



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (A/40/3; 188, 239 and Add.1, 365 703 and Corr.1, 727, A/CONF.116/28 and Corr.1)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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AGENDA ITEM 99: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/40/3, 707)

AGENDA ITEM 100: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (A/40/3), 45, 623):

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
- (b) STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. Mrs. SHAHANI (Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), introducing the cluster of agenda items, said that the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, whose report was contained in document A/CONF.116/28 and Corr. 1, had been attended by 157 States and 160 non-governmental and other organizations, with women heading many of the delegations. The concurrent Forum 85 workshop had attracted some 14,000 participants. She expressed warm appreciation of the hospitality shown by the Government and people of Kenya and the commitment of the Conference's President, Miss Margaret Kenyatta. The Commission on the Status of Women and the participants in the five preparatory meetings had also contributed significantly to the success of the Conference.

2. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted by the Conference, were a set of comprehensive, democratic and realistic recommendations, based on an informed review of the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women and a realistic assessment of the obstacles which lay ahead. The Strategies clearly reflected the interdependence of the Decade's three goals - equality, development and peace. The economic recession and cuts in public services, particularly in developing countries, had disproportionately affected women: expectations had risen, but the resources needed to fulfill them were no longer available. Nevertheless, the Strategies contained a note of hope, stressing

(Mrs. Shahani)

women's crucial role in the achievement of reform and the need for men and women to work together to overcome obstacles to women's advancement. The Strategies contained specific recommendations on the formulation of programmes for women which could be adapted to the situation prevailing in each country.

3. The Conference's resolutions on equality were designed to combat the existing direct and indirect discrimination against women and to encourage women to participate in political life. The measures to protect the rights of rural women, particularly in respect of rights to land and other vital resources, reflected the link between equality and development. It was essential for more States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and implement its provisions. National institutions had a major responsibility to ensure that laws against discrimination were put into practice.

4. The Conference's recommendations on development touched on two complementary themes: the impact of international and national events on women's lives and the need to support local activities to promote the social, economic and political development of women. There should be more awareness of the complex relationship between development and the advancement of women, and women should participate in every phase of the development process. For example, since women were responsible for obtaining water for their families in many parts of the world, they should be closely involved in water supply projects. Women's work in the informal sector of the economy should be reflected in economic statistics, and employment legislation should provide benefits for self-employed women and those working in family enterprises.

5. The section of the report dealing with peace emphasized the need for women to work more actively for peace and for more States to implement the provisions of the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation, adopted under General Assembly resolution 37/63. The Strategies recommended measures to be taken at all levels, from the international sphere to the local community level. Special attention was given to women living under apartheid and other racist régimes, Palestinian women and children, and women as the victims of crime and family violence. Women should be trained in the art of negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes and encouraged to develop their qualities of leadership and self-reliance. They should be recruited to the diplomatic service and the international civil service on an equal basis with men. The report also devoted several paragraphs to the importance of peace education for children.

6. The Strategies covered areas of special concern - women who, by virtue of their age, socio-economic status and other factors, were the targets of discrimination. They should be encouraged to face life with dignity and confidence on a basis of equality with men.

7. The Strategies were aimed mainly at Governments. Regional and international co-operation remained vital, since the Strategies would require evaluation at seminars and expert group meetings throughout the world. Research, incorporating

(Mrs. Shahani)

gender-specific indicators, was needed on many topics of supra-national or universal importance. Technical co-operation should promote self-reliance and increase co-operation among the developing countries.

8. The Strategies stressed the critical role played by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in monitoring the implementation of the objectives of the Decade for Women. They also acknowledged the contribution made by United Nations specialized agencies and institutions such as INSTRAW and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

9. Future world conferences could be held on a regular basis if the General Assembly so decided. In that connection, the non-aligned countries had already decided to hold a conference on women and development in 1990.

