

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

FORTIETH SESSION

Official Records*



THIRD COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Monday, 21 October 1985
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

later: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/40/SR.17
25 October 1985

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH
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85-56868 4548S (E)

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1. Mrs. SHAHANI (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), in response to several points made by the representative of the Dominican Republic the previous Friday, said that, with regard to the staffing of the Aging Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, recommendation 96 of the International Plan of Action on Aging emphasized that the Centre should be strengthened in order to continue to serve as the focal point for

(Mrs. Shahani)

activities in the field of aging. To that end, the United Nations had been requested to give due consideration, within existing global resources, to the provision of appropriate increased resources. In that respect, the Secretary-General had requested that a P-5 post should be established; however, that request had been turned down by the Fifth Committee. With regard to the question of redeployment, she assured the Committee that there had been no redeployment of the staff of the Aging Unit to any other programme within the Centre; on the contrary, the Centre had redeployed to the Unit an additional P-4. Furthermore, the Department had been granted the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities for two extrabudgetary posts, a P-5 and a P-4.

2. As to the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging, it had played a catalytic role in supporting requests from developing countries to implement the recommendations of the Plan of Action. In a short period of time, it had received requests amounting to over \$9 million. Unfortunately, the Fund had been able to respond to only a limited number of those requests. In that respect, she expressed her appreciation to the Economic and Social Council for requesting the Secretary-General to include the Trust Fund at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, and she reiterated her appeal to all Member States to contribute generously to the Fund.

3. Mr. VITO (Albania) said that the problems under consideration by the Third Committee must not be divorced from the serious general world situation. That situation was above all the direct consequence of the bellicose policy of the imperialist super-Powers, which were oppressing and exploiting peoples. The continuation of the world economic crisis, which had further accentuated the polarization between the developing and industrialized countries, had made the international situation even more bleak. It was clear that the democratic and freedom-loving countries had the will to solve the many existing social problems. However, the tense political and economic situation was accompanied by terrorism and anarchy organized by the Governments in power and by the unprecedented growth of political, moral and physical corruption.

4. Although racial and national discrimination was prevalent in many countries, there was also scorn for the dignity of women, corruption of the family, abandonment of the elderly and lack of care for disabled persons. The problem of housing was a heavy burden not only for many African, Asian and Latin American countries but also in the so-called developed countries. Prostitution, alcoholism and drug addiction were serious social evils in a number of countries, especially among the young. Those evils were encouraged by the bourgeoisie itself, which wanted to make the working masses, especially the young, apathetic in order to draw their attention away from crucial political problems and keep them from striving towards a better world.

5. It was axiomatic that, in a society where human beings exploited one another, there could be no real social justice. For that reason, his delegation supported the view that efforts to improve the world social situation were closely linked with efforts to combat demagoguery and the bellicose policies of the super-Powers.

(Mr. Vito, Albania)

6. Since the victory of the people's revolution, Albania had had great success in the economic, cultural, educational, scientific and social development fields, which, compared with the situation previously, was an encouraging example of what a people, however small, could do when it took its fate into its own hands. Social, industrial and agricultural production had increased faster than the population, and a vast network of medical institutions had been established which offered free medical treatment. Illiteracy had been eliminated, the popular masses participated actively in managing the country's affairs and there was no unemployment. Particular attention was paid to the new generation. Priority was given to the education and training of youth. Retired and aging persons had an honoured place in society, and even during retirement they continued to participate in the mainstream of social life and in educating the new generation. The State and society showed particular concern for disabled persons, creating all the conditions necessary for them to live in complete dignity. In general, Albanian social life was characterized by optimism about the future and a continual enrichment of moral values.

7. Mr. STRONHOLM (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that, in their view, the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had been an important step forward. Its decisions, including the resolution on the guiding principles, reflected a welcome consensus and should be further developed in plans for the Eighth Congress and even beyond. The 47 guiding principles represented an example of international co-operation typified in the earlier Caracas Declaration, and constituted a plan of action; principle No. 15 was important in stressing the need for a systemic approach to crime prevention, based on sound research and consistent action, reflecting the reality that crime was deeply rooted in social structures and that measures to control it must be weighed against social costs - a point the Nordic countries had often stressed. The guiding principles also stressed the importance of reducing opportunities to commit crimes. The Nordic countries fully supported those principles and expected to implement them in their own countries.

