



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZABOR (Hungary)

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

AGENDA ITEM 92: UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
(continued) (A/40/3; A/CONF.116/28 and Corr.1, 2 and 3; A/40/188, A/40/239 and
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- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- (b) WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
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AGENDA ITEM 99: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/3, A/40/707)

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

- (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. TRAORE (Ivory Coast) said that her delegation fully supported the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Any policy aimed at improving conditions for women should be based on an in-depth knowledge of their social, political and economic environment. Various bodies in her country co-operated with the Institute: the Department of the Status of Women, the Statistical Directorate, the Ivory Coast Centre for Economic and Social Research (CIRES) and the Ethno-sociological Institute of the National University. All those bodies studied the role accorded to women in the institutions of her country and were involved in redefining the role of women in the process of development.

2. Most activities undertaken for women in the Ivory Coast had been made possible by assistance from the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Results obtained within many areas during the past decade currently allowed women in her country to participate in the design and planning of, and follow-up to, development operations, particularly in the areas of agriculture, cottage industries, the establishment of support structures for young children and education for family life and in health and nutrition. It had been possible to define problems, test solutions and in particular, raise the level of awareness of women, decision-makers and planners. Thanks to information and education campaigns, women realized that

(Mrs. Traore, Ivory Coast)

their problems were being dealt with, and that awareness often led to the wish to participate. The Department of the Status of Women, in close collaboration with the Ivory Coast Women's Association, was trying to define the conditions of that participation, within the framework of the development objectives of the national five-year plan. With the co-operation of the technical services of various ministries, those two bodies had concluded a long sensitization campaign to promote understanding of the relationship between the underdevelopment of various sectors of national life, and the underutilization of women's energy, intelligence and abilities.

3. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were of particular interest to her country, where women had benefited from the spin-off from the strong growth of the economy before the decline of commodity prices but had since suffered more from the reduction in State resources than other segments of the population. Her country would draw all the obvious conclusions from the results of the Nairobi Conference. It would give special attention to agriculture, because rewarding the work of women who produced, processed and sold the bulk of foodstuffs was one of the conditions for food self-sufficiency. With the co-operation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, attempts would be made to facilitate their access to productive resources, loans and training and to lighten their tasks and increase their income. The access of women to drinking water, their participation in the protection of the environment and mother and child welfare were other priority areas for the Ivory Coast. In addition, in co-operation with UNFPA, her country stressed family education and family planning.

4. The problem of the integration of girls and women into social and vocational life was very important. In that regard, the report on the situation of youth in the 1980s (A/40/64) depicted the idea of marginality in a rather confused manner. being a young woman did not necessarily mean being in a marginal situation. It would be desirable to draw a distinction between the situation of girls and that of young women, as well as between the concepts of real age and social age. In the Ivory Coast, a woman of 18 years who was married and had children did not regard herself, and was not considered in society, as a girl, but as an adult who because of marriage had responsibilities and rights which a girl did not have. It followed that the problems of a married woman with children and those of a girl of the same age were totally different.

5. Mrs. QUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso), speaking on agenda item 92, said that women's problems were currently the concern not only of women but also of society as a whole and the authorities in her country. Attainment of the objectives of the Decade (Equality, Development and Peace) depended on changes in both attitudes and the material organization of society. Over the past two years the Government of her country, convinced that the emancipation of women would ensure the triumph of the revolution, had taken some specific steps in that regard. At the economic level, it had sought to enable rural women to derive a regular income from their work and, thanks to the agrarian reform, to aspire to a larger role than that traditionally reserved for them. Women had already proved that, once more equitable conditions were in place, they excelled in what they undertook. At the

(Mrs. Quedraogo, Burkina Faso)

political level, women had been fully integrated in decision-making bodies, such as the Revolutionary Defence Committees, in public office, ministries and the diplomatic corps, and were increasingly given the responsibility to elaborate and implement projects.

6. The women in her country were themselves studying various aspects of their situation: legal status, school enrolment and literacy, and participation in development. On the occasion of National Women's Week in March 1984, they had adopted recommendations in such matters as marriage and its dissolution, bank credit, excision and abortion.

7. In some situations the daily life of women had become more difficult, whether in southern Africa, Palestine or the drought-stricken Sahel. Her country hoped that the many draft resolutions designed to complement the Forward-looking Strategies - a document which it had signed - would not be discarded for lack of time. The most appropriate place and moment for their consideration would have to be found.

