



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 85: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/435, A/41/631)

AGENDA ITEM 86: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/621, A/41/340-E/1986/90)

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AGENDA ITEM 90: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/605, A/41/341-S/18065 and Corr. 1)

AGENDA ITEM 91: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/618, A/41/354)

1. Ms. WALKER (United Kingdom) said that all countries should adopt social policies which reflected particular needs, the problems and the role of youth, the aging and the disabled and, in that field, the United Nations played an invaluable role in stimulating awareness of all those issues and acting as a focus for the exchange of information and experience.

2. Recognizing the fact that youth represented the future, her Government had fully participated in the activities organized in 1985 within the framework of the International Youth Year and hoped that they would be followed up. As the Secretary-General indicated in his report on that question (A/41/578), most of the necessary mechanisms for the follow-up already existed. The Government of the United Kingdom was funding a project to convert into permanent local youth forums the local committees set up during the International Youth Year in England and Wales and had established in January a national advisory council for identifying the priority needs of young people in England and Wales and mobilizing available resources in order to meet those needs, particularly with regard to unemployment, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency. Many similar activities had been organized in Scotland and Northern Ireland since the International Youth Year with the participation of young people and through communication between youth organizations and government bodies. Her Government would continue to encourage that type of co-operation at the national and international levels.

3. With regard to the disabled, the Government of the United Kingdom recognized the importance of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the aims of which it intended to pursue. In the United Kingdom there was already an extensive network of non-governmental organizations specializing in questions concerning the disabled. Those bodies were of great help in ensuring in the best way the full integration of disabled people into the community. Furthermore, her country had already taken numerous measures to improve the quality of life of disabled people. For example, in 1985, new building regulations had been adopted

(Ms. Walker, United Kingdom)

in order to improve access by disabled people to public buildings and in 1986 Parliament had passed a law to ensure better co-ordination of services for the disabled.

4. At the international level, her Government had allocated funds to a number of projects to help disabled persons - in 1985-1986, the amount of \$US 300,000 had been spent on projects under the joint funding scheme set up with charitable organizations - and it would continue to consider all requests for assistance aimed at the prevention of disabling diseases and rehabilitation.

5. Finally, with regard to aging, the United Kingdom, which had had relatively early experience with that problem, was particularly conscious of the need to take adequate measures to cope with the increasing numbers of elderly people in both developed and less developed countries. By the year 2011, the number of people in the United Kingdom aged 85 or over would have doubled. Her Government therefore fully supported the aims of the International Plan of Action on Aging, whose recommendations closely reflected policies which were already well established in the United Kingdom. The Government considered the development of services for the elderly a priority area and favoured the exchange of technical information, professional expertise and the results of research in that field. In that spirit, it had participated in regional conferences and seminars and had provided funds for a number of projects to assist the aging in developing countries.

6. In order to stimulate more widespread implementation of the Plan of Action, her Government had already proposed that the United Nations should consider ways to improve the co-ordination of the activities of the Aging Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs; that United Nations bodies should pay greater attention in their programmes to the needs of the aging; and that greater use should be made of national and non-governmental organizations, whose experience and operational effectiveness were not always fully recognized.

7. It was particularly important, in view of the current financial crisis, to make the best possible use of existing resources and avoid all additional expenditures. It was evident from the report of the Secretary-General that an overwhelming majority of Member States favoured the strengthening of activities within the limits of existing resources or through increased voluntary contributions. Her delegation was ready to join in a constructive consensus which would serve the interests of the aging while avoiding any duplication of existing arrangements.

8. Mr. BUDAI (Hungary) said that the arms race, with the waste of material and intellectual resources which it entailed, deprived mankind of the resources necessary for solving the urgent social and economic problems of the modern world and to meet, in particular, the needs of the aging, the disabled and youth.

9. Hungary welcomed the adoption of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging because of the valuable contribution which the aging could make to society. The proportion of the aging in the population was steadily increasing, a trend which had been growing during the past decade; 2.3 million out of 10 million

(Mr. Budai, Hungary)

inhabitants were pensioners. The Hungarian Government had decided as a matter of priority to maintain the living standard of the aging. It intended to preserve the real value of pensions paid to the aging and expand social welfare services (free medical care and hospitalization).