10. A major responsibility for the implementation of the Strategies lay with national institutions and with women themselves. Going beyond the system of "networks" of information sources throughout the world, which had been established at the previous World Conference held at Copenhagen in 1980, women were now forming national, regional and international "coalitions", which would constitute a powerful weapon against economic stagnation, social unrest and moral confusion in their countries.

11. Annex I of the report contained 85 draft resolutions and one draft declaration which the Conference had had no time to consider. Nevertheless, they contained many valuable ideas, and the Third Committee might wish to take measures to ensure that the considerable effort which had been expended did not go to waste.

12. She would not speak in detail on the other two agenda items under discussion, but trusted that, in all its deliberations, the Committee would be inspired by the spirit of the Nairobi World Conference, where women from all over the world had expressed their solidarity and determination to work towards a brighter future.

13. Mrs. PASTIZZI-FERENCIC (Director, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women), introducing agenda item 99, drew attention to the report on the Institute's activities (A/40/707).

14. The end of the United Nations Decade for Women, coinciding with the Organization's fortieth anniversary, was a time to pay tribute to the latter's efforts to promote the advancement of women, to foster activity to give effect to the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and to progress from advocacy to practical measures, especially in the developing countries. To achieve those goals, the Institute's tasks would grow in importance.

15. Development was INSTRAW's chief concern; however, as had been revealed during the Decade, insufficient awareness of the relationship between development and the advancement of women was still hampering policy and programme formulation. Therefore, more research, training and information were needed; INSTRAW's

(Mrs. Pastizzi-Ferencic)

activities accordingly sought to promote women's contribution to development through strategies based on growth, equity, participation and eradication of poverty.

16. In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 38/104 and 39/122, the Institute had recently convened a high-level meeting of experts to examine and consolidate the report on the role of women in international economic relations. The expert group had commended the Institute's new approach, reflected in the studies underlying the report, and had expressed the hope that INSTRAW would continue the useful work of reviewing world economic trends as they affected women and help guide national and international development policies, especially during the current unprecedented crisis. The study would shortly be finalized and widely disseminated.

17. Immediately after the Nairobi World Conference, INSTRAW, in co-operation with FAO, had convened a meeting at Helsinki to discuss the development of guidelines relating to women and development and to assist in planning the integration of women into all development sectors. Such planning should give prominence to the collective self-reliance of developing countries, which in turn implied popular participation. The related technical co-operation programmes among developing countries, which the entire world community should support, must take into account the role of women in development, as emphasized in the Institute's studies. INSTRAW's approach stressed the role of women in such key areas as food production, industrial management, energy, water and sanitation, and the likely impact on women of new materials and technologies.

18. In the belief that development policy had to be based on adequate information, the Institute, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office, the United Nations University, ILO, FAO and the regional economic commissions, was working to improve statistical data on women's activities. Traditional census-taking had not properly reflected women's contributions; new concepts and methods were needed to redefine women's economic activity, including the household, informal and rural sectors, having regard to sex and age distribution as well as cultural and community differences. By its work in that sphere, the Institute had already helped to give effect to the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which recommended close co-operation in the collection and use of relevant statistics. Increased training opportunities for women and education concerning their role in development were needed; it was also important to advise decision-makers responsible for development on how economic processes related to women and to train instructors for the implementation of developmental changes.

19. The many challenges facing women and society called for an adequate institutional framework. The Institute made use of the networks existing among Governments, United Nations bodies and non-governmental and other organizations, and would continue to be a catalyst for the promotion of women in development. In order to expand the networks, the Institute called for increased contributions to its Trust Fund. The Institute was grateful for the support received from Member States throughout the Decade, from its host country, the Dominican Republic, from the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, and from all contributors.