8. The world economic and financial crisis and the climate of insecurity created by the arms race had their repercussions on women's prospects for the future. The political will of States to implement the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women would not be sufficient unless the international political and economic situation improved and unless the international community took the necessary measures to accelerate development. Promotion of the advancement of women required the efforts of all United Nations bodies, together with government action and the support of non-governmental organizations and women themselves.

9. Mrs. KORPI (Finland), speaking on agenda item 100 (b), said that the Finnish Parliament was currently concluding a thorough revision of national legislation concerning equal rights between women and men, in order to fulfil the conditions which Finland had set itself for ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. That revision and ratification process had shown that in Finland, as elsewhere, there were still many loopholes in national legislations, which in some cases, did not even reflect the de facto situation. Her delegation regretted that many reservations had been made by States upon accession to, or ratification of, the Convention.

10. Finnish women had been the first in the world to be granted all political rights. The Parliament of Finland had dedicated a reading of the instrument of ratification of the Convention to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

11. Mrs. MIRANDA (Chile) said that the Nairobi Conference, contrary to some predictions, had been able to produce a document which had been adopted by consensus. The Conference marked both the end of the Decade and the beginning of efforts to realize its promises, through the national, regional and international measures recommended in that document. The Decade already had to its credit the

(Mrs. Miranda, Chile)

sensitization of women to their rights and their potential, even if society sometimes still ignored them, as witnessed by the fact that the heads of State who had come to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations had rarely mentioned the Conference as one of the notable events of the anniversary year, or its concerns and decisions as an adjunct to their efforts to ensure world peace.

12. Equality, development and peace were interdependent. Peace was indispensable to economic development and development was indispensable to the establishment of equality between men and women. The countries of Latin America, including Chile, while aware that the Nairobi Conference would not be able to solve that problem, had insisted that the external debt should be mentioned in the document on Forward-looking Strategies as one of the obstacles to development.

13. The major objective of the United Nations was to banish the spectre of war. It was always in peacetime that women had been able to progress towards equality. Chilean women therefore welcomed the path followed by Chile and Argentina to settle their dispute peacefully and hoped that other States would make the same choice.

14. Chile had established a seven-member committee chaired by the Minister of Justice, who had given it the task of studying the status of women under the law. That committee would soon submit its report. Chile was also studying revisions to the Civil Code in order to be able to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

15. In order to implement the Forward-looking Strategies within the United Nations system, existing bodies and co-ordination between them must be strengthened. The preparation of United Nations programme budgets, particularly those of concern to women, would thereby be facilitated. The system-wide medium-term plan for women and development requested by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1985/46 could be a useful instrument and deserved thorough study. The Commission on the Status of Women should be strengthened and requested to monitor the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. It would be useful for that purpose to enlarge the membership of that Commission, even if that had financial implications, so as to encourage government action. Lastly, the Secretariat must try to recruit and appoint more women to senior posts in the United Nations system. After all, the Nairobi Conference merely closed the first decade of an undertaking which would have to be pursued for some time yet before decisive results were achieved.

16. Mr. HEGYI (Hungary) said that the Nairobi Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women had produced a reasonable review and analysis of the Decade and had adopted by consensus a final document containing strategies designed to improve the status of women and integrate them into all aspects of development. The text of the "Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" covering the period up to the year 2000 (A/CONF.116/28) was a balanced and comprehensive document which gave a realistic analysis of the global economic, social and political factors and trends that would have a bearing on the advancement of women during the next 15 years. Peace, for obvious reasons, was the prerequisite for the realization of all the objectives of those strategies.

(Mr. Hegyi, Hungary)

17. While his delegation welcomed the constructive approach to the objectives of the Decade, it could not agree with the view that issues such as trade restrictions, economic sanctions, the new international economic order, the situation of women and children under apartheid and the plight of Palestinian women and children were irrelevant to the solution of women's problems. Those unresolved issues were real and painful and often hit women much harder than men. His delegation endorsed the final section of the document, which defined the obstacles to the advancement of women and the strategies for overcoming them.

18. His delegation was in agreement with the observations on the Nairobi Conference made by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization (A/40/1). It did not think that all the problems had disappeared with the success of the Decade. Governments must show political will to fulfil the hopes raised by the Conference. His Government was more than ready to take the necessary follow-up measures at the national level, and it intended to participate in further actions at the regional and international levels to realize the objectives of the Decade.

