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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE:
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued)

(a) WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

(b) POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN
DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE FULL REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 91: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 95: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 96: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 97: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED
PERSONS AND UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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CONTENTS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 98: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS (continued)
- (b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/64, 256, 298, 336, 359, 390, 546, 570, 626, 701, 706, 768; A/C.3/40/4; A/C.3/40/L.3)

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (A/40/3, 342, 458, 489, 513 and Corr.1, 544, 643; E/CN.4/1985/10 and Add.1-2; E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1)

(a) WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

(b) POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE FULL REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 91: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/3, 65 and Add.1, 78, 672)

AGENDA ITEM 95: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES RELATING TO YOUTH: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/3, 389, 631)

AGENDA ITEM 96: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/3, 714)

AGENDA ITEM 97: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/3, 728)

AGENDA ITEM 98: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/40/482 and Corr.1-2, 751; A/CONF.121/22)

(a) REPORT OF THE SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS (continued)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

1. Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica) said that the desire to live in dignity and an environment of peace and social well-being was one of the greatest aspirations of mankind. In the forty years of the existence of the United Nations, social expectations had grown, influenced by such factors as technological change and a growing sensitivity to the needs of people in a rapidly changing environment. The

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

problems inherent in achieving those expectations within the limitations of declining economies had, for many developing countries, become more stark. In several developing countries, that stringency had forced severe cut-backs in social programmes. That trend was discouraging because it had resulted in personal insecurity and a lack of social well-being. In addition, the world was experiencing increasing aggression which led to wasteful arms expenditure, a denial of social justice and a growing disregard for the rights of individuals and groups.

2. The advance of technology was changing how the world functioned in practical terms: people must therefore change the way they looked at the world and operated in it. That was no less true for institutions. As telecommunications brought all areas, including space, into close touch, the world was truly becoming a global village. Its concepts and institutions must therefore adapt to that development. The major actors in the new arena might not be the nation States. For example, large commercial companies, with annual sales that exceeded the gross domestic product of some of the countries in which they operated, traded goods and services with each other and even exchanged sensitive information about nation States without those States being aware of what was being done. New technologies created development opportunities of which the international community should take advantage. They created labour intensive industries which, for reasons of labour costs, it was often more economical to locate "off-shore", away from the traditional centres.

3. Despite the progress achieved in social reform, the world remained far too imperfect. Every effort should therefore be made in order to ensure the necessary ingenuity, political will and practical planning to improve the situation.

4. Turning to specific issues, he said that programmes for the aging would need to be given special attention along the lines of the recommendations of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. His delegation supported greater co-ordination of efforts to maintain the momentum of the 1982 World Assembly on Aging.

5. The International Year of Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had attracted attention and provided programmes to respond to the needs of the disabled. The growing number of activist organizations of disabled persons with diverse interests demonstrated the high level of mobilization of that group with a view to implementing the recommendations of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

6. Crime and its prevention were linked to development, social justice and individual rights and freedoms. In societies today there were many elements which competed for control of scarce resources, and of political and economic power in order to achieve greater security and prosperity. Those needs created a breeding ground for all varieties of crime including drug trafficking and terrorism. Extraordinary, co-ordinated efforts were required at the national, regional and international levels in order to address the causes and to establish preventive mechanisms.

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

7. Finally, he noted that the numerous activities reported in the documentation on the International Youth Year testified to the seriousness and enthusiasm that had gone into making the Year a success and into involving youth at all levels.
8. Mrs. HOERZ (German Democratic Republic) said that the International Plan of Action on Aging was of topical importance, the number of old people was growing in all regions of the world. That increase affected socio-economic development and called for appropriate adjustments. The comprehensive system of economic, social, cultural and legal measures applied in the German Democratic Republic to improve living conditions included specific care for elderly and disabled persons. By eliminating the exploitation of man by man, the socialist German State left no grounds for discrimination on account of disability or age.
9. Her delegation welcomed the fact that co-ordinating mechanisms had been established in more than 70 Member States. Local co-ordinating groups had existed in the German Democratic Republic for several years. Care for the older generation also implied the guarantee of the right to work until retirement age, and that right was protected under the Labour Code. In addition, comprehensive social-security schemes ensured financial security for all elderly citizens.
10. As early as 1982, a central co-ordinating group for rehabilitation of disabled persons had been set up in the German Democratic Republic. All physically and mentally disabled children attended polytechnic high schools or special schools. Every disabled person now had a suitable job which, as far as possible, met personal wishes.
11. The review of implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had shown that much remained to be done at the global level. Unemployment, economic crises and social-service cuts impeded the implementation of programmes for older and disabled persons. At the same time, enormous resources were being diverted towards the development of weapons which threatened the existence of mankind. The German Democratic Republic would continue to contribute its experience to the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.
12. Miss BYRNE (United States of America) suggested that, in order to expedite work, representatives of the Secretariat should distribute written texts of their detailed views and provide only brief oral introductions to the various agenda items.
13. With regard to item 90 (b), her delegation wished to point out that "popular participation" had not been universally recognized as a human right. Instead, it was an important concept which encompassed many of the fundamental rights that must be guaranteed in a democratic society. The concept of popular participation was closely linked to the most essential civil and political rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When the essential rights to form, hold and exchange opinions were protected and people were able to express their will freely