20. Mrs. SNYDER (Chief, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (A/40/727), highlighted three areas of the report: administrative arrangements, operations and resource mobilization. In essence, the administrative arrangements were that UNIFEM continued to pay all of its own staff and office expenses, including office rental, and was paying the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1.5 per cent of project value as reimbursement for administrative costs, discontinuing the 13 per cent previously paid to the United Nations for the same purpose. The Fund, as a separate and identifiable entity in association with UNDP, was accorded full autonomy in its day-to-day operations under the responsibility of its own Director, who was directly accountable to the Administrator of UNDP.

21. Under General Assembly resolution 39/125, the Fund's mandate established two priorities in the use of the resources: first, to serve as a catalyst to influence the flow of mainstream resources to women, especially at pre-investment stages, and, secondly, to support innovative and experimental activities benefiting women in line with national and regional priorities. Since the Fund became operational in 1978, it had financed more than 450 activities for the benefit of women, ranging from studies of national planning processes in the Asia and Pacific region through co-operation with the World Food Programme in four Latin American countries. To sharpen its focus on national and regional priority areas, the Fund had also formulated regional action plans, inter alia, in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

22. The expanded mandate of UNIFEM - to influence the flow of mainstream resources - came at a critical moment when the economic situation of many low-income countries had been compounded by debt problems, and in Africa also by drought. The expanded mandate also came at a time when a number of evaluations of technical co-operation activities had shown that progress in ensuring fair consideration for women in mainstream activities had been modest at best. The lack of response to women's vital contributions to their economies and societies gave new urgency to UNIFEM's expanded mandate, and the Fund had therefore intensified its programming activities. The expanded mandate of UNIFEM had also positioned the Fund to influence policy: Fund staff now sat together with colleagues of UNDP, the World Bank and non-governmental organizations, which enabled them to contribute to policy-making and to co-ordinate fund activities with mainstream activities. Of critical importance for both policy and operations was the liaison with the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa.

23. To enable it to accomplish the critical tasks involved in resource mobilization, the Fund had received contributions from 94 Member States, and total contributions to date amounted to \$25 million since the mid-1970s. Despite the generosity of many countries, however, and despite the requirements of the Fund's expanded mandate, contributions had not kept pace with demands. To do its work until the year 2000 and to strengthen its autonomy, the Fund must have additional resources. She expressed the hope that there would be signs of increased support at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities in November. It was not only morally indefensible to disregard women in development co-operation but economically unsound. Especially for that reason, the Administrator of UNDP had warmly welcomed the new arrangements for the Fund.

24. Mr. SANTER (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the member States of the European Community as well as Portugal and Spain, said that the Community was convinced that the United Nations Decade for Women had been an important factor, at the national, regional and international levels, in the advancement of women. It had actively shared in the Decade's tasks both within the United Nations system and in the related world conferences and preparatory meetings. The equality of women, and their advancement in all aspects of national life, should continue to be strengthened by national legislation, and enforcement measures must be speeded up and efforts pursued well beyond the close of the Decade. Too many goals had not been attained and too much injustice still prevailed.

25. During the Nairobi World Conference, the representative of Luxembourg, speaking as President of the Community's Council of Ministers, had stressed the danger of allowing the Conference to become bogged down in politically controversial issues or matters within the competence of other international forums. Despite that danger, the good will of the international community of women and the efforts of the host country, aided by the African Group and the Chairman of the Group of 77, had secured the successful outcome of the Conference; its achievements must be safeguarded by giving them practical effect.

26. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted by consensus at the Conference, provided a sound basis for future action to promote the advancement of women in all spheres. Their provisions now had to be put into practice - a task to which Governments, in close co-operation with women's associations and other non-governmental organizations, must give priority.

27. In order to maintain the stimulus provided by the Decade, the relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, INSTRAW, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would have to co-ordinate their efforts and the Assembly, during the current session, should provide them with the necessary guidelines as well as a review and appraisal procedure. The periodicity of such a review and appraisal, and indeed of world conferences and meetings of United Nations bodies, should perhaps be considered in general. The Ten were prepared to consider any formula for monitoring progress towards the advancement of women pursuant to the conclusions reached at Nairobi.