19. Turning to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, he said that it was gratifying that more States had signed or ratified the Convention since the previous year. Unfortunately, the Convention was still far from being universal. It was regrettable that some of the most developed countries did not submit national reports on the status of women. Hungary had been a party to the Convention since 1981 and in 1984 had submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which had commended it for its frankness. Such frankness was essential to the progress of women, and it was not enough for reports to express pious wishes in that connection.

20. In recent years, Hungary had continued its efforts to promote women's equality, although not without difficulties because of the economic crisis. Currently, 80 per cent of women capable of work were employed and some 45 per cent of all active earners were women. The status of women was gradually improving, but vigilance was still necessary. Economic and cultural conditions must be improved and the conservative views which underestimated the social role of women must be overcome.

21. As in all countries, women's equality was harder to achieve in families than in other units of society because of resistance based on the idea that motherhood was incompatible with work outside the home. To remedy that situation, Hungary was continuing to develop its system of day nurseries and kindergartens and its child-care allowance scheme.

22. His delegation held the view that the obstacles to the realization of equal rights for women and men could be overcome only by action at the national and local levels, but international co-ordination and co-operation were useful in meeting the expectations of women all over the world.

23. Mrs. ASTAKHOVA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that most of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women had been attained in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic even before the Decade had been launched, and that Ukrainian women enjoyed broader legal guarantees than those set forth in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. While all the problems concerning the status of women have not been fully solved, it could be said that socialism enabled women to pursue social and professional activities, develop their personality and obtain economic independence, without which there was no real equality with men.

24. Today, in the Ukrainian SSR, almost two thirds of the specialists with higher and secondary education, one third of the engineers and agronomists, 70 per cent of the teachers, physicians and economists were women. Women participated regularly in public life (the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR was a woman); and they were well represented in the field of science, where they held close to 40 per cent of the jobs. Such active participation by women in all areas of social life was possible only because social and family conditions allowed them to combine work with their social, political and cultural activities and family commitments.

25. During the Decade, many additional measures had been taken to improve the well-being of mothers and children and to increase State assistance to the family. Some years ago, the period of leave granted to take care of sick children had been extended, the organization of family recreation had been improved, a system for providing communal facilities at the work place had been instituted and the number of day-care centres and kindergartens had increased considerably (they were currently attended by 60 per cent of children). All those measures relieved women of many of their domestic chores, allowing them more time to take care of their children's upbringing and participate in social life. In many sectors of the national economy such as education and health, where women comprised the majority of the labor force, salaries had been increased.

26. In reviewing the Decade, one could not fail to note with satisfaction that in many countries good results had been achieved in promoting the status of women. There were many countries, however, where women still faced discrimination in salary and education and often racial discrimination as well. Mere declarations were not enough to ensure true equality. Governments also needed to show the political will to create the conditions which would allow women real participation in all areas of the activity of society.

27. As the Nairobi Conference had shown, position of women in the developing countries was still difficult. Colonial and neo-colonial exploitation had had serious consequences: low life expectancy of women, harsh working conditions, a high mortality rate among women in childbirth, and illiteracy (out of 2.5 billion women, 491 million could neither read nor write). The policy pursued by the imperialist circles was one of the causes of that situation. In the Middle East and in southern Africa no significant progress had been made with respect to the status of women.

(Mrs. Astakhova, Ukrainian SSR)

28. In order to eliminate the obstacles to improving the status of women, priority should be given to combating the arms race (in particular, the militarization of space should be prevented) so that international economic relations could be restructured on a fair and democratic basis and peace and security guaranteed for all peoples. A fight should be waged against the policy of imperialism, colonialism, racism and racial discrimination in all its forms, apartheid, foreign aggression, occupation and interference in the internal affairs of States.

29. Mr. AHMED (Democratic Yemen) said that the resolutions of the Nairobi Conference had emphasized the interdependence of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Conference participants had stressed the fact that there could be no development without equality and that the well-being of mankind could be secured only through the establishment of peace and security in the world.

30. Equality had to be recognized de facto before it could be established de jure. In other words, women must be considered as full-fledged members of society and enjoy absolute equality of opportunity.

31. Development could not be perceived solely as a factor which favoured women. It was a global process in which the goals relating to women were identical to those affecting society as a whole. In order to ensure successful development, women should be allowed to give their creativity free rein and participate side by side with men in building the country economically and socially.

