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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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

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(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. TROUVEROY (Belgium), speaking on agenda item 97, said that his country had adopted a number of measures benefiting disabled persons. In education, for example, a special scheme had been established under which eight different systems were applicable to primary education, and a further four to secondary education,

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Mr. Trouveroy, (Belgium)

according to the nature of the handicap. In employment a number of measures for retraining disabled persons had been adopted, and sheltered workshops had been established. The retraining therapy was applied in various forms, such as ergotherapy, logopedics, attendance at a centre or department for job retraining and the supply, adaptation, maintenance and renewal of prosthetic devices and orthopedic appliances. Many of the sheltered workshops were officially subsidized, so that the State had a part in paying the wages of disabled workers. Employers of disabled persons were also eligible for State subsidies.

2. In the matter of housing, Belgium provided accommodation and host families for disabled persons, as well as hundreds of institutions: special homes, temporary residences and observation, guidance and treatment centres. Disabled persons had a guaranteed income thanks to financial assistance. Disabled persons or their spouses who were under retirement age received the disability benefits which normally went to the physically handicapped or the special benefits granted for other forms of disability. When they reached retirement age, those benefits were converted into a supplement to the pension. Persons already in receipt of a pension who became disabled could apply for benefits to supplement the old age benefit. Other measures adopted to benefit disabled persons included preferential treatment in social security matters and measures relating to family allowances, sickness and disability insurance, pensions and unemployment benefits. Belgium also had regulations relating to industrial accidents and occupational diseases, war-induced disabilities, and disabilities of mineworkers and war victims in peacetime. Moreover, disabled persons received various tax benefits.

3. The economic crisis affecting Belgium and other countries had compelled the authorities to cut back State assistance to the disabled. As a result, job retraining and housing schemes had been amended, increasing the share of the costs borne by the disabled but maintaining the guaranteed minimum income. The Government had tried to strike a balance between the need to cut the national budget and the need to retain the necessary funding to meet the needs of the disabled. The disabled had been exempted from the austerity measures imposed on the Belgian public at large.

4. The Belgian delegation, together with others, had promoted the establishment of the International Year of Disabled Persons and later, the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. It expressed its appreciation of the work carried out by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, at Vienna, for its efforts to implement the World Programme of Action. His delegation had carefully studied the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (A/40/728), a report which regrettably had again been issued very late. It was basically up to each State, in collaboration with organizations for disabled persons, to give effect to the World Programme of Action. It was of primary importance, therefore, to establish or strengthen national committees or other similar bodies.

5. Of particular interest in the Secretary-General's report was the description of co-operation and support activities for various projects. Those activities

(Mr. Trouveroy, Belgium)

should be continued and strengthened, giving priority to field projects. That would require an increase in the resources available to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, at Vienna, by redeploying staff and available funds. The nature of the Centre's activities and the magnitude of its task sufficed to emphasize the priority to be given to a commensurate increase in its resources. An appeal should also be made to States to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons, bearing in mind the Fund's contribution to development. The suggested renaming of the Fund should be a matter for consultation among interested parties. His delegation could agree to change the title, provided that it remained within the context of the Decade. If the Fund's terms of reference, which were set forth in paragraph 81 of the Secretary-General's report, were applied flexibly and focused on specific activities, the wishes of donors and recipients alike could be met.

6. With regard to agenda item 96, he had noted with great interest the statement on the problems of aging made by the representative of the Dominican Republic, and had noted his proposal that the Secretary-General should be requested to establish a committee of experts, sponsored by Governments and interested organizations, to study the necessity and viability of a United Nations Programme on Aging, and its possible financing. He shared the concern expressed by the delegation of the Dominican Republic about the problem posed by the phenomenon of aging for all countries, especially in Europe. However, he did not deem it necessary to set up another body within the United Nations, since a number of the Organization's programmes were already dealing with the problem and the Vienna Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had begun to promote an international plan of action on aging. As in the case of disabled persons, concerns about the question of aging could be met by increasing the Centre's resources by redeploying them.

7. Mrs. BROŠŇÁKOVÁ (Czechoslovakia) recalled the observation made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations early in 1985 about the International Youth Year that the number of young people in the world would increase between the years 1975 and 2000 by approximately 60 per cent and that the number of young people living in Africa, Asia, and Latin America - already afflicted with poverty, illiteracy, hunger, diseases, and unemployment - would nearly double. The possibility of a real improvement in the position of youth was inseparably linked with each State's socio-economic development. Young people were especially vulnerable to phenomena such as unemployment, discrimination in education, inadequate medical care, poverty, the rising cost of living and many others. Legal measures establishing the right to education did not necessarily guarantee that youth could exercise it effectively. The most reliable criterion of the real value of that right lay in access to the educational system for all strata of a country's population, including racial and national minorities. The high cost of university education prevented children from workers' or low-income families from studying at universities, especially the elitist establishments. Statistics proved that even in States with what was regarded as an advanced level of social welfare, the number of students from low-income families, which were the majority, was very small. Moreover, according to a study conducted by the International Labour Organisation, more than half the university graduates in certain States were unable to find jobs corresponding to their professional training.

(Mrs. Brošňáková, Czechoslovakia)

8. Youth unemployment was a mass phenomenon in many developed Western countries and in many developing countries. However, it must be noted that the former had real economic possibilities of eliminating that grave circumstance, whereas in the developing countries the solution of unemployment, including youth unemployment, was part of overall economic development. Their development could not be imagined without a restructuring of international economic relations on the basis of just and democratic principles. According to data published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in its member States practically one out of every three young people was unemployed in 1984. In absolute terms, unemployment had increased in those countries almost seven times in the past decade, leading to a growth in criminality, drug addiction, prostitution and other equally negative phenomena.