(Miss Byrne, United States)

through participation in a democratic electoral process, then the concept of popular participation was truly significant.

14. The findings of the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging indicated considerable awareness of the impact of aging populations on socio-economic conditions and the potential of the elderly themselves in national development. Her delegation appreciated the effective role of the non-governmental organizations in implementing the Plan of Action at both the international and national levels. The response of the United Nations specialized agencies too had been commendable. With respect to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, activity in the United States to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and to publicize the Decade continued in the public and private sectors.

15. The results of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders set the focus for the future. The Milan Plan of Action identified priority areas. Of special note was the emphasis given to combating terrorism, including, when appropriate, concerted action by the international community. The gravity of organized crime and international narcotics trafficking was also strongly emphasized in the Milan Plan, and she agreed that it was imperative to launch a major effort to control and eventually eradicate those two phenomena.

16. The Plan of Action and the supporting resolutions adopted by the Seventh Congress shifted the focus of criminality to promoting international co-operation in crime prevention and to increasing the capacity to respond to international crime. The United Nations must now carry on the necessary follow-up work so that the agreements achieved could have practical effect. The attendance of 124 States at the Congress testified to the universal recognition of the increasingly serious international dimensions of crime. The decisions taken had been unanimous and had reflected the view of both the developed and the developing countries that international criminality affected every people and every nation.

17. Mr. QUINN (Australia), commending the Report of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/CONF.121/22), said that the consensus achieved at the Congress after difficult negotiations on a range of important initiatives had been a major achievement. The Congress had also demonstrated the value of effective preparation at the regional and interregional levels. The broad range of participants had enhanced the overall result and should facilitate follow-up. It was hoped that the Third Committee could endorse the constructive work done in Milan.

18. Australia had been active in the proceedings of the Congress, including the launching of a key initiative in the form of a draft resolution on organized crime, adopted by consensus. Organized crime posed unprecedented challenges, and the resolution provided a significant impetus to international co-operation in fighting it, especially through practical bilateral measures. It also urged Governments to intensify national efforts. Three important elements emphasized in the resolution

(Mr. Quinn, Australia)

were the tracing of financial transactions, the creation of national institutions to combat crime and encouragement to Governments to consider tougher penalties against organized criminals.

19. The Congress' adoption by consensus of a Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice relating to Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power was a pioneering achievement that had received insufficient attention.

20. On the occasion of the International Youth Year, attention was justifiably centred on the problems being encountered by young people, and it was clear that urgent action was required worldwide to reverse the trend whereby many young offenders placed in institutions seemed destined to embark upon a life of crime. The Congress had adopted Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice and all Governments were urged to implement them, since they complemented other codified international principles regulating the treatment of offenders.

21. Drug abuse and crime had become inextricably linked in recent years. Australia had therefore supported a strongly worded resolution on action against drug trafficking and abuse which it hoped that the General Assembly would take into account when considering the question of narcotic drugs.

22. Action to control abuse of authority by the police could only be effective if comprehensive educational and other programmes were developed for police forces round the world. Australia had played an active part in the adoption in Milan of a resolution encouraging dissemination and implementation of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, which it was hoped would give new impetus to improvements in police training worldwide.

23. The Congress had also emphasized the primordial importance of the availability of reliable and coherent information on crime for the purpose of critical decision-making on crime prevention and control and the treatment of offenders. Australia had supported the adoption of several resolutions on the subject and had co-sponsored a text encouraging practical research in the field of youth, crime and juvenile justice.