10. The proclamation of the period 1983-1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was an action of international significance that should contribute to the prevention of disability, the rehabilitation of disabled persons and their full integration into society. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had focused attention on the situation of 500 million disabled people in the world and the need to create the necessary conditions to safeguard their dignity and ensure the full exercise of their civil rights. In Hungary, the disabled enjoyed the same social services as the entire Hungarian population and received assistance through special institutions. One of the fundamental goals of the Government was to see to it that persons with a physical or mental disability had the same employment opportunities as the rest of the population and could continue to live with their families.

11. Realizing the importance of direct participation by young people in the promotion of social progress, the Hungarian Government thought it necessary to disseminate as widely as possible among young people the principles of strengthening international peace and security, as well as the principles of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the right of peoples to self-determination. Hungary had, accordingly, supported the proclamation of the International Youth Year and the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year, which had highlighted the role of the Organization in increasing international co-operation in that field.

12. For the International Youth Year, the Hungarian Government had established a national committee, which had adopted and implemented a detailed programme of activities with the participation of young people and youth organizations. It would continue to follow up that programme.

13. Hungary had always supported United Nations efforts to increase and improve co-operation between Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. In that spirit, Hungary had taken part in the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, and had joined the consensus whereby the General Assembly had approved its recommendations at the 1985 session. The international community should implement the Milan Plan of Action and make a concerted effort to eradicate the social and economic factors which encouraged crime. The work of the Congress had aroused great interest in Hungarian Government circles, and they had been taken into account in practical and scientific work.

14. Hungary was convinced that, if international co-operation in that field was to be increased, the next congress must be carefully prepared on the basis of the positive approach adopted in Milan.

15. Mr. ORTIZ (Uruguay) drew attention to the report on the question of aging (A/41/631), drawn up by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 40/30. It was regrettable that such an important document, which described the approach taken by United Nations bodies towards aging and the prospects for the implementation of the International Plan of Action had been submitted rather late. If, moreover, the report contained errors and omissions, as the delegation of the Dominican Republic had stated, the Secretariat should revise it. Paragraph 26 of the report stated that six United Nations units were concerned with aging. Such an excessive number led him to fear that more time was spent on deciding which unit was responsible than on achieving actual results and that, as in any bureaucracy, organization took precedence over execution. The large number of organizations and subsidiary bodies led to a proliferation of meetings, held at different times and in very different places, as if the variety and novelty of the situation were thought to be a source of inspiration. He feared that, if that tendency continued, the number of officials working for those bodies would be greater than the number of elderly people with whom they were supposed to be dealing.

16. The problem of aging was, in essence, very different from the other problems before the General Assembly, which were the subject of great concern. Aging should be a source of satisfaction and pride for humanity, since the prolongation of life had been made possible by improved living conditions and scientific progress. It also gave cause for hope that later generations would be better able to overcome their difficulties and conflicts and that their extra years of life would be spent in an atmosphere of harmony.

17. Moreover, aging was an insoluble problem in that, unlike the arms race or racial discrimination, where it was hoped that good sense and realism would eventually prevail, no one sought to eradicate aging. On the contrary, the whole of humanity wished for a longer life. It was a universal problem, which affected all countries. By the year 2000, 14 per cent of the world's population would be elderly people, although the percentage would vary a little from one country or region to another. Uruguay had set up a committee for elderly people, on which the Ministries of Labour, Health, Education and Culture and private organizations were represented. Uruguay supported United Nations initiatives and international co-operation in that field.

18. Increased life expectancy also meant an increase in an individual's "useful" life, particularly his working life. Thus, from an economic point of view, the problem of aging and the problem of youth should obviously be considered in the more general context of development, so that the measures undertaken to encourage participation by those two population groups should not result in increased unemployment. As a general rule, proposals and recommendations concerning elderly persons were designed to "protect" them in all fields. Such a view implied that aging was inevitably accompanied by a reduction in physical and mental capacity which would justify a statutory age limit for technical and administrative employment. However, countries were often governed by men and women who were far beyond retirement age. If they were capable of performing such complex tasks, programmes for the aged should emphasize their "utilization" rather than their "protection". Over the years, elderly people had added to their innate talents a wealth of knowledge and experience which formed a veritable treasure-house of great value to society.