9. The overall situation of world youth reflected the whole spectrum of today's political, economic, social and ethical problems. To improve the position of young people and help them to be fully integrated into the mainstream of society, those problems must be solved immediately and consistently, at both national and international levels. It was very gratifying to note that the proclamation of the International Youth Year was part of the efforts aimed at achieving that goal, and that numerous meetings, conferences and seminars had been held in that context. In the summer of 1985, the Twelfth Festival of Youth and Students, held at Moscow, had made a major contribution to the struggle of the young generations against the threat of nuclear war and had promoted understanding and co-operation among youth and students' organizations with different political orientations. In July 1985 a World Congress on Youth held in Barcelona under the auspices of UNESCO had dealt with the position and role of young people in society in the fields of education, work, culture and international co-operation.

10. Without belittling the importance of international and regional activities organized in the framework of the International Youth Year, her delegation felt that efforts to improve the situation of young people must be centered on activities at the national level because only national authorities were competent to take measures to improve the position of youth. Only they could incorporate in their overall development strategies programmes and plans designed to solve the problems of youth, which could help them effectively to exercise their right to education and work and other fundamental rights. Only if that happened could young people fully develop the spiritual and material values created by previous generations. It would be equally necessary, therefore, to strengthen international solidarity with the young people suffering under the yoke of racism, apartheid and other forms of political oppression.

11. Her delegation felt that now and in the future, the international community's efforts should be oriented towards the further improvement of the position of young people. Most useful in that respect would be the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth contained in document A/40/256. Inspiration might also be drawn from the experience of the socialist countries, which had succeeded in a relatively short historical period in providing the young generations with a model system of complete care. Young people deserved that care,

(Mrs. Brošňáková, Czechoslovakia)

not only because they represented the future of every nation, but also because they were active and tenacious participants in the struggle for peace, disarmament, social progress and the development of co-operation among nations.

12. Mr. THORSTEINSSON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that, as noted in the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/1985/2), the situation was marked by violence, acts which denied human dignity and other impediments to social progress whose solution did not depend primarily on economic resources, but on the determination of societies and their Governments. It should be remembered, however, that some slow progress was also taking place in many countries, and especially a trend to establish more democratic forms of Government, which directly affected the social situation, as the Nordic countries had noted in their statement before the Economic and Social Council at its first session of 1985.

13. With regard to agenda item 96, the question of aging, he felt that the time had come for a first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. The Secretary-General's report on that subject conveyed little optimism about the concrete steps taken to implement the Plan of Action. The Nordic countries felt that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be strengthened from the United Nations regular budget. Older persons should not be viewed as a dependent group, but in terms of the active contribution which they had made and continued to make to society. A readjustment of housing policies was therefore needed, so as to take into consideration the needs of the elderly, and especially to avoid unnecessary medical care in institutions.

14. As to agenda item 97, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, he said that the best way to keep persons with disabilities in the mainstream of life was to give them equal opportunities. One example of that had been the recent congress held in the Bahamas by the Disabled People's International, which had the financial support of the United Nations. He felt, however, that administrative arrangements for promoting such activities should be streamlined. In that field, as in others, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs needed increased resources. Moreover, since 1985 was the International Youth Year, there was a need to underline the importance of integrating young disabled persons into society, safeguarding their right to education and employment and encouraging activities which improved their self-confidence and self-esteem. Lastly, he stressed that any discrimination against the disabled must be prevented.

15. Mr. YEDID (Israel) said that Israel would deliver its statement concerning the International Youth Year at the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year, to be held during the current session of the General Assembly. With regard to the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, he said that Israel was proud to have participated actively in the Congress, and, in the spirit of the Jewish people's traditions, it saw the international instruments and resolutions adopted at Milan

(Mr. Yedid, Israel)

as major steps towards the humanization of justice. Israel shared the pleasure of other delegations that the Milan Congress agenda had given such prominence to crime prevention, which, together with the treatment of offenders, were vital goals for the establishment of a stable world order. The resolutions adopted at that Congress represented a healthy consensus among the participants and laid the foundations for the establishment of practical international agreements. Israel had the honour of having been one of the sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "Domestic violence," adopted by consensus, and would continue to play a constructive role in that area.

16. Resolution 23, "Criminal acts of a terrorist character", also adopted by consensus at the Congress, was for the Government of Israel a positive example of the contributions which the United Nations could make, although Israel would have preferred a stronger resolution, especially in the light of the recent upsurge in international terrorism. Although the resolution represented some progress, it was relatively weak and would not prove effective. Nothing could justify terrorist acts. Even if underlying causes existed, they did not justify terrorism. The General Assembly must condemn it and stamp it out, regardless of its origin and of the causes invoked on its behalf.

17. Mr. NIELSON (Denmark) said that the proclamation of International Youth Year had contributed to an increased awareness of the problems facing youth, which was a threatened group, especially in the present time of economic crisis. Many young people in both industrialized and developing countries were facing complex problems which they could not resolve. It was therefore of the utmost importance that they should study the reports of the Secretary-General very carefully and seek guidance in the wise suggestions contained therein. It was also important for decision-makers to listen to young people and also involve them directly in the building of society. His country had a long and valuable tradition in that field. International Youth Year had also stimulated many new activities especially at the local level.

18. He would have wished the discussions in the Third Committee to have resulted in recommendations to all the Members of the United Nations that they should involve youth to a much larger extent in the decision-making processes at all levels of society. He would also have wished United Nations organs and specialized agencies to give a greater role to young people. He did not feel that the draft resolution submitted by Romania (A/C.3/40/L.3) took those considerations sufficiently into account. He suggested in conclusion that the General Assembly should take the comments he had made fully into consideration when discussing questions relating to youth at its forty-first session.