8. On the subject of standard-setting, a working group of the Sixth Committee was currently drafting a body of principles for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment. The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners had made an impact on many Member States' legislation and penal practice, and were an integral part of Sweden's laws; but experience, research and development in penology suggested that they might be due for amendment. Imprisonment should be avoided as much as possible; alternatives should be sought to the long isolation of offenders from society. It was hoped, therefore, that the Nordic countries' draft resolution on alternatives to imprisonment, adopted at the Seventh Congress, could be implemented at the national level and developed further during preparations for the Eighth Congress.

9. The Nordic countries urged the eradication of arbitrary and summary executions and the gradual reduction of the death penalty throughout the world with a view to its earliest possible abolition. Defendants in capital offence cases should meanwhile have the most effective legal safeguards, including the extensive use of procedures for review of conviction and sentence and for pardon and commutation.

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10. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that the study submitted by the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights concerning item 90 (b) (E/CN.4/1985/10) quite rightly pointed out that there was an inseparable interrelationship between enjoyment of the right to self-determination and popular participation in development. For the people of the German Democratic Republic, respect for the right to self-determination had provided a basis for the building of democracy and socialism after the country's liberation from fascism by the Soviet Union, other States of the anti-Hitler coalition and German anti-Fascists. Its experience had shown that it was imperative to implement economic, social, political and cultural rights as an integrated whole.

11. He noted that reference to that need was missing in the study, and his delegation therefore recommended that, in a possible revision, attention should be paid to the complexity and inseparability of all rights, and that the economic, social and cultural rights should not be dealt with in general terms only.

12. With regard to the development of an active and democratic life, he noted that in the German Democratic Republic every citizen was entitled to vote from the age of 18 and could stand for election to a representative body himself from the same age. The citizens exercised their right to participation also by taking part in the work of local elected bodies or by performing functions in various social organizations. As to the right to work, his delegation wondered whether it was possible to talk seriously about popular participation in the realization of human rights if some people, whatever their number, were deprived of the chance of earning their living by working. That question deserved far more attention in any revision of document E/CN.4/1985/10.

13. He noted that in the socialist States the right to work was not only embodied in their constitutions but was actually guaranteed to everyone. The fear of losing one's job owing to the introduction of modern technology was unknown, and changes of employment which might result from a conversion of production were always a matter of long-term planning in which the workers participated.

14. Ensuring a high level of education for all was also instrumental in achieving popular participation in the realization of human rights. In the German Democratic Republic, a successful approach had been taken by creating a self-contained, integrated educational system. It was compulsory for all children to attend a 10-year general polytechnical school, and the right to education was guaranteed by free general education, exemption from the payment of fees for full-time students and the provision of study grants. In the German Democratic Republic, education ranked among the most crucial factors in development, both of the individual and of society.

15. Lastly, he noted that it was to be deplored that no mention had been made in the Secretary-General's study of questions related to peace and disarmament. Popular participation also included the implementation of the most important human right, the right to live in peace. Colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, fascism and apartheid were serious obstacles to the enjoyment of human rights and it was essential to include them in future discussion of the item.

16. Mrs. ALVAREZ (France), speaking on item 90, said that the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1) gave an admirable summary of the major obstacles to social progress and the forces of social change in the world. However, it was disturbing to note the conclusion that, in the context of persistent underdevelopment and growing insecurity, the world social situation remained marked by violence against individuals and groups, the denial of their human dignity and other similar impediments to social progress. The analysis in the Report of the causes and effects of the world recession and the problems of development seemed most pertinent. Many countries needed to develop a social policy to cope with economic crisis; they could not simply continue the policy they had pursued in more prosperous times, especially if they were still unduly dependent on international markets.

17. The Report reflected an increasing interest in the relationship between disarmament and development and in proposals for reallocating resources to civilian and development use, including France's proposal that a conference should be convened on that subject. Although major progress did not seem likely in the near future, recommendations should be drawn up for the reallocation of resources released by future disarmament for economic and social development.