(Mr. Ortiz, Uruguay)

19. Turning to the items on youth, he merely wished to reiterate briefly Uruguay's position, which had been stated many times during the International Youth Year. The main concern was education, which would prepare young people for the responsibilities they would have to bear in the building of society. In Uruguay, primary and secondary education were compulsory; for many years, primary and secondary schooling, university education, and technical and professional training had been free of charge.

20. When considering the problems of youth, it was essential to avoid the mistake of drawing up strategies for a special group of human beings, as if being young were a permanent state, like being a member of a certain race or religion. Young people should be prepared not for youth, but for adulthood.

21. In respect of crime prevention and criminal justice, Uruguay supported the Milan Plan of Action and the conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/41/618) and welcomed the action taken by the competent bodies in that field. Nevertheless, although the studies undertaken were increasingly detailed and thorough, national and world crime rates were hardly diminishing at all. That fact should be taken into account in future studies on the issue.

22. Mrs. MIGNOTT (Jamaica) said that technological progress, advances in communications and growing sensitivity to everyone's needs had created new aspirations which had been frustrated by the global recession, particularly in the developing countries. Young people had been the victims of that situation and that was why the international community had proclaimed the International Youth Year with the theme "Participation, Development, Peace" and approved the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the Year. The reports of the Secretary-General on the question (A/41/578 and A/41/621) gave a serious and thorough assessment of the world situation of youth and of the achievements of the United Nations in that field. She referred, in particular, to the establishment of national committees and focal points, the creation of lasting links between youth groups and organizations and the development of lasting co-operation between organizations in the United Nations system and youth organizations. Her delegation supported the conclusions contained in documents A/41/578 and A/41/621 but reserved judgement on some points.

23. The aging population deserved the same amount of attention as youth. In that regard, the Secretary-General's report on the question (A/41/631), which gave a candid and comprehensive view of the state of affairs concerning the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, was responsive to the General Assembly's request in resolution 40/30. However, that report pointed to certain inherent weaknesses in the current approach, particularly the decline in pledged contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund on Aging from \$334,300 in 1982-1983 to \$56,000 in 1984-1985 and only \$8,000 so far for 1986-1987 and the insufficient co-ordination among United Nations agencies, on the one hand, and between them and national agencies on the other. In addition, the report drew attention to a certain stagnation in United Nations programmes devoted to aging, which was not particularly reassuring, since from 1982 on countries had not been able to devote the necessary financial resources to their own social programmes in that field.

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

24. Her country had a strong interest in the establishment of a United Nations programme on aging which could, in the long term, play a role equivalent to that played by UNICEF with regard to children, and in the establishment of a standing intergovernmental committee, preferably under the Economic and Social Council. However, recognizing the present financial constraints facing the United Nations, it supported proposals aimed at strengthening the Aging Unit in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Her delegation also appreciated the contribution of the Aging Unit and some United Nations agencies, particularly the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization, in the field of aging. In that context, the regional economic commissions should play a more active role as centres for liaison between United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and Governments. Finally, particular attention should be given to research and training programmes on aging at the national and regional levels, the development of exchanges of experience between persons administering and planning programmes on aging and the publication of up-to-date gerontological material.

25. While it appreciated the importance of the activities of the Trust Fund on Aging, her delegation wondered whether it would not be better to merge the original Fund with the new Trust Fund which had been established recently for the purpose of promoting a United Nations programme on aging. The Fund would be administered by a strengthened Aging Unit until the programme could be worked out.

26. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations activities benefiting disabled persons (A/41/605), her country continued to give its full support to maintaining and strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at the international, national and regional levels. It was also interested in the developments with regard to IMPACT, the UNDP programme for disability prevention.

27. Finally, referring to agenda item 91, she said that criminal activity, in its new dimensions, was due to the disintegration of traditional structures and to frustrated aspirations, which were themselves the result of misguided development strategies which denied the importance of human development. The regional crime prevention institutes must be given the necessary resources to continue their research and technical assistance programmes in that field at the regional and subregional levels. She was particularly disturbed about the falling off of the resources of the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and about the resulting curtailment of projects.