28. Mr. ABUSHAALA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the United Nations Decade for Women had brought new hope for women the world over because it had enabled many organizations in several countries to work together for the advancement of women.

29. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya wished to underscore the importance of appealing to women to participate fully in the peace movement because they too had borne the heavy burden of war. Women had also helped to fight famine and disease and it was in the light of their contributions and their experience that they had been integrated fully into all levels of Libyan society, including decision-making bodies.

(Mr. Abushaala, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

30. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, there was no distinction made between men and women with respect to opportunities for education, training and employment. Women worked no more than 40 hours per week and were exempt from working between midnight and 6 a.m. because their role in the family as mothers and nurturers of children was highly valued. In addition, women did not lose promotion opportunities while on maternity leave. They were an integral part of the production process and made up more than 50 per cent of the workers in several industries and in the civil service.

31. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya provided justice, not equality, for all its citizens because equality, if too rigidly enforced, could result in unjust situations. Women, like men, had access to free health care and widows and women without men to support them received social pensions and free housing.

32. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya strongly condemned apartheid and believed that it should be abolished because it hampered the development of women in South Africa and Namibia. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya supported those women and others struggling against imperialist forces and continued to support women in the least developed countries.

33. Mrs. BRADER-BREUKEL (Netherlands) said that the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had been the most well-attended gathering ever organized by the United Nations and had received more attention than any other United Nations conference. Thanks in part to the United Nations, women's struggle to be recognized as citizens of the world now had the vigour it required to succeed. The World Conference had also showed that women the world over were of one mind. Although the methods and strategies for achieving improvement in the status of women differed from country to country, because they depended to a large extent on the cultural, economic and political situation, the Conference had succeeded in placing the emphasis on common interests and priorities. As the Nairobi experience had shown, it was possible to deal with political problems without endangering the final consensus.

34. Now was the time to profit from the stimulus provided by the Conference so that its positive effect and results were not wasted. In the Netherlands, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (A/CONF.116/28) would be compared with the national policy plan for women's rights in order to see to what extent national policy accorded with that of the United Nations. The national plan was not concerned solely with equal rights for women in the Netherlands, but also with development assistance policy and the role of women in development.

35. Since 1974, many countries had taken steps to eliminate discriminatory features from their legislation. In addition, statutory provisions had been introduced, which explicitly prohibited discrimination on grounds of sex. The Netherlands urged the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in particular the Advancement of Women Branch, to implement paragraph 350 of the Forward-looking Strategies. Future medium-term plans of all United Nations bodies,

(Mrs. Brader-Breukel, Netherlands)

including the regional commissions and the specialized agencies, should devote attention to developing a detailed policy on women and development so that it could be included in all objectives, programmes and policy guidelines. In formulating programmes and projects, it should be stated explicitly whether and in what way women were included in the target group.

36. In addition, the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, should take the initiative in formulating a system-wide medium-term plan for women and development, taking into account the results of the World Conference, and should submit it to the Commission on the Status of Women and to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination. Measures must also be taken to increase awareness among United Nations staff of women's interests and the positive and negative effects of projects and programmes on women. It was also important to develop indicators by which to measure progress in the advancement of women and to conduct comparative statistical studies. That was the only way in which the Strategies could be assessed, modified and adjusted.

37. Without the support of women's organizations, the themes and activities of the Decade for Women would never have received the attention they had won. Those activities had been started because it was gradually becoming clearer that the policy of integration in respect of women in development did not adequately meet women's needs or accord sufficiently with their interests. The Netherlands believed that full integration of women in societal activities depended on support for the strategy of the autonomous development of women. Only then could the gulf separating men and women be bridged. Both the strategies for autonomy and for integration were necessary - they complemented each other - and both must be incorporated in programmes, projects and policy objectives.