19. Mr. KOUNKOU (Congo) said that in 1985, which had been proclaimed International Youth Year and coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the overthrow of fascism and militarism and the proclamation of fundamental human rights, dangerous centres of tension which threatened world peace were still a feature of the international situation. That fact had particularly serious implications for youth; because of it, the General Assembly would not hear how International Youth Year was evaluated

(Mr. Kounkou, Congo)

in Palestine, Namibia, and South Africa, countries in which young people were subjected to traumatic experiences. The youth of South Africa in particular, like other groups of the population, was resolved to struggle courageously against the shameful system of apartheid.

20. In his country, young people played an important role in political, economic and social life. The universal participation achieved by means of discussion among the representatives of the political authorities, the administration and the workers meant that young people were able to play their part in enterprises and in organs of State. The Socialist Youth Union of the Congo was open to all young people of both sexes and defended their specific interests. That body was in fact the central organ of political co-ordination, discussion and decision-making for the youth of the Congo. Furthermore, there was a separate ministerial office for youth problems, which carried out the decisions of the Congolese Labour Party.

21. Since independence the Congo had allocated enormous resources to meet the fundamental needs of youth. Education took up 25 per cent of the national budget and all children attended school. In addition to compulsory free education, the People's School programme had been set up to provide vocational training. Moreover, the widespread campaign for the democratization of sports had led to the establishment of many sports and recreation facilities throughout the country.

22. In preparation for International Youth Year his country had set up a national co-ordinating committee and had initiated several projects, despite the difficulty of finding external financing at reasonable interest rates. Given the importance of agriculture for his country and the manpower potential of rural youth, it was necessary to slow down the rural exodus, which involved primarily young people. To that end, the interests and needs of the rural world must be catered for. His Government was therefore carrying out a widespread land-reclamation programme, establishing key villages in all regions of the country which would be equipped with various infrastructural services. Several projects which had received financial support from United Nations bodies were included among the objectives of his country's development programme.

23. At the international level, the youth of the Congo had taken part in several special events held in 1985, sharing their modest experience with young people from other countries and conveying to them the message of peace, solidarity and friendship of the Congolese people.

24. His country's policy for the disabled had evolved in three stages. The first stage, which had begun on the proclamation of independence, was aimed at preventing disabilities, in particular by means of information campaigns. In that connection, the national poliomyelitis vaccination campaigns carried out with help from friendly countries had brought about a remarkable decline in that disease. The second stage had consisted of the establishment of a specialized infrastructure in the main population centres to increase the treatment and assistance available to disabled persons. The third stage was to integrate the disabled in social life and development activities. The Association for the Disabled had been set up, and the

(Mr. Kounkou, Congo)

State had allocated 665 million CFA francs to improve infrastructural services for disabled persons. He also wished to draw attention to the work of the Brazzaville Institute for Deaf Young People and the establishment of a unit to manufacture prostheses and other articles. The authorities and non-governmental organizations had given considerable assistance with that kind of activity. Moreover, his country's efforts in that field had influenced the decision of the Organization of African Unity to establish the regional office of the African Rehabilitation Institute in Brazzaville. At the present time, when national egoisms were keeping official development assistance programmes to a minimum, multilateral co-operation under the auspices of the United Nations seemed the only means of solving the problems affecting the most vulnerable groups of society.

25. Mr. MATELJAK (Yugoslavia), referring to the work of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which had adopted by consensus a large number of important decisions and recommendations concerning development, respect for national independence and equality of peoples and countries, said that his delegation attached special importance to the adoption of instruments such as the guiding principles for crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of development and a new international economic order, the Milan Plan of Action, the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice relating to victims of crime and victims of abuse of power, and the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice.

26. His delegation firmly supported the view that development per se did not generate crime, but development must be accompanied by adequate social policies to ensure the equitable distribution of the fruits of development among all peoples, so as to contribute to the improvement of overall social conditions. Development should be planned, and development programmes should be properly implemented, taking into account various factors, including crime-prevention and criminal justice policies. Effective participation by the people in the development process constituted, in his delegation's view, the basic pre-condition for preventing the criminogenic consequences of development.

27. In Yugoslavia, for example, where the social system was based on socialist self-management, criminality had not only levelled off, but had even shown a substantial decline in the past three decades of the country's dynamic and accelerated development. In comparison with 1953, the number of persons convicted in 1981 had declined by 47 per cent. The country's self-management system had produced social self-defence, the goal of which was the effective prevention of crime and other negative phenomena by promoting the social activities and self-management mechanisms of economic enterprises and other social institutions.

28. Crime prevention and criminal justice were primarily the responsibility of Member States and their Governments. National Governments had a sovereign right to formulate, plan and implement policies in that and in other fields of national development. In their national development plans Governments should take into account the interrelationship between crime and specific aspects of development, particularly with respect to population growth and changes in the structure of the population, migration and employment opportunities.

(Mr. Mateljak, Yugoslavia)

29. Any strategy for crime prevention should be considered in the context of economic development, socio-political systems, cultural values and traditions, and in the context of the transformation of the existing system of international economic relations and the establishment of a new international economic order. International co-operation was an important factor in combating crime successfully at the national and international levels. That was especially true of certain new forms of international crime, such as international terrorism and drug trafficking. Where terrorist activities were concerned, it must be kept in mind that some Member States viewed such activities in an ideological context and applied double standards and selectiveness. Such practices were totally unacceptable and should be resisted resolutely both by the United Nations and by the international community as a whole. The United Nations should play a key role in developing international co-operation, especially in promoting technical co-operation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

30. The international community must now see to it that the resolutions adopted at the Congress were properly implemented. His delegation, which had participated actively in the work of the Congress and sponsored many of the aforementioned resolutions, supported the work of the Congress and the documents it had adopted and was ready to do its best to implement its recommendations.

31. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/40/728), his delegation supported the suggestions contained in that report, in particular the proposal that the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons should be renamed the United Nations Fund on Disability. That Fund could help to finance many of the activities to be carried out at the national, regional and international levels to implement the World Programme of Action during the Decade. A task force must be set up as soon as possible with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as indicated in earlier United Nations resolutions, in order to strengthen the support services provided to the disabled. That body might include representatives of interested United Nations agencies, regional services for technical co-operation in the field of rehabilitation, national committees for the Decade of Disabled Persons and rehabilitation experts.