28. Mrs. CHIMELA (Botswana) paid a tribute to the memory of the President of the People's Republic of Mozambique and expressed her sympathy to the people of that country.

29. Commenting on the concept of youth, which had evolved rapidly in recent years, she pointed out that youth constituted a social group with its own specific identity, needs, problems and cultural configurations which had been brought into focus during the International Youth Year. The underlying causes of the problems

(Mrs. Chimela, Botswana)

of youth must be analysed before they could be realistically resolved and the situation of youth should be continually monitored with a view to improving it. The basic needs of youth could not be very different from those of other groups and satisfying them was precisely what development was about.

30. On the occasion of the International Youth Year, her country had adopted, at a national youth rally, a specific plan of action which would serve as a guide during the second half of the decade. Specifically, industry, commerce, private centres and government and semi-public agencies were all active in the technical and vocational training of youth. Collectively, they offered training opportunities in varying degrees and forms to more than 9,000 young people annually. The Government's goal was to train an adequate number of qualified citizens to achieve rapid economic and social development, with special emphasis on rural development and job creation. At the initiative of the community and with government assistance, brigades had been established to give on-the-job training to primary school leavers in various areas such as construction, metal work and vehicle repair and maintenance. Job creation in the rural areas deterred the migration of youth to urban areas, a problem causing concern throughout the developing countries. The International Youth Year had also provided her country with an opportunity to articulate a national youth policy.

31. Her delegation was also concerned with the problems of the aged, who should not only be regarded as receivers of services but who also had a major role to play in development. Her Government had therefore established mechanisms through which the aged could participate in development programmes in their villages and become members of village, regional and national committees. They could also be useful in pre-school centres. In the rural areas, the aged received financial assistance to start self-employment projects and income-generating activities.

32. Botswana subscribed to the idea of establishing structures for the aged within the United Nations. Just as one spoke of parental responsibility, the responsibility of children towards their parents should be recognized. Solutions other than old folks' homes must be found for the elderly. Although, owing to the extended family system, Botswana provided in one way or another for the needs of aged persons, it fully approved the measures or programmes being implemented in some countries for the strengthening of the family: financial support for low-income families who wished to keep their elderly at home, social services to support the whole family when there were elderly people at home, interest-free loans for home improvement, grants to encourage the establishment of family-based income-generating projects and educational projects to encourage children to support their parents.

33. The disabled too should be treated like any other members of society. Disabled children should be integrated into the normal educational system. That would facilitate their participation in community life and would be less costly in the long term than providing special education for them. Such integration could only be successful if accompanied by careful planning and appropriate support services. Botswana had adopted a community-based rehabilitation programme within



(Mrs. Chimela, Botswana)

the framework of the existing public health system and in connection with the development of its services for disability prevention and rehabilitation at the village level. All those measures had to be incorporated in the rural development strategies in order, firstly, to draw on human resources at all levels and, secondly, to ensure the participation of all members of the community in decision-making and programme implementation.

34. Mr. POERSCHKE (German Democratic Republic) paid a tribute to the memory of the President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, who had died tragically, together with several of his associates.

35. Although young people had always been a major concern of the United Nations, the International Youth Year had given Member States a fresh opportunity to tackle their problems. It was imperative to continue systematically the activities introduced at the national, regional and international levels in order to attain the ambitious objectives of the International Youth Year: participation, development and peace. The German Democratic Republic believed that the United Nations was an appropriate framework for efforts towards that end.

36. In view of the fact that peace had never before been so seriously endangered since the Second World War, more and more young people were fighting against the danger of war and imperialist aggression, and, in the German Democratic Republic, millions of boys and girls supported the peace policy of the Government and the concrete and realistic proposals submitted by the Soviet Union to secure peace and put an end to the arms race. The youth of the German Democratic Republic respected and paid tribute to the endeavours undertaken by the United Nations to ward off the danger of a nuclear holocaust. In the German Democratic Republic, World Peace Day had brought together thousands of boys and girls. They had called upon the peace-loving youth of the world to send representatives to a peace seminar to be held, on the initiative of the socialist youth organisation, "Free German Youth", in the capital of the German Democratic Republic in March 1987. The German Democratic Republic believed that the seminar would be an opportunity for giving an international dimension to activities geared to the objectives of the International Youth Year.