38. For too long society had denied women economic independence and such denial was in part a denial of human dignity. Women must therefore be given greater opportunities to achieve an economically independent status. In industrialized societies, thought must be given to the redistribution of paid work among men and women, accompanied by a change in mentality resulting in a better division between the sexes of unpaid work in the home and in the community. Unpaid work should be valued in economic terms and made a visible part of GNP.

39. The right of women to decide for themselves in matters concerning their bodies and their lifestyle was one of their basic human rights. Women must be able to make a free choice with regard to the way they organized their lives and the personal relationships they entered into. In particular, the right to control their fertility was a right women must be able to exercise.

40. The discussion on the human dignity of women had brought sexual violence against women and girls into the open. An active policy was needed the world over to rid society of sexual violence. Effective measures involving the judiciary, the police, welfare organizations and self-help centres must be taken.

(Mrs. Brader-Breukel, Netherlands)

41. Of course, the conclusion of the Decade for Women did not mean an end to the activities and discussions it had engendered. The world had only begun to realize the effects of the differences in power and the conflicts of interest between men and women. As women continued to work for the necessary changes in society, there would unavoidably be reluctance and incomprehension on the part of those who often regarded themselves as masters of the world - men. That problem had to be acknowledged and a solution found. National and international policies to raise the consciousness of men were therefore required. The wide dissemination of the Forward-looking Strategies would be an excellent means of achieving that.

42. Miss SOBOLEVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had convincingly demonstrated the significance and close relationship of the Decade's three themes: equality, development and peace. It had stressed the need to protect future generations from war and reaffirmed belief in the individual and the equality of women and men in the task of economic and social progress. Despite attempts by certain Western countries to distract attention from the main issues, the Conference had clearly shown that the chief problems affecting women, including the question of equality, were closely linked to such tasks as preventing conflicts, including nuclear warfare, preserving peace and ensuring economic and social progress for all. The Conference had stressed the need for greater attention to the role and responsibility of women in the tasks of peace and progress, and for even greater attention by legislative bodies, Governments and social organizations to the equality and advancement of women.

43. Women and children were the first victims of colonialist, racist and aggressive policies - as the Conference had noted. Women everywhere, particularly those who had themselves suffered, realized that to talk of the traditional woman's role was meaningless when the world might be plunged into catastrophe. Women in her country had suffered more than most during the Second World War, and the current population pattern still reflected the effects of that conflict. Women of her country and other nations had made great efforts - at the front lines, in partisan brigades and on the home front - to achieve victory over facism and militarism.

44. The United Nations Decade for Women and the Declaration of Mexico, had helped to mobilize fresh forces in the cause of peace and the social and economic development of nations, as well as to improve the status of women as a vital factor for peace and progress, including opposition to the arms race on earth and in space. The Nairobi World Conference had shown that women did not everywhere exercise equality in politics, employment, education, health and other fields, but experience had proved the value of the World Plan of Action endorsed by the World Conference on the International Women's Year at Mexico City.

45. The Forward-looking Strategies adopted at the most recent World Conference were based on those instruments; they stressed that equality, development and peace were indivisible and rightly showed that the chief obstacles to the advancement of

(Miss Soboleva, Byelorussian SSR)

women were imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, apartheid, racism in all forms and the existing unjust international economic relations. Adoption of the Strategies was of the greatest significance for women throughout the world and the entire United Nations system.

46. Her country had been among the first to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The provisions of that instrument and the World Plan of Action were reflected in her country's Constitution and other relevant legislation. National, social and economic development plans fully safeguarded women's rights in matters such as employment, maternity and child welfare, through the appropriate Standing Committee of the Byelorussia's Supreme Soviet. The legislation assured women's equality with men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as part of the constant concern for the people's welfare and well-being.