32. As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, the Yugoslav Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons had been transformed into the National Committee for the Decade of Disabled Persons. That Committee, as well as corresponding committees in all federal units (republics and autonomous provinces), had been active in the implementation of the national plan of action and of the World Programme of Action. An extensive analysis of legislative and self-management regulation in the area of the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of disabled persons was currently under way in Yugoslavia. At international level, Yugoslavia was co-operating with other countries, particularly developing countries, and the United Nations system. The Service for Technical Co-operation Support for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons had been set up at Ljubljana and three projects for assistance to developing countries would be carried out in the course of the year, in co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

(Mr. Mateljak, Yugoslavia)

33. Yugoslavia devoted considerable attention to the problem of aging persons and was constantly improving their position. In that connection, a national co-ordinating committee had been set up to co-ordinate activities at national and international level concerning the implementation of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. The committee was carrying out activities aimed at implementing national plans and using the experience of various countries for the formulation and implementation of programmes of activities of broader regional and international importance. Accordingly, Yugoslavia considered that activities aimed at implementing the International Plan of Action should be co-ordinated by existing United Nations organs which, in co-operation with Member States, should assist the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in implementing their programmes.

34. Mr. AHMED (Democratic Yemen) said that the fact that the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations reaffirmed the close relationship that existed between that victory and international peace and security. Moreover, the fact that the year had been designated International Youth Year confirmed the fundamental role played by young people in the world. His country attached great importance to the participation of youth in the development process. The Union of Socialist Youth of Democratic Yemen had a membership of 70,000 young people who participated actively in the popular national councils, trade union and popular organizations and also occupied a seat in the People's Assembly.

35. In recognition of the importance of young people's participation, the right of young people to education, vocational training and employment must be strengthened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/23 on the rights of youth. Since the country's independence, young people did not suffer from discrimination and enjoyed the benefits of free education at all levels; there were technical training schools, and literacy campaigns were carried out. In recent years, over 150,000 men and women had been taught to read and write. The Union of Socialist Youth of Democratic Yemen had helped to mobilize young people to participate in that sphere and in the economic and social construction of the country.

36. The report on the world social situation highlighted the organic relationship that existed between the right to self-determination and the right to participate in development. Such participation was crucial to the economic and social transformation of the people and its development. It was important to ensure that there was no discrimination with regard to the enjoyment of cultural, political and social rights, in order to achieve genuine equality of opportunity in the spheres of education, training and the right to work.

37. It should be noted that no significant changes had been brought about in the world social situation. Social problems would be resolved only when the injustice and inequity which affected the developing countries and created obstacles to peace and security were removed. Among the alarming trends that could be observed currently, mention should be made of the arms race which had extended even to outer space. Not only were vast amounts of resources being invested in that race, but it created insecurity and anxiety among all the peoples of the world.

(Mr. Ahmed, Democratic Yemen)

38. His country had participated in preparations for the International Youth Year and had hosted the regional youth and students meeting held in March 1985. It had also participated in the Moscow Festival of Youth and Students held in July and August 1985, which had helped to reaffirm the objectives of the International Year.

39. Mr. MATSUKA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that, although steps had been taken since the holding of the World Assembly on Aging to implement the recommendations of that Assembly, the world economic crisis had resulted in a reduction in social and medical services for old people, thereby worsening their situation. Old people, especially disabled persons and women, were in a particularly difficult situation. In the Western countries, there were millions of unemployed people who could not obtain any kind of social benefit. It was essential to take special measures if the situation of the elderly was to be improved, but it was necessary first of all to solve serious socio-economic problems in general.

40. His country's policy with regard to the elderly was in line with the policy of the socialist countries in general, namely to improve the situation of all people, particularly with regard to health, and to enhance the population's social activities. Old people had the right to work, to a retirement pension and to access to all social services without discrimination. In recent years, the Government had adopted various legislative measures to improve the situation of old people. Some people wished to go on working even after they retired. Pensioners' work was socially useful not only because it enabled society to take advantage of their experience but also because it made them feel valued. In addition to a retirement pension, old people enjoyed free medical services, lower rents, lower prices for foodstuffs and free public transportation. Their spiritual needs were also taken care of by means of, inter alia, the implementation of recreation programmes.

41. International co-operation in the sphere of aging helped to solve the problems of some States. The part played by the Vienna Centre was important in that connection. For instance, an interregional seminar had been held in his country in September 1985 in which over 30 countries had participated and at which a valuable exchange of experience had taken place. Since many countries had expressed high opinions of the Vienna Centre, his delegation thought there was no need to create a new department in the United Nations Secretariat to deal with the question of aging, since that would simply mean a duplication of effort and a waste of resources.

42. The disabled, a group currently made up of a multitude of persons, required the attention of the international community in order to achieve their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The recommendations of the World Programme of Action must therefore be implemented. In his country, numerous steps were already being taken to that end, for instance social rehabilitation, training courses and the search for appropriate employment.

(Mr. Matsuka, Ukrainian SSR)

43. Although there had been some achievements, the international community still had a long way to go to solve the problems of aging and the disabled. Unless account was taken of the socio-economic situation in adopting the corresponding measures, any plan to that end was doomed to failure. In that connection, the State must play a fundamental role in solving those problems for only it had sufficient human and material resources to do so successfully. Voluntary activities were not enough. Before a solution could be found to that specific problem, socio-economic problems in general would have to be solved.

44. One major obstacle to the implementation of programmes to assist disabled persons and the elderly was international tension, which in turn lent impetus to the arms race. Everyone was aware of the sums of money that were spent on weapons to the detriment of social programmes. In thinking towards the future, everything possible must be done to avoid a repetition of what mankind had experienced in the Second World War. Moreover, the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed what could be expected from a nuclear war, which was why an end must be put to the arms race.