18. Her delegation had some recommendations to make. Firstly, it would be useful if the same group of subjects was covered in every edition of the Report in order to reflect changes more clearly. Such subjects could include social action policies, social protection, distribution of resources, health and nutrition, using the data produced by other United Nations bodies and with appropriate adaptation to the social development context. A wider approach was needed to cover the many aspects of social development problems; her delegation considered that the Report should once again be published on a four-yearly basis, in view of the two-year period between the sessions of the Commission on Social Development. Finally, it was regrettable that the chapter on civil and political rights had been dropped from the 1985 Report, since respect for those rights was a basic prerequisite for development and social justice.

19. In the Secretary-General's report under item 90 (b) (E/CN.4/1985/10 and Add.1 and 2), valuable progress had been made towards a universal definition of a concept which could be realized in many different ways. A consensus seemed to have emerged on certain aspects of popular participation: it could be defined as the involvement of citizens in public affairs at various levels, it responded to a social need and was a means of promoting development. As stated in the report, the population concerned should draw up its own guidelines for participation, and the participation machinery should operate with the fullest respect for human rights (p. 6). The report also stressed the relationship between popular participation and some civil and political rights (p. 17). Her delegation would go so far as to suggest that there could be no true popular participation unless all civil, political, economic and social rights were respected.

20. Her country had adopted many laws and measures which helped citizens to fulfil their social responsibilities and to take part in decision-making, such as the Decentralization Act of 1982, and measures to permit more freedom in communication, industry and trade-union rights. The report rightly stated that population groups

(Mrs. Alvarez, France)

with specific difficulties or aspirations, such as young people, women, old people and the disabled, should be given every opportunity to participate in the life of society as fully as possible.

21. The recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "National experience in promoting the co-operative movement" (A/40/78-E/1985/10) were designed to preserve the autonomy and democratic nature of the co-operatives and to develop movement-to-movement activities between developed and developing countries. If a co-operative movement was to be truly beneficial, it should adhere to certain principles, such as democratic management, shared responsibility and independence, and give a low priority to individual profit.

22. Mr. MATELJAK (Yugoslavia), speaking on item 90, noted that the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1) gave a comprehensive review of social development in the world, together with the economic, technological and military factors which hindered it. The unjust system of international economic relations was a major reason for the current difficulties, particularly in the developing countries.

23. As pointed out by the Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in Luanda in September 1985, such factors as a decrease in loans to developing countries, unfavourable exchange rates and raw-material prices, protectionism and the debt burden had compelled the developing countries to restrict imports and reduce investments, with the result that their gross domestic product, per-capita income and overall production had stagnated or declined. Developing countries receive inadequate support in computer technology and other related sectors. Their foreign debt had assumed serious political and social dimensions: unless a just and lasting solution was found quickly, the developing countries' obligations might become too great for them to repay. Under such conditions, many developing countries were unable to undertake any significant social development measures.

24. For the first time, the Report referred to the adverse effects of the arms race and armed conflicts on the world social situation; that approach was in conformity with the Declaration on Social Progress and Development. It was absurd that mankind should expend on weapons an annual sum equivalent to the total debt of the developing countries. Economic and financial relations, the arms race and the technological gap between the developed and developing countries were the root causes of the worsening social situation, leading to political conflict and military tension in some countries, and progress must be made in those areas before the social situation could improve. All Member States should take more effective action in order to establish the new international economic order, put an end to the arms race, and eliminate colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and exploitation.

25. Popular participation was an essential element of social progress and economic growth. The Secretary-General's study (E/CN.4/1985/10 and Add.1 and 2) was a good starting point for further consideration of the subject. Popular participation was not a recent phenomenon: it was enshrined in the legislation and daily life of many countries. The participation of workers in management was designed to achieve more rapid social and economic development, modernization and innovation.

(Mr. Mateljak, Yugoslavia)

26. The international organizations, especially the United Nations, had gathered a great deal of data on the subject of workers' participation in management, and their work had contributed greatly to the introduction of workers' participation throughout the world. A seminar on popular participation had been held in Yugoslavia in 1982, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/152, and its report was contained in document A/37/442. The United Nations system should continue its efficient work in that field. Popular participation was an important means for a realization of all human rights, and was mentioned specifically in the Proclamation of Teheran, adopted by the International Conference on Human Rights in 1968, and in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

27. In his country, popular participation had developed into a comprehensive system of self-management which was laid down in the Constitution as a fundamental human right. The workers took decisions in all areas of planning, production and financing. Citizens also took part in the management of social and political affairs at all levels.