47. Women in her country occupied many leading posts in industry, science and government. Over one third of the deputies to the Supreme Soviet were women, and four women were in the Government. Over 50 per cent of the experts in higher education, and some 65 per cent in secondary education, were women and more than half the students in higher educational institutes and middle schools were girls and women. In addition, many young women from developing countries were receiving education and training in the Byelorussian SSR.

48. Although all States should accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, more than half the States Members of the Organization had not yet done so, including some who blithely preached about human rights with regard to others.

49. To achieve women's equality in fact was a difficult and protracted task, but a legal foundation was needed to begin with. The provisions of the Forward-looking Strategies were reflected in her own country's legislation and procedures. The United Nations must strive to give full effect to the Forward-looking Strategies in the cause of women's equality, peace and social progress.

50. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that her delegation supported the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and welcomed the Institute's efforts towards co-operation not only with the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations but also with non-governmental organizations, women's associations and academic institutions. The beneficial results of such co-operation were exemplified by the Institute's programmes on water, statistics and rural development.

51. She noted that the United Nations Decade for Women had ended without fanfare and with only modest results. Ten years after the Mexico City World Conference of the International Women's Year, and despite the high hopes which had led to the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women under the banner of equality, development and peace, the evidence showed that the results of the Decade were clearly beneath expectations. At the World Conference to Review and Appraise

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, many studies had shown that the strategies set forth in the 1975 World Plan of Action and in the 1980 Programme of Action, notwithstanding their contribution to the broadening of future prospects for women, were insufficient in most areas.

52. She was gratified to find that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women defined the concept of development in such a way as to reflect the current view that development should cover all spheres of women's lives, including their physical, moral, intellectual and cultural development based on freedom and justice. After reviewing the giant steps made by the international community in the definition of development, she noted that the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of relations between development and the advancement of women were still little known and poorly understood, and that the absence of political will continued to hold back action to promote the effective participation of women in development. Even more serious, since the question of integrating women in development was often perceived as belonging to the category of social protection measures, it had been given low priority because it was seen as a cost to be borne by society rather than as a contribution. That being so, it might not be irrelevant to ask whether it would not be better to call attention to that aspect of the problem rather than to blame all the evils afflicting women on the international economic situation, the lack of a new economic order or any other consideration of that type.

53. Many studies had indicated that the development process could be encouraged or slowed down by the integration or non-integration of women. However, appropriate solutions must first be found to put an end to the inequalities between men and women in all fields. It was essential, before undertaking any action, to begin with the following principle: women as well as men must be factors in and beneficiaries of the progress resulting from development and not robots of development.

54. In order for women to be mobilized for development purposes, they must be guaranteed all their rights on an equal footing with men. They must be educated and trained, given equal opportunities, equal wages, and access to jobs which were not simply those which men refused to do because they were unrewarding or degrading. Some of the studies presented at Nairobi had noted that there were continued violations of the rights and minimal needs of women despite the fact that the Decade for Women and the first half of the Third United Nations Development Decade had indicated some positive changes. However, progress had been very slow and the economic crisis had even reversed some situations to the detriment of women.

55. The existing disparities between women and men could not be resolved automatically, through economic growth alone. At the same time, without economic independence, women could not achieve equality. Governments must eliminate all discrimination against women and, at the same time, set up an infrastructure to improve the economic status of women. Her delegation therefore supported the recommendations aimed at integrating that infrastructure in national and international development strategies.

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

56. She noted that although women in developing countries formed a major component of the fundamental development sectors, particularly that of agriculture, their work had never been given the value it deserved. Moreover women's participation in those activities did not normally figure in the established statistics, thereby rendering their important contribution invisible. The vital role of rural women in Latin America, Asia and Africa had never been recognized, because it was always the image of men which persisted, leading them to reap the benefits of the work done by women as well as any assistance or credit extended for the promotion of agricultural production. That naturally led to a reinforcement of the inferior status of women and to the maintenance of preferential treatment for male children. Moreover, men were placed in decision-making and management positions, while women were required to do back-breaking, badly paid work. The gulf separating the two explained why many developing countries had not attained the goal of self-sufficiency in food, agriculture and rural development. Her delegation therefore welcomed the measures elaborated by the Nairobi Conference aimed at ensuring rural women access to land, capital, technology and other productive resources.

