED (continued) (A/35/130 and  
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AGENDA ITEM 73: QUESTION OF A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (continued)  
(A/C.3/35/L.14)

AGENDA ITEM 79: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued) (A/C.3/35/5;  
A/35/274 and Add.1; A/35/291; A/35/444 and Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 70: PRESERVATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL VALUES, INCLUDING  
THE PROTECTION, RESTITUTION AND RETURN OF CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC PROPERTY (continued)  
(A/35/349; A/35/419)

AGENDA ITEM 68: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 72: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS  
(continued) (A/35/202)

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (continued) (A/35/65;  
A/35/96; A/35/132; A/35/137; A/35/173; A/35/185; A/35/228; A/35/434; A/35/457;  
A/35/462)

(a) REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (A/35/40; A/C.3/35/4)

(b) FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (A/35/417)

(c) STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS,  
THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND THE OPTIONAL  
PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS  
(A/35/3/Add.24; A/35/195)

1. Mr. AZAR GOMEZ (Uruguay), speaking on agenda items 73, 69, 81 and 71,  
described the experience of Uruguay, whose policy was designed to enable  
individuals to enjoy the benefits of welfare and education throughout their  
lives so that they could progress smoothly from one stage to the next in full  
awareness of their family and social responsibilities and of their rights and  
duties.

2. Before providing a service to benefit children, youth, adults or the aged,  
it was important to take all the relevant factors into consideration and to  
secure the requisite material and financial resources in order to achieve  
something more than ephemeral or mediocre results which would lead only to  
discouragement and frustration among the intended recipients of aid.

(Mr. Azar Gomez, Uruguay)

3. Uruguay, with a population of 2.9 million persons fairly equally distributed among the various age groups, was aware of the problems encountered at every stage of life. It had good reason to look forward to the elaboration of a convention on the rights of the child, and therefore wished to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.14.

4. Without wishing to repeat the statement more on that question by Mr. Narancio at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly (A/34/PV.37), he thought it appropriate to refer briefly to the standards adopted and the institutions established by Uruguay in the social field. Various ministries, including the Ministries of Education and Culture, Public Health, Employment and Social Security, Transport and Public Works, Internal Affairs and National Defence, were collaborating in the national child welfare and education effort.

5. The Child Council was responsible for maternal and child care and for the welfare of the sick, the disabled and orphans. The same Council had the task of counselling juvenile delinquents to learn a profession or take a job which would help them re-integrate themselves in society. Prior to the establishment of the Child Council, children's problems had already been dealt with by other institutions such as the National Institute for Deaf Mutes, the International Institute for Child Welfare, the Intensive Care Centre for Children in the Filtro Hospital, and various schools and homes for mentally handicapped children. Ongoing vaccination campaigns had enabled Uruguay to eliminate tuberculosis, whooping cough, smallpox, poliomyelitis, etc.

6. Particular attention was being given to nutrition, and school canteens were offering children balanced meals based on menus prepared by a group of eminent dieticians and providing for a daily intake of over 90 grams of protein and more than 3,000 calories. That fact, together with the food aid provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers, explained why Uruguay had the lowest infant mortality rate in Latin America. A system of family allowances made it possible to cover the costs of children's education, and canteens and holiday centres for children were also available.

7. In Uruguay, education was compulsory, secular and free with the result that the illiteracy rate was virtually nil. There was an average of one educational institution for every 242 persons of school age, and one teacher for every 25 pupils. Uruguay had not achieved that result by improvising or by importing teachers representing a cultural and political neo-colonialism. Its legislation with regard to education was a reflection of an open society which was free from discrimination and offered constant opportunities for social advancement. Since 1813 when education had first been declared secular, free and compulsory, free tuition had gradually been introduced at all levels, including the university level. The Constitution guaranteed the freedom of education, restricted State intervention to matters involving health, morality, security and public order, and exempted both private educational establishments and cultural institutions from the payment of national and local taxes.

(Mr. Azar Gomez, Uruguay)

8. The Constitution, together with the Child Code promulgated in 1934, affirmed the rights of the child with regard to education and health. Uruguay was therefore ready to take a direct part in the elaboration of the convention on the rights of the child and to work for its adoption, provided that it was not tainted with sectarianism or discrimination and that its provisions were not contrary to Uruguayan policy in that respect.

9. His country attached major importance to the problems of youth with regard to education, physical fitness, health, employment and preparation for work. Statistics showed that the number of young people in the world would increase from 519 million in 1960 to 1.128 billion in the year 2000, and Uruguay did not intend to be an exception to that trend. In order to help the new generation integrate itself in the national life, institutions had been established to respond to the needs, aspirations and personal worries of young persons. Since 1973, the Student Welfare Directorate had been pursuing a policy of promoting the welfare of university students in all fields - accommodation, provision of meals, employment, medical and dental care, and sporting activities - and it was helping them to participate in the country's economic and social development in an atmosphere of peace and national harmony. The State recruited young persons for jobs in various State institutions for periods of probation with pay, thus giving them the opportunity to enter the world of employment in their own fields of specialization.