37. The results of the International Youth Year provided grounds for satisfaction, particularly with regard to the realistic character of the many national, regional and international programmes designed to ensure young people respect of their fundamental rights, in particular, the right to work, the right to education and culture and the right to participate in decision-making. In the German Democratic Republic, all the necessary conditions were present to enable young people to exercise their political, economic, social and cultural rights and, in so doing, to contribute to the building of the State. Moreover, the country had 22,000 young deputies and 600 young mayors, who were working for the improvement of living and working conditions.

(Mr. Poerschke, German Democratic Republic)

38. Furthermore, at a time of rapid technological changes, the German Democratic Republic offered employment and equal opportunities for all. A few weeks earlier, 184,000 boys and girls had enrolled in vocational training establishments. Most of the 918,000 young skilled workers who received job-training during the current five-year period would find work suited to their skills. Whereas youth unemployment had assumed gigantic dimensions in several developed capitalist States, where, out of 32 million unemployed, 4.4 per cent were aged 25 or younger, not a single young person in the German Democratic Republic feared losing his job because of scientific and technological advances.

39. The world-wide implementation of the fundamental political, economic, social and cultural rights of youth remained a tremendous task incumbent upon the international community. The report of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the International Youth Year contained a number of interesting conclusions, which must be taken into consideration in order to ensure the necessary co-ordination and co-operation in that field and which his delegation unreservedly approved. The German Democratic Republic hoped that the International Youth Year had opened the way for improving the economic, social and cultural situation of youth and the more active participation of young people in the solution of the present vital problems of mankind.

40. Mrs. DARGEL (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the preparation and adoption by the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year of the guidelines for further planning and follow-up in the field of youth was evidence of the importance which the international community attached to that question. In the view of the Byelorussian SSR, the role of the United Nations in that field should be to endeavour to settle the world problems that impeded the implementation of the objectives of the International Year, namely, participation, development and peace. One such obstacle was the fact that huge sums were allocated every year to military budgets. Those expenditures represented approximately the equivalent of \$130 a year for every inhabitant of the planet, or approximately the annual family income in a number of developing countries. The cost of one nuclear submarine was equivalent to the annual total of the resources allocated to education by 23 developing countries with a school-age population of 160 million.

41. The Byelorussian SSR supported the recommendations and conclusions in the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving young people: participation, development, peace (A/41/621), while regretting that the role of non-governmental youth organizations was not sufficiently highlighted in it and that the participation of youth in the struggle for peace and disarmament was not given its due place. The Byelorussian SSR also supported the recommendation contained in the report that the General Assembly should envisage, at its forty-first session, designating a date to be observed as International Youth Day. In some countries, including her own, such a day already existed and was observed on the third Sunday in June.

(Mrs. Dargel, Byelorussian SSR)

42. With regard to channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations, a subject dealt with in document A/41/578, the role of the United Nations system was to establish closer ties between the United Nations and non-governmental youth organizations, which played an important part in the movement for peace, détente and disarmament. In that connection, it was to be regretted that the document did not contain any information on activities of that kind organized on the international scale, in particular, the XII World Youth Festival held in Moscow in 1985. The task of the United Nations was to disseminate information on youth activities and to enable countries with different social and economic systems to exchange experience on that subject.

43. As pointed out in document A/41/621, the International Youth Year provided an opportunity for the developing countries to develop a youth policy for those young people who were often trapped by illiteracy and unemployment. While the developed market economy countries did have social policies and very diverse approaches to that problem, the net result was that millions of children and young people still lived in poverty, homeless and without hope for a better life. In contrast, in the planned economy countries, as noted in the report, the State assumed primary responsibility for youth problems and provided young people with the services necessary for their growth and fulfilment. That was especially true in the Byelorussian SSR, where the constitution guaranteed young people the right to education, work, leisure, health care and culture. It should be noted in that connection that out of the 485 deputies in the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR, 71 were under 30 years of age. There was also a commission of the Supreme Soviet whose special function was to formulate government policy on youth questions, particularly those relating to work. In Byelorussia, young people did not know what unemployment was and education was free at all levels. The youth of Byelorussia had taken an active part in the events of the International Youth Year, in particular, the XII World Youth Festival, at which the young generation had come out solidly for peace and against nuclear war.