32. As stated in paragraph 95 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, one of the main obstacles to the integration of women in the process of development was the aggravation of the international situation. The absence of peace and security in the world impeded the progress not only of women but of all mankind. It was therefore necessary to establish relations based on mutual respect and the recognition of the right of peoples to decide their future and to live in peace. The keynote of the Decade had been the elimination of discrimination in all its forms, participation and self-determination. That meant that the inhuman policies and practices that the people of southern Africa had to face, the uprooting of the Palestinian people and the denial of their right to self-determination constituted both an obstacle to the attainment of the goals of the Decade, and a violation of all the international covenants on human rights. The United Nations and the international community should condemn those violations and practices and assist the Palestinian people and the people of southern Africa to regain their rights.

33. Since independence, the Government of Yemen had worked to improve the status of women. Women had contributed actively to liberating the country and had been able to participate very quickly in all the activities of society. Women had their own organization, the Union of Yemeni Women, which was in the forefront of political, economic, social and cultural activities. Women were currently members of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Council, of the Supreme People's Council itself and of the local popular assemblies, held senior posts at the executive level of power and worked in very varied professions.

(Mr. Ahmed, Democratic Yemen)

34. Although the country had limited resources, every Yemeni woman had the right to free education at all levels. Because of that benefit, there were currently as many women as men in teaching establishments. The improvement of health services had eased women's routine tasks, so that they were able to devote more time to society.
35. With the enactment of a progressive family code, the status of women had improved and the important place of women in society had been recognized.
36. Inspired by the guiding principles of the United Nations Decade for Women, Democratic Yemen had been able to give a powerful impetus to efforts to promote the cause of women and their social status, so that today Democratic Yemen was among the countries which had made great progress in achieving the goals of the Decade.
37. Ms. ILIC (Yugoslavia) said that the Nairobi Conference had successfully completed its two tasks: to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women and adopt the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, the latter having been done by consensus. At that Conference, the topicality and interdependence of the three themes of the Decade had been reaffirmed, as had the fact that the status of women could be improved only in the context of world socio-economic development and the further democratization of international relations (including the establishment of a new international economic order) and under conditions of peace and security.
38. The international community's concerted efforts had made it possible for the United Nations Decade for Women to initiate a process for the emancipation of women; however, documents from the Nairobi Conference had focused attention on the severe economic crisis affecting the world, which was having particularly adverse effects on the status of women and was aggravated by natural disasters that hampered countries' efforts to improve their population's standard of living, further increasing unemployment and reducing the resources allocated for social services. Her delegation therefore believed that conditions for accelerating the development of the developing countries (which was perceived as a combination of economic growth and social progress) must be created at the national and international levels, and that the most important political problems must be solved. Such development could be achieved only with the maximum participation of men and women in all spheres. Since women could not be men's equals unless they enjoyed economic independence, their economic status must also be improved by providing them with expanded employment opportunities; measures to that effect must constitute an integral part of national and international development strategies.
39. In Yugoslavia, socio-economic and political development had always been based on the principles of self-management (which guaranteed equality of the sexes) and the equality of peoples and individuals. The underlying principle of activities undertaken in Yugoslavia before and during the United Nations Decade for Women had always been that, at the national level, the promotion of women's social status was the key problem of social relations; its solution was an integral part of the struggle for a better life and a higher standard of living, which implied women's

(Ms. Ilic, Yugoslavia)

full participation on an equal footing with men in decision-making. At the international level, that action constituted an integral part of the struggle for peace and development based on respect for the independence, sovereignty and equality of all peoples and countries. Those activities had covered various fields: planning, legislation, science and research, and publications. The Federal Assembly had adopted a resolution on social activities to promote women's social status and socio-political role in socialist self-management society. The Federal Executive Council reported periodically to the Federal Assembly on the implementation of that resolution. The report which it had submitted after the Nairobi Conference had shown that, in spite of remarkable progress in the fields of education, health, employment (in Yugoslavia, women accounted for 38.4 per cent of the total labour force), protection of motherhood and social care for children, the results were still inadequate. The Federal Assembly had therefore decided to make a concerted effort to enhance women's status further by incorporating women's issues into all socio-economic development programmes and by mobilizing all human and material resources in order to implement them and elaborate programmes for achieving the goals of the Decade and the Forward-looking Strategies at the national and international levels.