28. Mr. DROEGE (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation showed how swiftly technology could become a vital factor, presenting a challenge which could be met only through international co-operation, with the participation of all in technological progress. His country was prepared to contribute thereto, having striven in the past for social progress at home and abroad.

29. The advances within the European Community since 1959, such as co-operation among Member States, social security and freedom of movement to seek work, and insurance, educational and resettlement facilities, should and could be achieved on a world scale, given perseverance and awareness of the primary importance of the item. Social peace and, ultimately, world peace depended on just social conditions. But social peace depended not only on social security but on a political and legal system based on respect for human dignity and clearly defining the individual's community rights and duties, thus providing for active, responsible public participation, which was the soundest safeguard against social stagnation.

30. The full enjoyment of the rights enunciated in United Nations human-rights instruments required popular participation; those rights had to be continually defended. In the social field, trade unions the world over represented their defence; therefore, any Government truly committed to social rights must not only allow but guarantee to its citizens the right to form and join trade unions.

31. Social conditions in his country had long surpassed such elementary considerations. Whilst convinced that each society must choose the kind of popular participation best suited to its people's interests, his country was ready to share its long experience of a viable system.

32. Mrs. SANTHOSO (Indonesia) said that her delegation agreed with the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs that the guidelines for future planning and follow-up in the programmes for youth were pivotal for a long-term strategy. In order to encourage youth's contribution towards the goals of International Youth Year, it was important to apply the guidelines flexibly, given the diverse problems faced by youth throughout the world. The Commission for Social Development of the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened so that it could regularly appraise the guidelines. The coincidence of the World Conference for the International Youth Year with the Organization's fortieth anniversary should further stimulate attention to youth's concerns and to fostering its potential; therefore, the World Conference should finalize and adopt the guidelines.

33. Youth was among the groups suffering most from the effects - including unemployment - of the bleak world economic situation, which imposed a heavy burden on the developing countries. Increasing attention was being given to co-operatives, as mentioned in document A/40/78, as a potential means to create a climate more conducive to youth employment. Pursuant to Indonesia's Constitution, which gave more weight to community well-being than to individual prosperity, the co-operative was deemed the most suitable form of enterprise, particularly for low-income groups in rural areas.

34. Her Government had taken steps, in line with Recommendation No. 127 adopted by the ILO General Conference at its fiftieth session, to promote village co-operatives, which covered food-crop production and marketing, home-industry products and handicrafts, as well as housing, credits for smallholders and other community activities. Women's co-operatives in particular had made outstanding progress. Her delegation fully agreed that co-operatives played a vital role in promoting development, whilst noting that in many developing countries the participation of youth, disabled persons and the aging was very modest - perhaps because the job-creating potential of co-operatives was slackening. The goals of the United Nations Decade for Women, the International Youth Year, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the International Plan of Action on Aging must be vigorously pursued if the groups concerned were to play an appropriate part in development.

35. With reference to the Secretary-General's report in document A/40/482, her Government had made considerable efforts to implement the recommendation of the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. In dealing with new issues which had assumed international proportions, Indonesia had adopted an integrated approach to crime prevention, relating it to economic development and social structures. The Government was striving to overcome overcrowding and high unemployment and to reduce the pace of urbanization by establishing low-cost housing projects and industries outside large cities. It was also strengthening its criminal-justice system and establishing committees on legal education and treatment of offenders, with a view to promoting greater public legal awareness, especially among the young, as a means of crime prevention.

(Mrs. Santhoso, Indonesia)

36. Indonesia's legal provisions and safeguards reflected, and perhaps surpassed, the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials; Indonesia also applied, to the best of its ability, the Standard Minimum Rules adopted by the first United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. It also fostered close co-operation with neighbouring States, including members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), by means of technical co-operation programmes, particularly among ASEAN law enforcement agencies, and by studying operational procedures that did not infringe upon States' territorial integrity. In 1984, Indonesia had hosted a regional seminar, in collaboration with the United Nations.