44. It was his delegation's view that it was the task of the Commission for social development to deal with youth questions on a regular basis. It might even be a good idea to set up a sub-commission for that purpose. It was the duty of the United Nations and all States to work for a better life for young people. The development of a general system of international peace and security, which had been proposed by the socialist countries, including the Byelorussian SSR, could substantially help to achieve that goal.

45. Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) paid a tribute to the memory of the late president of the People's Republic of Mozambique. He recalled the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples adopted by the General Assembly in 1969, which indicated the importance attached even then by the international community to the direct participation of youth in building the world of the future. At a time when imperialist forces continued to disturb peaceful coexistence among nations and to intensify the arms race at any price, it was more than ever necessary to promote the ideals of peace, disarmament and international co-operation among youth

(Mr. Kittikhoun, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

throughout the world. The International Youth Year had drawn attention to the need to meet the special needs and aspirations of young people in order to ensure their participation in the struggle for peace, national independence, social progress and development. His delegation felt that the impetus generated by observance of the Year should be reinforced by appropriate follow-up actions at the national, regional and international levels. For its part, it would make every effort to move forward in that direction.

45. Lao revolutionary youth had been very active in the national liberation war against colonialist and imperialist forces. As a dynamic component of Lao society, it contributed significantly to the national defence and socialist construction. Its general status was gradually improving and its fundamental rights were fully guaranteed, as reflected in its active participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party and the Lao Government inculcated in Lao revolutionary youth the spirit of patriotism, internationalism, understanding among nations and peoples, international co-operation and peaceful coexistence between States regardless of their social and political systems. Much remained to be done, but the young generation, united under the banner of peace, independence and socialism, was determined to move ahead.

47. His Government appreciated the role played by the United Nations Trust Fund for Disabled Persons and believed it deserved continued support.

48. The situation of youth, disabled persons and the elderly in various parts of the world, and mainly in developing countries, demanded attention by the world community. While commendable efforts had been made to improve their status, much more remained to be done. It was imperative to create appropriate economic, social and cultural conditions enabling them to get actively and fully involved in every field of activity. To that end, the great nuclear Powers should heed the voice of reason and engage in good faith in negotiations to bring about peace, détente and disarmament, for the survival of mankind was now at stake.

49. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland), referring to agenda items 86 and 87, said that the observance of the International Youth Year had generated many events in Poland organized by young people and groups representing them and had led to the adoption of a programme aimed at increasing youth participation in the various sectors of social and economic life. It had also provided an opportunity for undertaking a number of scientific studies on the situation of youth throughout the country. The emphasis, during the Year, had been largely on the role of young people as managers in the workplace or in academia, and their participation in political life had also been encouraged. That participation had been reflected in the elections to the Polish Parliament in October 1985. The enactment by the Polish Parliament of a bill on youth which specified the rights and obligations of young people in political life had been an event of the International Youth Year.

(Mr. Zawacki, Poland)

50. All in all, there had been 22 large international events for the International Youth Year, including a number of international seminars on United Nations activities to promote peace and disarmament. Those events had served to generate interest in youth on the part of Governments, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations, focusing on youth problems and the role young people were called upon to play in seeking solutions to the fundamental problems of mankind. The Year had also confirmed that the prospects for young people depended on improvement in the climate of international relations and on the preservation of peace. It was useful to recall in that connection that it had been at Poland's initiative that the General Assembly had adopted the Declaration on Education of Societies for Life and Peace.

51. At the international level, Poland hoped that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would continue to disseminate information and to promote co-operation among countries on youth questions.

52. His delegation attached great importance to the role of the United Nations in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice. It had supported both the Guiding Principles for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Context of Development and a New International Economic Order, adopted by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held at Milan in 1985, and resolution 40/32, in which the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations made by the Congress. Those two documents represented a major step towards better international co-operation in criminal justice matters. The international community needed to pay attention to many questions in the field under consideration. For example, there were the issues of the suppression of economic crimes, better administration of juvenile justice, more equitable treatment of victims, the use of computer techniques in criminal justice systems, the reduction of the human and material costs of imprisonment and the strengthening of interregional advisory services in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice. While some of those matters could be pursued by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, other United Nations bodies should be encouraged to co-operate with the Centre.