40. Yugoslavia was also participating in all activities of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in that area, and had actively participated in the preparations for the Nairobi Conference by submitting a report and other publications. Yugoslav experts had also helped carry out a study on the role of women in developing countries, which had served as a basis for discussion at the Conference of Ministers of the Movement of Non-Aligned and other developing countries held at New Delhi in April 1985. Yugoslavia believed that United Nations conferences should be held periodically to review the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

41. Her delegation noted with interest the report of the Interregional Seminar on National Experience Relating to the Improvement of the Situation of Women in Rural Areas (A/40/239). It was a well-known fact that women in developing countries were major agents in agriculture, food production and rural development, a very important area in many developing countries but one which was becoming a question of survival in Africa. Yet women's potential contribution to rural development was not always appreciated. Her delegation therefore welcomed the recommendation to improve productivity and the status of women in agriculture by facilitating women's access to land (a right which they had traditionally enjoyed, before the advent of structural changes in the colonial and post-colonial eras), water, appropriate technology, training, credit and services, and the decision-making process.

42. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the General Assembly had decided in resolution 39/125 that the activities of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women should be continued through establishment of a separate and identifiable entity in autonomous association with the United Nations Development Programme known as the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

(Ms. Ilic, Yugoslavia)

43. Turning to agenda item 99, she said that Yugoslavia attached great importance to the approach taken by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (a body having its origin in the Decade), which considered women's issues within the overall context of development, and believed that the Institute might develop a wide range of programmes by adopting an innovative operational method. The co-operative arrangements with United Nations agencies and government and non-governmental organizations had facilitated a rapid growth in initial programmes. Her delegation wished to draw attention in that connection to the co-operation between the Institute and the International Centre for Public Enterprises in preparation of the study on the role of women in developing countries for the Conference of Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries held at New Delhi. Her delegation sincerely hoped that the developed and developing countries would increase their financial support to the Institute so that it could continue its work.

44. Mrs. TIRONA (Philippines) said it was important that the three major instruments developed during the long years of striving to guarantee women the same rights as men in all areas, namely the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, should be supported so that the gains of the past 10 years might continue through the year 2000 and perhaps even beyond.

45. The Nairobi Conference was a landmark in the history of women's struggle and of the United Nations because, for the first time in 40 years, the international community had recognized that women had the right to participate in the pursuit of a just and durable peace, economic and social progress and universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The momentum built up by the Nairobi Conference would be meaningless if sustained efforts were not undertaken at the national level. That was why the Philippine National Parliament had tabled a bill designed to improve the national machinery that dealt with women's issues and integrate 77 women's non-governmental organizations in it. It was hoped that that action would ensure a comprehensive co-ordination of activities.

46. The international community was currently beset by difficulties caused by the world recession and depression, which had aggravated the crises experienced by the developing countries. The Philippines believed that women's potential must be mobilized and utilized to help bring about economic recovery and point the way towards long-term progress and development. As providers of family welfare, workers and community leaders, women could in fact influence the speed and quality of development. Consequently, opportunities must be provided for them to do so by equipping them physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually. In the area of agricultural production, for example, women must have direct access to land, water and other natural resources, education and training and must also be provided with outlets for non-farming activities. Appropriate technologies must be developed in consultation with potential women users. When national plans were modified, the effects of such changes on women as beneficiaries of development and on their productive and reproductive roles should be taken into account. At the policy level, women should be represented in national development and economic bodies.

(Mrs. Tirona, Philippines)

47. The centrepiece of the national economic recovery of the Philippines was self-reliance, and women, who constituted half of the total work force and mostly lived in the rural areas, could contribute substantially to that programme if given the necessary economic independence. Recent statistics indicated that only 0.05 per cent of total resources allocated by the United Nations system to the agricultural sector went to finance programmes for rural women. Moreover, the major share of development resources was still allocated to technical projects for men. Bearing in mind the need for food security and for foreign exchange, it was necessary to reassess priorities and perhaps to increase resources allocated to strengthen women's capacities to produce food and goods for export. For that reason, the Philippines welcomed the development of international co-operation and the efforts made within the United Nations to enhance the productive capacity of rural women in fair and safe working conditions.

48. In implementing the Forward-looking Strategies, there was a need to identify and reinforce women's groups at the grass-roots level and to promote their involvement in various programmes and projects. Day-care centres should be established in work areas. Non-governmental organizations should be involved in planning women's activities, including training programmes. The information media should give the necessary publicity to such matters in order to shape public opinion, promote the value of equal participation for both sexes, mobilize public support and help in the formulation of national policies.

49. The Secretary-General of the United Nations might wish to provide policy guidelines to Member States for the implementation of the Strategies at the national, regional and international levels. United Nations bodies should be requested to submit their inputs for inclusion in a consolidated report of the Secretary-General. A questionnaire could be drawn up or, as recommended by the Nairobi Conference, a system of periodic reports could be established.