45. Mr. HERRERA-RAMIREZ (Cuba) said that the United Nations had always given attention to the question of youth, as was demonstrated by the adoption in 1965 of the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples, the holding in Barcelona, Spain of the World Conference for International Youth Year under the auspices of UNESCO and the declaration of 1985 as International Youth Year. Cuba too had always attached importance to youth and to its participation in all national activities. For that reason, it had enthusiastically supported the objectives of the Year. The decision of the Assembly to declare International Youth Year had given the necessary impetus to the struggle for access by youth to work, education and the creation of a just society, the cessation of the arms race and the achievement of peace.

46. Today, in contrast to the past, youth in Cuba, protected by the legislation in force, had incentives for and opportunities of participating in the life of the country, raising their cultural level and increasing their work activities. An example of that had been their creative contribution to the activities carried out by the Cuban Co-ordinating Committee established for International Youth Year in implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean. In line with that attitude, Cuba had hosted the eleventh World Festival for Youth and Students in 1978 and had participated in the twelfth Festival held in Moscow in July.

47. While his delegation generally supported the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth adopted by the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year, they did not clearly set forth the economic causes which made youth one of the most vulnerable social groups in the majority of developing countries. In that connection, the capital of his country had been, one month before, the host for a dialogue between young people from Latin America and the Caribbean on the external debt, a meeting in which thousands had exchanged opinions on their countries' economic situation and problems.

(Mr. Herrera-Ramirez, Cuba)

48. With respect to the item on the world social situation, the economic development of a country could not be dissociated from its intrinsic social aspects. For that reason, his Government had repeatedly stated that the external debt of the majority of developing countries, particularly those of Latin America, was morally unpayable because to pay it would mean their ruin and would aggravate even more the poverty of the majority of their peoples, and he therefore regarded as essential the establishment of the new international economic order adopted by the General Assembly 10 years before. Similarly, Cuba attached great importance to popular participation as a basic factor in development and the enjoyment of human rights. The organs of people's power in his country, composed of representatives elected through direct vote, and the contribution of workers in drawing up and implementing production plans were examples of that participation. With respect to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly on Aging, his country had continued its efforts to achieve the greatest possible participation of the disabled in the life of society and to improve living conditions for the elderly through the establishment of national committees for both groups and through the national health and social welfare network.

49. With respect to agenda item 98, crime prevention and criminal justice, the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had affirmed once again that success in that field depended on the improvement of social conditions and the raising of living standards, since the existence of underdevelopment created conditions for delinquency and, in turn, increase in delinquency impeded the economic, social and cultural development of peoples. The increase in delinquency should not be viewed as a consequence of development, but rather as a consequence of structural distortions generated by centuries of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. States were thus under an obligation to implement the resolutions adopted by the Seventh Congress, with a view to eliminating the causes and conditions which generated crime.

50. Miss NAJJAR (Jordan) said, with respect to agenda item 90, that the information provided by the Secretary-General in his report on the world social situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1) showed that since the establishment of the United Nations the world had made great progress: the majority of countries had been freed from colonialism, even though there were still peoples struggling for independence and self-determination. Nevertheless, the political development of those 40 years had not been accompanied by economic and social progress: the gap between rich and poor countries continued to widen; developing countries had the majority of the world's population, but a minimal percentage of liquidity; that imbalance had caused an increase in hunger and diseases in those countries, which were in a situation of even greater dependence. The development of the third world countries was a matter of concern to all peoples, and every effort must therefore be made to establish the new international economic order. To that end, according to the report of the Secretary-General, efforts should be made to strengthen international co-operation and the exchange of information and technical know-how, as well as the role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the field of economic and social development.

(Miss Najjar, Jordan)

51. With respect to agenda item 91, Jordan had, in order to tackle the economic and social problems facing it, adopted the system of planning based on national and international participation. Thus, it had been able to solve some problems by mobilizing human resources and promoting the energy sector. In the period 1961-1980, the gross domestic product had increased by 11 per cent and the rate of capital formation had reached 40 per cent of the gross national product and 30 per cent of the gross regional product. Education had been extended throughout the rural areas of the country, with the result that literacy and schooling had been brought to 91 per cent of the target population. Educational enrolment had reached 76 per cent in secondary education and 18 per cent at the university level. In 1980, approximately 70,000 students had been studying abroad. In addition, Jordanian women had benefited from the literacy campaign. The extension of education had permitted the training for managerial staff in the economic field. With respect to health, Jordan had made great progress, if it was taken into account that in 1978 the infant mortality rate, one of the most important health indicators, had been 23 per thousand.

52. Progress had also been made in the rural sector in recent years thanks to the expansion in the acreage under irrigated cultivation and the increase in productivity through mechanization of agriculture. Similarly, great improvements had been made in the country's food supply infrastructure.

53. In the area of social development, the most important indicator of the recent progress was the establishment of a department responsible for reviewing projects in the various sectors: development of rural communities, the disabled, civil defence, the family and child care and the mentally handicapped.

54. Moreover, private bodies supported the efforts of the Government in the area of social development. In Jordan, there were 150 charity groups providing assistance to approximately 50,000 persons. Co-operation with Arab countries and the specialized agencies of the United Nations was also of great importance. Jordan supported the calls by the United Nations and the Division of Human Rights for co-operation between all countries of the world to solve economic problems and create more stable and happier societies.

55. Mrs. ALVAREZ (France) said, in relation to item 89, that her Government had adopted various measures with regard to youth in the framework of its economic and social policy. Indeed, the difficulties being experienced by youth in becoming incorporated in adult society in nearly all Member States were disturbing; those difficulties resulted from the economic situation and the rapid changes in technology, production methods and social structures. Young people had to face many problems relating to education, occupational training and the possibility of finding work in line with their aspirations and skills.