37. She expressed her Government's thanks to the Government and people of Italy for having hosted the Seventh Congress. Her delegation welcomed the guiding principles adopted by that Congress; they not only dealt comprehensively with the crime-related issues facing most developing countries, but also made recommendations for policies at international and regional levels.

38. Technical assistance was crucial for the developing countries, given the financial constraints they faced in developing laws to deal with new forms of crime. Her delegation hoped, therefore, that the General Assembly would fully endorse the guiding principles. It also felt that, in view of the new forms of criminality stemming from modern technology, the congresses should be held at shorter intervals.

39. Mr. ABUSHAALA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said, with reference to item 91, that his country had achieved major social and economic change by involving the whole community in building up an economy which had formerly been subjected to extensive foreign exploitation. All possible benefits were made available to workers in the agricultural sector and production in factories was based on the co-operative system. No Libyan family was without housing, and free education was provided to all. Health care and medical treatment were provided free of charge and health centres had been opened throughout the country. With regard to communications, new roads totalling 20,000 kilometres in length had been laid over the past 15 years and the country's long coastline was endowed with several ports.

40. With regard to item 96, his delegation endorsed the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging and supported international co-operation to promote its principles. The aging did not encounter any problems in his country, owing to the existence of close family ties. Social-security law also entitled them to a retirement pension, social services and health care. Centres had been established for the care of aging persons without families, and opportunities were provided for the aging to participate in development programmes. His delegation reiterated that special attention must be devoted to the aging in developing countries and to those forced to leave their homes involuntarily, whether as a result of expropriation of their land, as in Palestine, or of drought, as in Africa.

41. With regard to item 97, he said that a law promulgated in 1981 guaranteed shelter and housing to the disabled, as well as their education and exemption from taxes and customs duties, and facilitated their movements at home and abroad. Two well equipped institutes for the rehabilitation of the disabled had recently been opened.

(Mr. Abushaala, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

42. The problem of remnants of war had increased the number of disabled persons in his country; approximately one third of its territory was still affected by mines. The United Nations had provided useful consultative services. His delegation urged States with a sense of moral responsibility to co-operate in the rehabilitation of the disabled and expressed its support for the Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

43. With regard to item 98, his delegation was pleased to note from the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/40/482) that his country had been among those which had responded to inquiries on specific topics. His country had also taken part in many conferences on the subject, including the seventh Congress, at which it had introduced a number of draft resolutions, including those entitled "Crime prevention in the context of development" and "Criminal justice systems - Development of Guidelines for the Training of Criminal Justice Personnel". His delegation would continue to participate in such conferences and was confident that the joint efforts of Member States would meet with success.

44. Mr. Hamer (Netherlands) took the Chair.

45. Mrs. HUMPHREY (Barbados) said that social progress and development was critical to overall national development and a key to improved international co-operation. Crime reflected social underdevelopment. Her country therefore accorded priority to the welfare of its youth, and fully supported the objectives of the International Youth Year. Its theme, Participation, Development, Peace, should reflect youth policies.

46. The Secretary-General, reporting to the Economic and Social Council, had recommended that youth should be integrated more fully into national policy making. Her Government had established a youth affairs section within the Ministry of Labour and Community Services and had assigned personnel to work with youth organizations and advise on concerns of special interest to youth. Her delegation welcomed the world-wide response to the International Youth Year, and supported the measures outlined in subparagraphs (103 (a) to (e)) of document A/40/631. It welcomed the proposal to promote the family as an information channel. It hoped that the review mentioned in paragraph 94 of that document would lead to youth's growing involvement in United Nations activities.

47. Her delegation was also concerned about other sectors of society requiring specific attention, such as the aged and the disabled. Her Government continued to support United Nations action to improve their situation, and, in its reply to the questionnaire on implementation of the Plan of Action on Aging, had reported its special programmes of economic and social assistance to the aged, including its intention to promote the home and the family, rather than institutionalization, as the best environment for the aged. The Government was also considering legal and administrative measures to reduce the cause of accidental disability and enhance job opportunities and rehabilitation for the disabled.