53. Poland took a keen interest in the activities carried out by the international community in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, particularly the activities of the Helsinki Institute, with which it worked closely.

54. Mr. FAROUQUE (Sri Lanka) said that the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging had created an awareness of the fact that the issue of aging was an aspect of social development, that the elderly were a development asset and that the quality of life of the elderly was no less important than their longevity.

55. Sri Lanka was aware of the social, economic, and political implications of the phenomenon of aging. It was therefore endeavouring to implement the Plan of Action and to ensure that the elderly (7 per cent of the Sri Lankan population), who still depended on the traditional extended family for social and economic support, did not lose that security as a result of such social developments as smaller family units and the employment of young people at great distances from their families' homes. The Sri Lankan Government was therefore seeking to promote respect for the

(Mr. Farouque, Sri Lanka)

elderly and ensure that they remained with their families. Although the role played by national social-planning machinery was important, the role played by the bodies of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations was just as vital. Without those bodies and without close international and regional co-operation, it would be difficult for the developing countries to take action in the field in question, in view of their escalating shortage of resources.

56. Active involvement of young people in United Nations activities not only made them aware of their rights and obligations to society but also broadened their horizons, thus enabling them to contribute to international peace and understanding. The experience gained by Sri Lanka during the preparations for and the observance of International Youth Year had helped to enhance the activities carried out nationally by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Employment. The Ministry, together with the National Youth Services Council and the National Apprenticeship Board, was responsible for policy-making, planning and co-ordination in the area of technical training and activities for young people. The activities in question placed emphasis on, for example, community development and self-help. Within that framework young Sri Lankans, who represented over 50 per cent of the total population, were involved in promoting the well-being of their own communities. They also participated in decision-making and in the preparation and implementation of national policy.

57. While Sri Lanka was appreciative of the efforts being made both by United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to integrate the disabled into society and ensure that they were equal partners in social, economic and political development, it was concerned about the serious financing difficulties encountered in the implementation of the World Programme of Action, as in the case of other social development projects. The deteriorating economic situation had not spared the disabled at either the national or the international level. However, the world economic crisis must not be used as an excuse by Governments and the international community for deferring programmes for the disabled. The Sri Lankan Government provided vocational training and rehabilitation for handicapped people, endeavoured to persuade both the public and the private sector to employ disabled people who had acquired training in trades and crafts and, where feasible, helped the disabled to start new ventures by providing them with seed capital or implements for their trades. The Department of Social Services and the Ministry of Education co-operated with voluntary organizations in the fields of vocational rehabilitation of the disabled and education for handicapped children. In the area of disability prevention, Sri Lanka had launched pilot projects in various parts of the country and, with assistance from WHO, was in the process of preparing community rehabilitation programmes for the disabled, which were linked to the primary health care programme and the strategy for attaining health for all by the year 2000.

58. On the subject of crime prevention and criminal justice, in addition to an increase in the crime rate, Sri Lanka was encountering problems caused by the dearth of law enforcement personnel and delays in the administration of justice. It had been recommended that the Constitution and the relevant legislation should be amended in order to solve the problems in question. For humanitarian reasons, there was a particular need to revise the penal laws and statutes and make them

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less rigid. Crime had increasingly become a problem associated with young people, and the practice and administration of justice in respect of young offenders must be revised. Sri Lanka had set up a unit to monitor the observance of human rights guaranteed by the Constitution and to eliminate any discrimination.

59. Drug abuse was a matter of growing concern for Sri Lanka, which had established the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, under the purview of the Ministry of Defence, in order to combat the problem. Narcotics offences were extraditable under Sri Lankan law. Sri Lanka endorsed the recommendations put forward in the Secretary General's report (A/41/618), particularly the recommendations in paragraph 18, which dealt with the agenda items for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. In order to cope with the challenge of increasingly sophisticated criminality, it was essential to strengthen international technical co-operation, share information, disseminate relevant scientific know-how, make available the required financial resources, particularly to the developing countries, and emphasize an interdisciplinary approach.