56. Paradoxically, it was more difficult to solve those problems in democratic and pluralistic societies, whose goal was to offer young people material, intellectual and moral opportunities to develop without their running the risk that their Governments might "enlist" them and force them to follow set paths, a practice

(Mrs. Alvarez, France)

which recalled dark days in contemporary history. The French Government had undertaken an ambitious programme to facilitate the integration of young people into the social and occupational mainstream, which included improving educational programmes, encouraging contracts for on-the-job training and setting up public-works projects and locally-generated employment. In 1984-1985, those measures had benefited nearly a million young people, who would otherwise perhaps have been unable to find work. Other measures adopted in France were related to housing and recreational activities for young people, as well as assistance to youth associations and promotion of international exchanges.

57. Her Government followed with great interest all the research being done by international organizations in the field of youth employment. In that regard, it commended the seriousness and objectivity of the studies conducted by the International Labour Organisation.

58. As to item 96, her delegation had noted with interest the Secretary-General's report concerning the question of aging (A/40/714), in particular the consideration of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging. The increase in life expectancy and the trend towards a decline in the birth rate had caused a significant increase in the proportion of older persons in the world population. In Western Europe, nearly one out of every five persons was over 60. And although the demographic pyramids of the third world countries rested on broad bases, there was a tendency in them as well towards shrinkage and a concomitant increase in the percentage of persons over 60. What was happening was a world phenomenon, and it should be perceived as such.

59. The consequences of the aging of the population were well known, namely, a reduction in proportion of the economically active population, which had to support those who were economically inactive; an increase in health-care costs; and an upsurge in specific housing, transport and entertainment needs. Those problems were all the more difficult to solve in that they arose in the primarily urban environment of contemporary societies and in the context of a weakening of traditional family ties. Taking into account the additional effects, otherwise positive, of shorter working hours and the establishment of an earlier retirement age, it could easily be understood why countries had to face the problem of financing the heavy burden of social security under those conditions.

60. In order to deal with those questions, the French Government had established, in 1981, a ministry for retired and aging persons and had begun to implement an ambitious policy in that field. The most radical step, taken on 1 April 1983, had been to reduce the retirement age from 65 to 60 years. At the same time, retirement and certain other pensions had been considerably increased, and tax benefits had been granted to older persons. A great effort had also been made to allow them to continue living in the family environment by providing them with domestic help and home nursing, and improving their housing conditions. For those who could not continue living with their families, the number of places in homes for the elderly had been expanded. To prevent the isolation of older persons, information services had been provided for them, their participation in public life had been encouraged and a volunteer service had been established which enabled retired persons to use their skills voluntarily to help others.

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(Mrs. Alvarez, France)

61. Her delegation, aware that to implement policies for older persons at the national level was not enough, felt that international action in that field should become multilateral. In that belief, it had taken an active part in the work of the World Assembly on Aging, held in 1982 under the auspices of the United Nations, and had supported the International Plan of Action on Aging, endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. It felt that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should continue and intensify its work of co-ordinating the various policies on aging which had been adopted by Governments, non-governmental organizations and various bodies of the United Nations system having competence in that sector. The most appropriate way to implement the International Plan of Action on Aging would be to strengthen and improve the administration of resources available to the Centre.

62. With regard to item 97, she noted with satisfaction that the international community had become aware of the problem of the disabled, and recalled that in 1982 it had welcomed the adoption of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. In the hope that a more detailed appraisal of the implementation of that programme would be made at mid-Decade, she said that she shared the view expressed by the Secretary-General in chapter III, part B, of his report (A/40/728) that it would be useful to continue the Trust Fund. She expressed the hope that, in accordance with resolution 39/26, an increasing number of countries would contribute to international activities for the disabled by supporting the Fund.

63. Even before the General Assembly had adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the French Government, on 18 November 1981, had instituted a series of measures completely consistent with the recommendations made by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. The objectives established by the Government were the following: to strengthen the specific rights of the disabled; to facilitate their integration in education and the work place; and to improve the quality of their daily lives. The initiatives ranged from care of disabled children in schools to household help for the disabled through adaptation of their homes and provision of auxiliary services; they included occupational training adapted to the needs of the disabled, the development of a system of jobs reserved for them in public administration, and the signing of contracts for their benefit between the State and private enterprises. The general philosophy underlying the policy was to enable the disabled to live under the most normal conditions possible within society, and not outside it.

64. Mr. BEMBOY (Zaire) said that the crisis which had been afflicting the world economy for a number of years, and which had affected nearly all countries, had had more unfavourable social repercussions than had been seen since the 1930s. Those negative trends had seriously compromised the growth prospects of the developing countries, upsetting their development and in some cases putting an end to it. As a result, in those countries there were more than 850 million persons living at the subsistence level, prisoners of hunger, disease and unemployment. In the market-economy developed countries, the situation was also bleak, since there were more than 30 million unemployed.

(Mr. Bembo, Zaire)

65. Although signs of a slight improvement in the economic situation were noticeable in some industrialized countries, it could not be said that the recovery was sustained and lasting, or that there had been any improvement in the situation of the developing countries, which for the most part were producers and exporters of commodities. The situation had all the characteristics of a world-wide depression, which posed a serious threat to the future of mankind and called for global solutions.

66. As the head of his delegation had said during the debate in the plenary Assembly, third world countries, in their efforts to improve the living conditions of their peoples, had come up against the following obstacles, among others: the reduction in their export earnings as a result of fluctuations in the prices of their products, which destabilized their development plans and programmes; the reduction in loan and financing facilities for their development projects and the constraints imposed by debt-servicing requirements. During the fiscal years 1983 and 1984, debt servicing had accounted for 10 per cent of the national output, 26 per cent of exports and more than 30 per cent of the budget. Although his country had undertaken to fulfil its financial obligations, it would not like those obligations to jeopardize attainment of its objectives for economic, and particularly social, development. Consequently, it had also begun negotiations with its creditors with a view to a substantial rescheduling of debt payments. Zaire would thereby have available the financial resources required to solve social problems in the areas of health, housing, employment, the transport of agricultural produce from the interior of the country to urban centres, the supply of manufactured goods, energy, potable water, education and recreational activities. His country had decided that, with effect from 1985, it would devote seven years to the study of adequate solutions to those problems, and for that purpose, it had drawn up new development strategies.