57. The education of women was more than vital for the elimination of the gap between the sexes. The importance of education and training, and the crucial role of the mass media in the elimination of disparities and prejudices affecting women and their effective participation in development, could not be overemphasized. That was all the more true in that the data gathered thus far confirmed that despite the Decade and the efforts made by Governments, the social, economic and political position of women had not improved significantly. In the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, a number of recommendations had been made, inter alia, to Governments, public and private enterprises and the mass media. However, her delegation was surprised that stronger recommendations had not been made to political organizations and trade unions, which had a decisive role to play in promoting women to positions of political responsibility and decision-making. It would perhaps be useful for INSTRAW to undertake a study on the activities of such organizations in promoting the advancement of women. Moreover, in view of the persisting inequalities in society and the barriers to women's participation in political life, it would perhaps have been desirable to include a recommendation advocating the practice of a sort of reverse discrimination in education, training, health and employment, allocating a certain percentage of responsible positions to deserving women.

58. Her delegation particularly supported the recommendations contained in paragraphs 13, 237 and 267 of the Forward-looking Strategies. However, her delegation strongly questioned whether, given the world situation, women were in a position to contribute effectively to disarmament and the promotion of international peace and security. In that context, she drew attention to paragraph 257, which pointed out that the questions of women and peace and the meaning of peace for women could not be separated from the broader question of relationships between women and men in all spheres of life and in the family.

59. Evaluating the results of the Nairobi Conference, her delegation felt that it had been a success in so far as it had been held on a continent where women had

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

from time immemorial suffered from discrimination based on their sex, but whose suffering had been further aggravated by racial discrimination, apartheid, colonialism and natural and man-made disasters. The Conference had made it possible to show the thousands of participants a generous, hospitable, open and well-organized Africa. The Conference had also been a success because, perhaps for the first time, it had been a forum for creating awareness and a source of valuable information, as well as a forum enabling women from all over the world to have a real discussion of women's problems. Lastly, it had been a success in so far as a consensus had been reached on the Forward-looking Strategies. On the other hand, it had not lived up to expectations, for it had become another international battlefield where women had wasted the better part of their energy on impassioned political debates. By doing so, they had not only imitated men but had even surpassed them. Her delegation regretted that the questions of women and children living under apartheid and that of Palestinian women and children had not been the subject of calm and realistic study.

60. Although some progress had been made towards the advancement of women, much remained to be done. It was the responsibility of Governments to take advantage of the virtually untapped potential, vitality and dynamism of women so that the world could be enriched by their immense talents, so long unrecognized.

61. Miss SMADJA (Observer for the Commission of the European Communities) noted with satisfaction that the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women had been adopted by consensus. The EEC had made many contributions to the text and had sought to strengthen the sections devoted to women's working and living conditions.

62. During the United Nations Decade for Women, the EEC had developed its policy of equal rights for men and women by means of community directives and practical measures to ensure their implementation. The EEC had encouraged women to set up co-operatives and gain access to jobs using the new technologies.

63. A major achievement of the Decade had been the adoption of legislation at all levels to improve women's status, although the measures contained in the Strategies represented a minimum consensus and the EEC would have been prepared to go further. The EEC was preparing a new programme of action for the period 1986-1990 to consolidate the progress already made and to promote greater equality of opportunity for women in many fields.

64. It was gratifying to note that the Conference had placed greater emphasis on the theme of development. The Third Convention of Lomé, drawn up by the EEC and the ACP States and due to enter into force in 1986, incorporated new provisions on the subject of women and development. They were designed to increase women's role in the production process and give them access to training, credit and appropriate technologies.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.