24. Mrs. BAZAROVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on items 89 and 95, emphasized the significance of the International Youth Year and said that the valuable guidelines contained in the Secretary-General's report on the International Youth Year (A/40/256) would be of great assistance to Governments in their efforts to safeguard the rights and interests of young people. The decisions of the World Conference for the International Youth Year, held in the context of the current session of the General Assembly, would provide valuable guidance in the future.

25. It was vital to involve young people in the campaign to relax international tension, put an end to the arms race and increase confidence among States, so that many of the resources currently used for arms production could be reallocated to development. The Twelfth World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Moscow in the summer of 1985, had played host to more than 50,000 young people from all over the world and had made a valuable contribution to those objectives.

(Mrs. Bazarova, USSR)

26. The escalation of the arms race by the imperialist Powers and their attempt to extend it to outer space diverted resources from social programmes and adversely affected the social and economic situation of young people in capitalist countries: they were the first victims of unemployment, housing shortages and racial discrimination, and their protests at the violation of their fundamental rights were harshly repressed. The relevant draft resolutions adopted by the Committee should focus on those problems. Cuts in social programmes further aggravated the already difficult position of young people in those countries, which accounted for the growing numbers of suicides and drug addicts. It was necessary to ensure equal rights for young people, and to guarantee their right to education, thus enabling them to participate fully in the fight for social justice and development in their own countries.

27. Many of the recommendations in the specific Programme of Measures and Activities to be undertaken prior to and during the International Youth Year had already been implemented in the USSR; they included the construction of co-operative housing and the provision of leisure and sporting facilities. The system of socialist democracy allowed young people to participate in government on an individual basis, by voting or by seeking election as a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, and through the youth organizations, which were entitled to initiate legislation. The interests of young people were safeguarded by youth commissions attached to the Soviets of People's Deputies, by trade unions and by youth organizations. Youth representatives usually attended meetings of governmental and public organizations dealing with the education, vocational training, work and leisure activities of young people. Student organizations also participated in university boards on certain issues.

28. It was important that the activities of the International Youth Year should not be merely ceremonial. The debates at the special plenary meetings of the General Assembly on the results of the International Youth Year would act as a valuable stimulus to States to tackle the problems facing young people. Non-governmental organizations had played a valuable part in the activities of the Year, and it was important that close collaboration between international youth organizations and the United Nations system should continue. It was vital that youth organizations should participate in the World Conference for the International Youth Year. The USSR was sponsoring a draft resolution on the subject of youth, and hoped that it would be widely supported.

29. Mrs. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that, if the problems of youth in the developing countries were to be solved, adequate responses would have to be found to the world economic crisis, such as fair prices for raw materials, the provision of more capital, including concessionary loans to developing countries, an end to protectionism, a fair solution to the debt problem, and implementation of the new international economic order. Lightening the economic burden on the developing countries would help them deal with the problems of youth employment, education and health.

(Mrs. Ouédraogo, Burkina Faso)

30. A number of concepts still had to be defined with regard to the problems of youth. The definition of youth, for example, was still unsatisfactory. Its definition as a specific age group neglected the fact that some features of youth could be conserved into maturity and could, if possessed by a significant portion of the population, lead that society to act as a youthful one. That aspect was taken into account in Burkina Faso.

31. In the context of cultural values and modern communication methods, she felt that the United Nations should give greater consideration to the reference in paragraph 42 of document A/40/64 to the contradictions between new aspirations and traditional values for rural youth in Africa. That problem went beyond national frontiers, in view of the invasion of cultural values from distant societies whose structures were poorly understood and which led to frustration and disruptive behaviour among young people. Such trends should be investigated by the United Nations with a view to ensuring that cultural exchanges between advanced and developing societies resulting from modern communications did not disrupt social equilibrium.

32. One problem of particular concern to Burkina Faso was the migration of young people from rural to urban areas, a problem aggravated by the drought. Burkina Faso had been endeavouring to combat those problems by providing agricultural training for young people.

33. She hoped that the International Youth Year would stimulate the search for a solution to the problems of youth in the interests of bringing about a just, promising and dynamic future for all societies.

34. Mr. BUZO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on items 90 and 91, said that, despite the activities of the United Nations in connection with the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, many of the basic objectives in the Declaration had not yet been achieved. In the capitalist world, many millions of workers, especially young people and older workers, were deprived of the right to work. The crisis in the capitalist economy also affected the developing countries: neo-colonialist terms of credit had reduced the developing countries into mere exporters of capital.