10. All those programmes enabled young people to pursue their studies while remaining in contact with national realities. Starting in 1973, steps had been taken to reorganize the curricula in order to enable students to obtain their diplomas faster without prejudice to their qualifications. In three years (1976-1978) 1,217 doctors and 543 dental surgeons had qualified. Twice as many degrees had been awarded by the University after 1973 as in 1972, and, in 1977, three times as many as in 1960. Young people received free medical care, were given a full medical check-up every year and were required to keep their medical card up to date regardless of whether they were students or young workers. That medical care was supplemented by a nutrition programme which was implemented by the university restaurants.

11. The National Committee for Physical Education encouraged young people to take part in sports and recreational activities and organized sports meetings as well as international competitions. Accordingly, his delegation would look favourably on any initiative the United Nations might take in the matter and endorsed the holding of an International Youth Year which would provide an opportunity to exchange experiences. Moreover, it would support, in the context of the item "Policies and programmes relating to youth", any resolution designed to instill in young people respect for morality and the law and the belief that the family was one of the cornerstones of society. Young people should be helped to overcome their anxiety and to abandon the materialism and scepticism that were so widespread in the present times of conflict, terror and inequality, and to become conscious of the intrinsic value of the individual.

(Mr. Azar Gomez, Uruguay)

12. In addition, the Government, realizing the importance of the problems of the elderly and the aged, had implemented a social security policy through the Ministry of Labour and of Social Security; acting through the Ministry of Public Health and certain private institutions it provided the aged with effective protection while respecting their dignity. In 1974, the National Co-ordinating Commission for the Welfare of the Aged had been established to help prepare, plan and implement a global policy of medical and social protection for the aged. The Commission, whose membership was mixed, co-ordinated the efforts made by Government and private institutions. The Ministry of Public Health was responsible for various services for the protection of the elderly including a hospital, which was part of the University of the Republic, and a geriatric polyclinic. Old people's homes had been established and, in 1974, the Ministry of Public Health had created the post of co-ordinator-general of geriatric services for the entire country.

13. The Constitution contained provisions regulating retirement and pensions and a social insurance fund had been established to provide disability and life insurance. His delegation was in favour of a study on the problems of the elderly and the aged and would support any initiatives designed, for instance, to convene a World Assembly on the Elderly, in order to exchange experiences and find solutions, to improve old age insurance by a system of guarantees organized by the State or private institutions, to undertake research into the biological, ecological, physiological, pathological, demographic and sociological problems of the aged, to encourage the elderly to remain physically and intellectually active and to prepare the population to accept the aging process. He expressed the hope that all the good intentions expressed on the subject of children, youth and the aged would not remain just an expression of good intentions but would lead to specific measures.

Mrs. de Arana (Peru) took the Chair.

14. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark), referring to item 79, said that he would speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

15. The Governments of the Nordic countries whole-heartedly supported the decision taken by the United Nations to designate 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. It would focus world attention on the serious problems of disabled persons and would give all Governments an opportunity to take stock of the situation, to formulate their goals and to decide what immediate measures must be taken to ensure full participation and equality for the world's approximately 450 million disabled persons.

16. The Nordic countries unanimously supported the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee with regard to the particular importance of preventive measures, whether relating to nutrition, immunization, improved water supply and the prevention of traffic accidents. Preventive action not only created a better life for the individual but at the same time augmented resources in terms of manpower as well as reducing expenditure on rehabilitation programmes. Preventive measures



(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

were particularly necessary in the developing countries, where the problems that faced the least privileged population groups became extraordinarily grave for those who were disabled.

17. In that context he drew attention to the WHO programme relating to disability prevention and rehabilitation, which was directed at disabled people in rural areas as part of primary health care services, and the strategy just adopted by the Executive Board of UNICEF, which involved specific measures for the prevention, early detection and treatment of disabilities among children.

18. The main objective of the International Year of Disabled Persons should be to develop an integrated approach to the problem, to develop concrete concepts and methods of action, to establish regional co-operation and to encourage the various countries to take the interest of disabled persons into account, both in development planning and in their bilateral co-operation programmes with the developing countries.

19. Whatever the extent of the preventive action, every society would always have larger or smaller groups of disabled persons. It was essential therefore to pay regard to the interests of such persons so as to enable them to lead a normal life and to facilitate their reintegration in society. That was indispensable, not only for humanitarian reasons but also because elimination of physical barriers and other socially generated handicaps was a worth-while investment in so far as successful rehabilitation programmes not only enabled the handicapped to join the labour force but also led to substantial savings in social benefits.

20. It was imperative to devote a great deal of effort in 1981 to disseminating information. People must be informed and made aware of what it meant to be handicapped so that they could have a genuine feeling of solidarity with the disabled and realize that such persons had just as much right as others to participate in all sectors of economic, social and political life. A positive public attitude towards the disabled was crucially important for the successful implementation of the proposed Plan of Action for the International Year of Disabled Persons and especially for obtaining the necessary resources.