67. In the area of health, which was receiving particular attention, the primary health-care strategy, initiated in 1978, was still being pursued. The first objective was to improve existing structures in order to make basic health care available to the entire population. The system of health infrastructure adopted by the country was based on the establishment of health zones, each with a consulting hospital and a series of health centres providing various services such as the expanded vaccination service and endemic disease-control services. The expanded vaccination programme, which was already being satisfactorily implemented in urban areas, was being intensified in the rural area. All children up to the age of two years would be compulsorily vaccinated in order to immunize them against the six principal diseases of early infancy. Great efforts had also been made to supply medical centres and pharmacies with medicines and health equipment.

68. Under the health programme, rural water brigades had also been established in many regions of the country in order to ensure that by the year 1991 the majority of the rural population would be supplied with potable water.

69. The communications infrastructure was another important sector. Since the Government was seeking to overcome the country's geographical isolation, it had

(Mr. Bembo, Zaire)

begun a programme of systematic rehabilitation of roadways, bridges and lakes. In order to open up all areas of the country, the construction of 2,600 kilometres of new asphalted roadways had been planned.

70. A third important sector was that of energy. Zaire currently produced enormous amounts of hydro-electricity, and had accordingly prepared an electrification plan for all the regions of the country.

71. Turning to item 96, he said that, in Zaire, as in many other African countries, family ties were almost sacred; older and disabled persons lived with members of their family, who provided for their needs and gave them affection. Notwithstanding, in 1963, Zaire had established a national old people's home which catered to old people who lacked family support. There they were provided with, inter alia, lodging, clothing and medical attention. The country now had 44 such homes.

72. With regard to item 97, in 1969 the National Centre for Occupational Training of Handicapped and Disabled Persons had been established. Its aim was to train and rehabilitate disabled persons, and it comprised six specialized sections. There were now 56 institutes in Zaire which dealt with the problems of handicapped and disabled persons.

73. In June 1985, the first national workshop on occupational rehabilitation had been held in Kinshasa with the participation of 65 delegates from the public service and from private agencies throughout the country which specialized in the occupational rehabilitation of the disabled. The participants in the workshop had adopted 32 resolutions, which called for, inter alia, the intensification of publicity campaigns on the prevention of diseases and accidents which could cause disability, the establishment of an early diagnosis system and the education of the population regarding its attitude towards disabled persons; the creation of viable institutions for the rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped; the incorporation of all associations for the disabled in the country into a national federation; the establishment of a national co-ordinating committee for rehabilitation activities and the elaboration of a juridical framework for such activities; the establishment of special educational programmes, the organization of study trips abroad for the training of specialized teachers and the granting of scholarships for studies in the area of rehabilitation services; the establishment of urban and rural rehabilitation systems or services to direct disabled persons towards activities in which they did not yet participate sufficiently, taking into account the socio-economic realities of the job market; and the observance of a national day for the rehabilitation of the disabled.

74. With respect to item 98, the census conducted in late 1984 had revealed that Zaire had a population of about 33 million, most of whom were concentrated in the urban areas. In Kinshasa, the capital, where 3 million people lived, there were already the social and moral problems generally encountered in large modern cities, namely, unemployment, drug taking, prostitution and crime. Zaire, which supported all efforts aimed at removing those ills, welcomed the results of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

75. Mrs. WANDEKA (Kenya) said that the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1) had painted a picture that was no better than that which had existed four years previously. It noted, for example, that the social situation in Africa had been greatly affected by drought and famine and that the number of people in poverty continued to multiply in the sub-Saharan region. It also noted that the majority of the poor in that region lived in rural areas as subsistence farmers. Famines of such magnitude as the one experienced during the past year should never be allowed to recur. Improvements in productivity to ensure food security for the masses could reduce the effects of such calamities on the whole population.

76. If it were true that women in Africa were the sole producers of food consumed in that region, then there was a great need to improve on the rudimentary methods which they used and to provide incentives for rural women and their families to produce extra food. As indicated in the Report, the poor should be given the opportunity to engage in activities that would enable them to fight their poverty. Emergency aid was not an answer to their problem. Many developing countries had also suffered from low export earnings and had had to repay numerous debts with high interest rates. Those factors had led to social unrest and made living conditions worse. The proper redistribution of resources and well co-ordinated development assistance could alleviate suffering and improve the world economic and social situation.

77. Older people, the handicapped, children and the sick were the ones who suffered most and needed help from society. Although hampered by various social and economic problems, Kenya had had significant achievements in providing facilities for disabled persons, although much more remained to be done. Training had been provided to disabled persons in all the vocational centres in the country and many disabled persons had been recruited, for example, by the National Industrial Rehabilitation Centre and the Orthopedic Centre. Several activities had been made possible by the National Trust Fund which had been established by the President of Kenya to assist in the development activities of disabled persons. Through UNDP/ILO technical assistance programmes, community-based rehabilitation programmes had been launched. Kenya had sent a number of disabled persons to various African countries to participate in the African regional workshops and in an international workshop on the role of disabled youth in national development, held in August 1985. The educational, medical, social and vocational-training programmes for the disabled had also been expanded and steps had been taken to assist persons who suffered hearing impairments.