35. His country fully supported the conclusions of the Commission on Social Development contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/21, which attributed the worsening social situation to attempts to preserve the existing imbalance in economic relations and the policies of colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and aggression practised by the imperialist Powers. The 1985 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1) was an improvement on the previous report: its chapter on conflicts and militarism was essential for any understanding of the obstacles they posed to economic and social development.

36. The sufferings of the Byelorussian people during the Second World War had made them more anxious than ever to strive for peace and the guarantee of the most

(Mr. Buzo, Byelorussian SSR)

precious human right of all - the right to life. Even since the Second World War, approximately 20 million people had died in armed conflicts around the world. The Byelorussian SSR strongly endorsed the statement in the preamble to the Declaration on Social Progress and Development that international peace and security on the one hand, and social progress and economic development on the other, were closely interdependent. The United Nations could do a great deal to promote disarmament and détente and thus allow the peoples of the world to concentrate their efforts on economic development and social progress.

37. He had some criticisms of the 1985 Report. It had paid undue attention to the situation in capitalist countries, and its general conclusion that the social situation was worsening did not correspond to the true state of affairs. Indeed, the economy of the Byelorussian SSR was thriving. In the first four years of the current five-year plan, both the national income and industrial productivity had increased by about one quarter. Real incomes had doubled in the past 15 years, and the level of education had risen steadily. Working conditions, health and social services were kept under constant review.

38. True popular participation in all spheres of social life was only possible under socialism. In the Byelorussian SSR and other socialist countries, the people exercised power through the Soviets of People's Deputies, which were the political foundation of the State. Social bodies such as the trade unions and the Komsomol youth organization were concerned with many economic and social questions. A law passed in 1983 was intended to increase the role of work collectives in such fields as the management of public affairs, production planning and social development.

39. Although the International Labour Organisation (ILO) had done some valuable work on conventions and recommendations which largely corresponded to workers' interests, his delegation strongly criticized the position taken by the ILO Secretariat. Its comments were contained in the socialist countries' declaration on the subject (A/40/342). It was to be hoped that ILO would focus on major social problems of vital importance to workers all over the world and establish co-operation among all States on a non-discriminatory basis.

40. Mr. BUDAI (Hungary) said there had been no decisive changes in the world social system during the past three years; prospects for economic and social progress, and particularly in developing countries, were therefore dim. The roots of that situation were to be found in social injustice, colonial and neo-colonial subjugation, acts of aggression and war. The drain of material and intellectual resources in the arms race was depriving mankind of the means of solving its current economic and social problems and was in blatant contradiction to Article 55 of the Charter. Arms limitation and disarmament measures were indispensable for the attainment of social goals and the socialist countries had made numerous far-reaching proposals on the subject.

41. He shared the view of other speakers that the Economic and Social Council was the most suitable forum for a detailed exchange of views on national experience in achieving social progress, and that more effective use should be made of it. He

(Mr. Budai, Hungary)

opposed enlargement of the institutional framework or the creation of new agencies or structures for that purpose.

42. The economic and social situation of Hungary had undergone momentous changes during the past four decades. The development of a socialist society had enabled it to overcome the backwardness it had suffered before the Second World War. Although some goals still remained to be achieved, the security of existence of the population had been ensured on a nation-wide scale, with unemployment unknown and a comprehensive system of social benefits available to all. Despite the effect of the world economic situation on Hungary's economy, efforts were continuing in order to improve living standards and social-welfare, and in the years ahead the Government would be working to increase economic efficiency. The national consensus enjoyed in Hungary on the main issues of the country's social, economic and cultural development was one of its most important achievements.

43. The elderly should be enabled to enjoy a life of fulfilment, health and security. He therefore welcomed the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. He referred to the action Hungary had taken for the welfare of the increasing proportion of older people in its population, such as the provision of old-age pensions, free medical care and hospitalization, a network of social-care services to assist old people in their own homes, and homes for the aged who could not be cared for in their own environment. The Government intended to strengthen that action by preserving the real value of pensions, increasing low pensions, improving social-care services, and creating other possibilities for persons of post-retirement age to continue in gainful employment.

44. The 500 million disabled people in the world were entitled to expect society to create the conditions for them to live in dignity and enjoy their rights as citizens. The United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons should contribute to that end. He referred to his country's efforts earlier in the century to care for the disabled, and said that from 1949 onwards care for the disabled had become a responsibility of the State in accordance with the spirit of the country's socialist Constitution. A network of health services and education and social measures had been provided and appropriate employment ensured for persons with bodily or mental disabilities. The social care and employment of disabled persons was carried out by separate networks of institutions, and the interests of disabled persons were represented by associations established by type of disability. Hungary had acceded to the 1983 Geneva Convention on professional rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons and was making efforts to ensure the full and equal participation of disabled persons in social life and development.