21. Awareness of the problems of disabled persons should be an indispensable element at all levels of the planning of social development, especially where the physical environment was concerned, so as to ensure that the disabled were not kept apart, and to facilitate their full integration in society.

22. The problems of disabled persons had too long been regarded purely as a social security problem. That was a simplified, incorrect interpretation since it was not only a question of enabling disabled persons, as in fact all members of society, to benefit from health services and public assistance, but also to guarantee them normal access to all spheres of social life: education and vocational training, the labour market, political and cultural life, recreational activities, sport, public transport, etc.

(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

23. The aim must be less to adjust the disabled to society than to create a society in which everyone, including the disabled, should have equal opportunities and equal chances of success.

24. It would also be very desirable, as the Advisory Committee had recommended, for the United Nations to provide opportunities for disabled persons themselves and their organizations to take an active part in the activities of the International Year for Disabled Persons and to participate in the work of the Advisory Committee, the secretariat of the International Year and the specialized agencies. The Nordic countries supported the recommendations to that effect contained in the report of the Advisory Committee. On the other hand they did not think it would be advisable to hold a world conference of disabled persons. At the World Conference of Rehabilitation International held at Winnipeg in 1980, there had been a proposal to establish a world coalition of disabled people, composed of representatives of federations of national associations of disabled persons. A steering group had been established which, in conformity with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, should be able to draw upon the Fund for resources of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

25. By approving that proposal and granting the world coalition of disabled people the consultative status of a non-governmental organization, the United Nations would confirm the right of disabled persons to organize activities on their own behalf and advocate their own cause.

26. Mr. SOKALSKI (Poland), referring to agenda item 73, said that no international effort had ever aroused so much interest, understanding and unanimity as that undertaken on behalf of children, as was shown by the wide range of initiatives engendered during the International Year of the Child. In that connexion, he recalled that Poland had submitted a draft convention on the rights of the child, the principal objective of which had been to turn the largely declaratory principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child into legally binding, universally sanctioned rules. That initiative had been motivated by the underprivileged situation of more than 650 million children and by the inadequate measures adopted to ensure their protection, particularly with regard to health and employment, and also by the progress of international law.

27. Although it was part of the broad notion of human rights, the concept of the rights of the child, of relatively recent origin, arose from a different perception of the child's rightful place in society.

28. Really to satisfy children's needs, it was not enough to grant them all the rights guaranteed to adults, especially since some of those rights, for example that to education, were obligations rather than rights. Specific steps must also be taken to ensure that children effectively benefited from the special protection and special care referred to in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

29. The concept of the rights of the child had been evolving in stages over the years and had first been introduced into national legislation, for instance when adapting outdated laws to new trends of industrialization. In view of the

(Mr. Sokalski, Poland)

dependence and the continuous exploitation of children in many countries - whether they were independent or under colonial domination - Governments and international organizations had begun to take increasing interest in the protection of the rights of the child, and the establishment of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 1946 had marked a new area in the international efforts in that respect. Moreover, at least 15 ILO conventions included references to the situation of children. Lastly, the preparation and observance of the International Year of the Child had greatly helped to emphasize the need to guarantee to children all over the world rights equal to those of adults.

30. The International Year of the Child had also further enhanced the idea of a convention on the rights of the child. At the end of 1979, Poland had submitted to the Commission on Human Rights the text of a revised draft convention which the Commission had accepted as a working document. The proposal, which had seemed to enjoy universal support, had also given rise to a number of suggestions, particularly on the need for the final text to take account of the diversity of the customs, traditions and socio-economic and legal systems of the different countries, and of the international implications of such a convention.

31. The consultations held by the Polish delegation had resulted in the preparation of a draft resolution (A/C.3/35/L.14), based on previous decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission of Human Rights. In that connexion, he informed the Committee that Congo, Niger, Nigeria and Uruguay had joined the list of sponsors.

32. In conclusion, he reminded the Committee that few legal structures proved truly effective unless they were accompanied by concerted action on the part of the international community and practical efforts to make children's happiness a permanent reality.

33. Mr. Garvalov (Bulgaria) resumed the Chair.

34. Mr. DIENNE (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), introducing the report on the preservation of cultural values (A/35/349) on behalf of the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture and Communications, explained that UNESCO's cultural programme was based on two fundamental concepts, that of cultural identity and that of endogenous development.

35. UNESCO's intention in linking those two concepts was to convince member States, particularly the developing countries, that they should no longer consider the problem of the preservation of cultural values solely from the viewpoint of the arts and literature but in the context of development as a whole. In fact, development implied the mobilization of all the material, cultural and intellectual resources of a country and should therefore be rooted in the cultural values of the different societies.



(Mr. Dienne, UNESCO)

36. Moreover, UNESCO's programme in the sphere of culture and the preservation of cultural values should not be considered in isolation, because it overlapped all the areas of competence of that organization and was closely linked with its programmes in the fields of education, science and technology, information and communications.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.