(Mrs. Humphrey, Barbados)

48. As noted in the report of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/CONF.121/22), certain forms of crime could hamper national development. Nations must work together to deal with international crime which was an outgrowth of domestic crime. It was in the interest of all Governments to develop and pursue policies to eliminate poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination and other social ills which fostered crime.

49. Her Government was committed to the elimination of apartheid and reiterated its solidarity with the peoples of southern Africa. It joined forces with the world community in combating the illicit traffic in drugs, and reiterated the call made by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, addressing the Assembly during the current session, had said that the world should act resolutely to eradicate terrorism and the use of mercenaries. Her Government would follow with interest the outcome of the work of the Seventh Congress.

50. In conclusion, she said that it was the duty of all to strive for a social climate in which peace and security could have a chance to flourish.

51. Mr. FORSTENZER (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), speaking on items 89 and 95, said that strong bonds of co-operation had been established, and fully used in the youth programme of UNESCO and by the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in connection with the International Youth Year. That co-operation would continue on the basis of the firm foundations established.

52. UNESCO's activities leading up to the Year had been guided by a resolution of its General Conference. Even before the proclamation of the Year, the UNESCO youth programme had begun a series of regional youth meetings in order to analyse the major trends and priority problems posed with respect to youth in every region of the world. That cycle of meetings had provided the foundation for a scholarly survey of youth prospects in the 1980s that had been presented by the Director-General to the General Conference at its twenty-first session.

53. In its work with the United Nations system, UNESCO had participated in five regional meetings organized by the United Nations regional commissions and in other inter-agency meetings. In observance of the International Youth Year, UNESCO's most recent activities had centred on the organization of the World Congress on Youth held at Barcelona in July 1985. The Barcelona Statement, adopted unanimously, was one of the most innovative documents to come out of the observance of the Year. That Statement would be submitted to the Third Committee by the representative of Spain at a subsequent meeting.

54. Throughout UNESCO's activities in commemoration of the Year, its programme and support sectors had reinforced their co-operation with member States and youth non-governmental organizations in order to promote youth participation in economic, social and cultural development. Attention had been given to the stimulation of thinking and of action by young people in favour of peace. An effort had also been undertaken in the field of information to promote the ideals and activities of the Year through the production and distribution of publications, periodicals, films and radio and television programmes.

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(Mr. Forstenzer, UNESCO)

55. While these would always be problems affecting youth, UNESCO, together with the other institutions of the United Nations system, Member States and non-governmental organizations, remained committed to solving those and other problems.

56. Mr. OMOTOSO (United Nations Development Programme) said that the United Nations Volunteers programme, as a major operational unit of the United Nations for the execution of youth programmes, had, during the International Youth Year, renewed its efforts to assist Governments in Asia and Africa in formulating and initiating UNDP-funded projects designed to increase youth participation in development through employment-generating activities. The Volunteers programme had also collaborated with the specialized agencies in implementing youth-related projects in their respective fields and had maintained close liaison with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

57. Under its separate mandate from the General Assembly for promoting self-help through the strengthening and creation of Domestic Development Services (DDS), the Volunteers programme had launched a DDS programme in the African region. A most encouraging recent development had been the positive response of some Governments in Africa and Asia to the Governing Council's decision calling for the allocation of an increased volume of indicative-planning-figure resources for DDS programmes in helping the least advantaged communities to participate more actively in their own development.

58. Another related development was the Governing Council's submission to the General Assembly at the current session of a decision on the proposed International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development. The concept of volunteer work existed to some degree in almost every facet of the international development network and was reflected in the work of every United Nations development agency. A significant recent example of the incalculable value of volunteer work to the contemporary world was the contribution of thousands of volunteers to help the people of Mexico City survive their recent ordeal.

59. One initiative that UNDP was pursuing with governmental and non-governmental organizations to stimulate grassroots development was "The Tree Project". It was a world-wide undertaking formed to support local responses to deforestation and desertification. Participatory, people-oriented development was essential to improve living conditions. UNDP supported grassroots initiatives for participatory development by the poor and increasingly collaborated with people's organizations, co-operatives, local non-governmental organizations and other community-based groups in developing countries.

60. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) said that Thailand had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.3.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.