45. Hungary was mindful of the significant role young people would play in building the future, and considered that the role of the United Nations and other agencies should be fully utilized to strengthen co-operation in the field of youth policies. With that in mind and in response to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 39/22, a European meeting on co-operation in youth policies had been convened by the Hungarian State Committee for Youth in Budapest in September 1985, attended by government experts and representatives of the United Nations system.

(Mr. Budai, Hungary)

The fortieth anniversary of the United Nations afforded another opportunity for Member States to establish closer co-operation on securing the future of youth throughout the world.

46. Hungary appreciated United Nations efforts to enhance co-operation on crime prevention and control and had hosted one of the five interregional preparatory meetings for the Milan Congress. It was encouraging that the Milan Plan of Action and the new guiding principles for crime prevention and criminal justice as well as all resolutions and decisions of the Congress had been adopted by consensus. Hungary would carefully review the recommendations contained in those instruments with a view to their implementation on both national and international levels.

47. Mrs. ITO (Japan) said that since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 34/151 there had been world-wide activity to promote the goals of the International Youth Year. It was essential to continue that activity beyond the end of 1985, and her Government appreciated the Advisory Committee's work in preparing guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up, which emphasized not only activities at the national level in accordance with the specific conditions and priorities of the country concerned but also the need for active co-operation by young people. With regard to paragraph 76 (g) of the guidelines, however, her delegation reiterated its understanding that preparation of appropriate international instruments did not include formulating an instrument to deal with the rights and responsibilities of youth; it could not support an approach which treated as duties matters which should be left to the judgment of young people themselves.

48. Her Government had played an active part in IYY activities, having served as a member of the Advisory Committee, and during 1985 would contribute \$US 100,000 to the Trust Fund for that Year. A national co-ordinating committee had been formed and there had also been vigorous activity at governmental and non-governmental levels, including youth organizations.

49. Youth exchange should be a principal factor in promoting IYY's goals: participation, development and peace. Her Government, therefore, promoted measures such as the Japan Overseas Co-operation Volunteers system, under whose auspices over 5,000 young volunteers had worked abroad during the past 20 years; there was a steady growth in applications to serve and in overseas demand for help. Japan sponsored other similar programmes, and invited young people of other countries to take part in the work of organizations in Japan. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 39/22, Japan would be sending youth representatives as members of its delegation to the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year. It hoped that the deliberations of the Conference would be productive and free from political motivation.

50. The question of aging was of considerable concern to Japanese society, in which some 15 per cent of the population would be over 65 years of age in the year 2000 and 20 per cent in 2025. Her delegation fully agreed that activities relating to aging and to youth should be harmonized, as called for in Assembly resolution 39/25. The International Plan of Action on Aging, adopted in 1982, suggested basic

(Mrs. Ito, Japan)

policy guidelines, but responsibility for the principal measures taken on the issues should remain at the national level, reflecting each country's circumstances. Her delegation was pleased, therefore, that the General Assembly had decided to review implementation of the Plan pursuant to resolution 37/51 and revise its activities accordingly. The report entitled "The World Aging Situation: Strategies and Policies" (ST/ESA/150) contained much useful information on the subject.

51. Japan had established a Ministerial Council to deal with its population's rapidly changing age structure. The Government had encouraged measures reflecting not only the significant contributions the elderly could make to society but also their needs, such as safe living conditions, assistance and opportunities to live a full, secure life in the family and the community. It was also making an effort to ensure stable employment for elderly persons who wished to continue to work.

52. Her Government welcomed the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which aimed at enabling the disabled to participate fully in social, economic and cultural life. To that end, her Government had formulated a long-term plan in 1982 on measures for disabled persons and established a disabled persons' welfare headquarters, whose activities included information and training, research, promotion of suitable employment and rehabilitation for the physically and mentally handicapped, provision of prostheses, suitable transport and building facilities, and guaranteed income safeguards. The International Year of Disabled Persons had promoted wider awareness in Japan of disabled persons' problems, which were complex and not easy to solve. Efforts to implement the relevant Plan of Action at the national, regional and international levels must continue. Japan co-operated with developing countries in that regard, extending technical assistance as part of ODA through the Japan International Co-operation Agency.