50. Mrs. CHIWELE (Zambia), speaking on agenda item 92 (b), said that the United Nations Decade for Women had ushered in an era of global activism to sensitize women and influence the roles they were to play in development. In appraising the results achieved and the obstacles encountered during the Decade, the international community had been able to take stock of the past 10 years and to plan for the future. The obstacles identified in the Forward-looking Strategies, whether international political tension, racial oppression, military conflicts, the economic recession or the arms race, differed from one region to another, as did the aspirations and hopes of women. What was, for example, a priority matter for African women, was not necessarily so for women in the Western countries. Each country should therefore take the measures appropriate to its own particular situation.

51. Zambia's priority was to eliminate apartheid so as to achieve peace in southern Africa. Only then could it concentrate on issues of development. Some considered apartheid a political question that should not be injected into women's issues. However, apartheid made no distinctions of sex or age among its victims. If an explosion in the region was to be avoided, that system must be speedily

(Mrs. Chiwele, Zambia)

dismantled and the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive economic sanctions was the only peaceful means of doing so. The countries that opposed sanctions should realize that the notion that economic sanctions would be particularly harmful to the black population of southern Africa was absurd. Black people were not only deprived but were dying daily and for them, as for all the inhabitants of the region, the elimination of apartheid was a matter of life and death. Similarly, only with the easing of tensions in the Middle East so as to enable the Palestinian people to have a homeland of its own could the women of that region benefit from the achievements of the Nairobi Conference. Like most developing countries, Zambia had been adversely affected by the world economic recession. The scarcity of financial resources would therefore hamper its efforts to improve the status of women. The establishment of equitable international economic relations would help create favourable economic conditions for the implementation of programmes for women.

52. The implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies over the next 15 years would require the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring progress both at the national and international levels. That would include strengthening institutions concerned with matters affecting women and providing adequate resources for women's programmes. It would also be necessary for individual countries to provide the necessary legal framework for the implementation of the Strategies and, in particular, to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Continued liaison with non-governmental organizations would also be helpful.

53. National machinery had been established in Zambia through the Women's League of the ruling party, with which most women's non-governmental organizations were affiliated and with which they co-operated in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies. The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the Zambian Government early in 1985 would facilitate their task.

54. The Commission on the Status of Women should be entrusted with the task of promoting the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies and the Branch for the Advancement of Women at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should continue to serve as the focal point in that regard. Her delegation supported the convening, in the year 2000, of a world conference to review and appraise the progress made in implementing the Strategies. In the interim period, the non-aligned and other developing countries should hold ministerial conferences and the United Nations should, beginning in 1990, convene meetings either at the global or regional levels every five years in order to evaluate the situation on a regular basis.

55. Ms. POMETTA (Observer for Switzerland) said that her Government had actively participated in the Mexico City, Copenhagen and Nairobi Conferences. Those meetings had facilitated a comprehensive and long-range review of the lessons of the past and of goals for the future as well as the formulation of strategies to solve the problems confronting women in the modern world, whether with regard to

(Ms. Pometta, Observer, Switzerland)

respect for their individuality or to their contribution to the improvement of society. The development of the individual, like economic and social development, presupposed respect for the rights of the human person. The Swiss people had shown its dedication to that principle by deciding in favour of an amendment to the legal provisions regarding marriage contained in the civil code which gave effect to the principle of equal rights for men and women incorporated into the Federal Constitution shortly after the Copenhagen Conference.

56. The Nairobi Conference represented only one more stage. The harmonious development of modern societies depended on dialogue and co-operation between men and women and on the sharing of responsibilities between legally equal partners.

57. Whether in the protection of individual rights or in health and educational programmes, women were often at a disadvantage as compared to the rest of the population. Switzerland had, for that reason, introduced two resolutions at the Nairobi Conference. The first concerned the application of humanitarian law. Women and children living in areas of armed conflict were often those most seriously affected by war. Switzerland therefore hoped that those States that had not yet done so would ratify additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. The universally binding nature of those Conventions would thereby be strengthened. The second resolution concerned the health and welfare of women. It requested Governments and the relevant organizations to dedicate themselves to reducing the rate of mortality in childbirth and to eliminating practices dangerous to the physical and mental health of women.

58. Despite some reservations, her Government welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Forward-looking Strategies, which would guide the work of the international organizations. It was pleased that the desire for dialogue and constructive solutions had prevailed at the Nairobi Conference, enabling it to have positive results.

OTHER MATTERS

59. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Angola, Ghana, Norway and Singapore had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.3.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.