78. Referring to the question of aging, he said that planning programmes and activities was not enough: they had to be implemented; problems were not solved by slogans alone. His Government, with the help of national and non-governmental organizations, especially regional institutions and international agencies, had carried out a number of important activities to help the aged, especially in providing food and shelter to those in need. The Social Welfare Division of the Department of Social Services was currently the focal point for all such programmes. Schoolchildren were also taught to assist old people during their free time, and young people were encouraged to continue to care for their older parents

(Mrs. Wandeka, Kenya)

and relatives instead of placing them in old people's homes. Although in his country the number of older people requiring assistance was not yet alarming, it was necessary to prepare for the future. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be given all necessary support.

79. Referring to item 98, he noted with appreciation the report of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, and he was pleased to note that the Congress had given much attention to juvenile delinquency and drug abuse, and had adopted the United Nations standard minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice ("The Beijing rules"). His delegation also welcomed the recommendations of the Congress concerning the establishment of an African regional institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice relating to victims of crime and victims of abuse of power. His Government would do all in its power to implement the recommendations of the Milan Plan of Action.

80. Mr. VILLAGRA DELGADO (Argentina) said that the Argentine delegation had actively participated in the meetings of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and, among other things, had circulated a draft universal declaration on the rights of the prisoner, which it had forwarded to a working group of the Sixth Committee which was preparing a set of principles on the treatment of detainees. His delegation welcomed the interest shown by the Congress in the various aspects of development, since there was clearly a direct link between crime, poverty and unemployment, which were particularly serious in the developing countries. The establishment of a new international economic order and the realization of the right to development would constitute a very important element in alleviating the problems of crime, which in many cases were a reaction against situations resulting from the injustice of an economic system that did not allow adequate participation of all in the benefits of society.

81. His delegation hoped that the Third Committee would adopt by consensus measures which would allow a continuation of the work carried out by the Milan Congress and implementation of the resolutions and decisions it had adopted, especially the Plan of Action. He also trusted that all delegations would give their support to the draft resolutions which the Congress had recommended for adoption by the General Assembly, since those drafts concerned topics of particular importance. His country hoped that all countries would implement the model Agreement on the Transfer of Foreign Prisoners and Recommendations for the Treatment of Foreign Prisoners, as well as the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary.

82. Mr. LY (Senegal) said that his country assigned great importance to the question of youth, and therefore welcomed the fact that the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year had established guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. Interest in the topic should not be allowed to flag once the Year was past; on the contrary, the goals of the Year should be made permanent. The activities in question could be carried out by the

(Mr. Ly, Senegal)

national co-ordination committees, the secretariat of the International Youth Year and the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The theme chosen for the item on youth - "Participation, development, peace" - reflected the specific needs and concerns of present-day youth.

83. His delegation applauded the success of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the approval by consensus of the Milan Plan of Action and the Guiding Principles for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which expressed the desire and the determination of the international community to make concerted efforts in this vital area. It was especially significant that those guidelines, which could provide inspiration to Governments, had been laid down in the context of the requirements of development, the aims of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, a new international economic order, taking into account the political, economic, social and cultural situation and the traditions of each country and the adherence of crime-prevention and criminal-justice systems to the principles of social justice.

84. Those documents offered vast scope for international co-operation in crime prevention and criminal justice and for a world-wide, concerted approach leading to concrete measures. His delegation noted in that regard that the Seventh Congress had recognized the usefulness of United Nations regional and interregional institutes, which should be strengthened and should increase the scope of their programmes. His delegation noted the resolution of the Congress which requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish, as a matter of the highest priority, in close collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, an African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. It was to be hoped that the resolutions adopted at the Milan Congress would be implemented, in order to promote international co-operation in crime prevention and criminal justice.

85. In African societies, older persons had always enjoyed a privileged position, based on respect, prestige, discretion and wisdom. However, the changes resulting from the implementation of new development programmes, which frequently conflicted with the local social situation, had drastically affected their status, hence the need for national policies aimed at resolving the problems of aging.

86. His country, which had collaborated fully with the objectives of the International Plan of Action on Aging, had become aware of that need and had drawn up a policy aimed at satisfying the needs of older persons in various fields, especially in the medical and health, social security and housing sectors, in order to combat the isolation to which the elderly fell prey.

87. In December 1984 an African Regional Conference on Aging had been held in Dakar at the initiative of his Government and with the support of the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. The Conference had examined the applicability of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, and had developed concrete measures to respond to the needs of the African elderly. The United Nations, the

(Mr. Ly, Senegal)

specialized agencies and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should continue and strengthen their programmes in the field of aging and should assist African Governments, and especially in the founding of an African society of gerontology.

88. During the current period of economic crisis, which made the socio-economic situation of elderly and handicapped people more precarious than ever, it was particularly important for the international community to strive to implement the Programmes of Action relating to those two categories of disadvantaged people, in order to respond to their needs for integration, participation, prevention, re-education and equality of opportunity.

89. With regard to the world social situation, the situation in developing countries was particularly alarming. The obstacles to social progress were many and the forces for social change were slow to appear. In that regard, a more integrated approach could have been adopted, in the preparation of the 1985 Report, since social progress was inseparable from economic progress.

90. However, as a result of the reduction in public support for development, monetary instability, disintegration of the multilateral system of trade, the increase in debt servicing and the rigidity of lending policies, Africa suffered more than other regions from the reverses of the economic crisis, which, moreover, had been aggravated in the sub-Saharan zone by the effects of drought and desertification. It was paradoxical that, at the same time, multilateralism was receding, the arms race was accelerating, the North-South dialogue was paralysed, and the prospects for global negotiations on international economic co-operation remained gloomy.

91. He quoted the words of Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity: "Now, at the end of the millenium, uncertainty about mankind's future has assumed a completely new aspect, in that it is felt throughout the world ... In other words, mankind possesses in its very diversity the key to meet the challenges of our time" In conclusion, he said that mankind had no right to become discouraged.

The meeting rose at 9 p.m.