53. Mr. DUGUAY (Canada) said that the international instruments and resolutions adopted at the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders were major steps towards the humanization of justice. Crime prevention and the fair treatment of offenders were vital to world peace and respect for human rights and could be achieved only through concerted national, regional and international action.

54. Canada was seeking new approaches to crime prevention focused on community participation and reduced opportunities for criminal acts. It advocated the international exchange of criminal justice information, with a view to promoting effective strategies to combat crime and criminality, and continued to support the vital role of the United Nations in that field. It welcomed and supported the resolutions adopted at the Seventh Congress relating to crime prevention as it affected juvenile justice, but was concerned about two issues relating to the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice. It would be contrary to current Canadian legislation and juvenile justice philosophy to accept the notion that young persons' needs provided grounds for extending intervention beyond what was necessary to respond to the offence; young persons should not be punished under the guise of providing treatment for their special needs. Secondly, youths who had not been reinolved in criminal activities for specified periods of

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(Mr. Duguay, Canada)

time should be entitled to have their records destroyed. It would be contrary to Canada's system of justice to destroy all records of young people as soon as they reached the age of 18.

55. The Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice relating to victims of crime and victims of abuse of power, which Canada had helped to draft, was a significant step forward. Canada had realized that the remedies for victimization did not necessarily have to come through the criminal justice system, which should be invoked only when there were no other appropriate forms of conflict resolution.

56. An impartial, independent judiciary was essential to the administration of justice and the protection of human rights, whose enunciation had meaning only if enforceable. To that end, Canada had been pleased to participate in preparing the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary. However, the text could have been stronger with respect to implementation of the Basic Principles. His delegation urged that any further work on the subject by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control should be co-ordinated, through the Economic and Social Council, with the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

57. Mr. ABUSHAALA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation, having participated in the work of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, welcomed the Committee's attention to that subject as well as the outcome of the World Congress on Youth organized by UNESCO earlier in the year.

58. Libya was not affected by youth unemployment: over 100,000 young persons of many nationalities were working in that country. However, it shared the international community's concern about the social, political and economic situation of youth and supported measures aimed at enabling young persons to assert their place in society.

59. Every year Libya organized youth gatherings; in 1983 it had hosted meetings in connection with an African youth festival in which 23 African States and 15 youth organizations had participated. Libya not only provided the requisite funds for those events and similar activities involving youth participation, but it had carried out scientific research and other studies with a view to improving the situation of young persons and seeking solutions to the many problems created by the worsening world economic crisis. Young persons must be encouraged to apply their creative energy towards social, economic and political progress in keeping with the aims of the Charter and the principle of self-determination and in pursuance of the goals of the International Youth Year and the efforts to establish a new international economic order. Libya accordingly was co-operating with the youth of Palestine, Azania and Namibia in their struggle for the freedom of all oppressed peoples.

60. With regard to agenda sub-item 90 (b), relating to popular participation, he noted that the entire Libyan people, through its councils and committees, took part in formulating and implementing all decisions relating to domestic and foreign affairs.

61. Mr. MADAR (Somalia) said that his Government endorsed the conviction expressed in the fourth preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 39/22. Soon after the 21 October revolution in 1969, its Central Committee had begun the organizing of groups of workers, women and youth; since then, the Somali Democratic Youth Association had been active in government-sponsored ventures in which self-help was a major theme.

62. As the Secretary-General had said in document E/1985/10, youth had borne a heavy share of the social and economic burden created by the recession; that was true in Somalia as in other developing countries. However, the nation's youth had withstood hardships such as the 1974 famine, regional struggles for self-determination, the current emergency created by mass refugee flows, and extreme drought and famine. Somalia's young people also supported the struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid, as well as the efforts towards disarmament, peace, self-determination, the exercise of human rights and the adjustment of national, regional and international economic imbalances.

63. Commenting on the Secretary-General's report on the question of aging (A/40/714), he said that Somalia recognized the need for research into the topic, involving factors such as mortality, fertility and migration, and welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/28 on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action.

64. The right of the elderly to take part in decision-making in all spheres was inherent in Somalia's traditions, which had always stressed the individual's responsibility to the community. However, since Africa must come to terms during the next 30 years with the world's highest increase in the number of elderly persons, and bearing in mind the recent drought, famines and refugee flows and other catastrophes to which the young and the aged were always the most vulnerable, the ECA secretariat and member States, including Somalia, were monitoring the situation, as the 1984 conference at Dakar had shown. Somalia welcomed the United Nations growing emphasis on the questions of aging and youth, and firmly supported the aspirations and activities of the International Youth Year.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.