60. Mr. GAFFEY (Ireland) said that his country placed great value on the work of the United Nations in the fields of youth, aging and the disabled. However, in his statement he would concentrate on the issue of youth, which had a particular relevance to political, economic and social developments in Ireland today. There had been a tremendous response to International Youth Year among young people themselves, who had been enthusiastically and energetically involved in the activities carried out during the Year both internationally and locally. In many countries it had thus been possible to build an awareness of the potential for youth participation in decision-making processes affecting not only young people but society in general.

61. Ireland had been pleased to participate in the efforts in question as a member of the Advisory Committee for International Youth Year. For demographic reasons Ireland had a clear interest in heightening international awareness of the role of young people in society. It recognized the high proportion of young people within the Irish population as representing a wealth of social capital. Following intensive consultations and a thorough analysis of the situation of young people in Ireland, the Irish Government had decided to launch a new national youth policy based on the principle of partnership with young people. The aim of the programme was to help all young people to become self-reliant, responsible and active participants in a democratic society. The Irish Government viewed the policy not merely as a fulfilment of a duty to young people but also as a means of safeguarding the future well-being of such a society. The policy's priority target was young people aged between 12 and 21 years, who now accounted for almost 19 per cent of the population. It established a national youth service, whose role would be to co-ordinate local youth service boards that would be responsible for fostering the development of a wide range of voluntary services for young people at the local level in order to supplement the efforts of the family and the formal education system. Those services, which were designed to provide young people with employment and to give them an opportunity to participate in the shaping of society in general, should take account of the needs and wishes expressed by young people themselves. The policy represented a commitment by the Government to address the

(Mr. Gaffey, Ireland)

many problems facing young people, such as homelessness, substance abuse and crime, and to respond to the needs of young disabled people.

62. The success of measures to increase the level of youth participation depended on recognition by Governments of the right of young people to access to the world of work. The primary aim of the Irish Government was to alleviate unemployment. It was paying special attention to the problems of unemployed youth, especially during the transition from school to work, which was particularly difficult in a period of economic constraint, and it had introduced a range of specific measures in the areas of education, training and counselling.

63. The success of the International Youth Year was largely attributable to the response at the local level. His delegation was convinced that the Year had opened up a wealth of possibilities for the involvement of young people in national and international decision-making. It was confident that the resultant sensitivity to youth needs would have a profound impact on the building of international co-operation and understanding.

64. Mr. IBRAHIM (Oman) said that since Sultan Qaboos assumed the leadership of the country in 1970, the training of young people and the fulfilment of their aspirations had become major concerns of the Omani Government, which considered education an important tool for the construction of a stable and advanced society.

65. Youth symposia had been held each year in the Sultanate since 1976. They had been organized in various regions of the country and had allowed the young participants to get to know their country and to find out how the people actually lived.

66. Those occasions had ceased to be exclusively male events. Omani girls in their turn had begun to organize meetings, which they used to advantage to develop their artistic, cultural and physical skills.

67. The first Omani university had been inaugurated on 8 September 1986. The State authorities would endeavour to ensure that that teaching and training establishment would respond fully to the needs of Omani society.

68. The end of the International Youth Year marked the beginning of long-term action for young people in every country. In accordance with the objectives of the Year (participation, development and peace), Omani youth organizations would make great efforts to ensure that the coming generations would play a vital role in the life of society and would participate fully in the development process. But such efforts could only be made in an atmosphere of peace; hence the need to inculcate a sense of friendship, co-operation and understanding into young people in order to achieve the objectives established by Sultan Qaboos when he stated that it was incumbent upon the young people of the free world to reinvest mankind with dignity, to promote peace and to lay the foundations for understanding among peoples.

69. The first symposium specifically for disabled persons had been held in the Sultanate of Oman. That event was evidence of the importance which the Omani authorities attached to the protection of that segment of the population. After



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the proclamation of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, the National Committee for the Protection of Disabled Persons had been set up and had worked constantly since its establishment to give disabled persons confidence in their abilities and to enable them to make the best use of their capabilities. The Omani authorities were currently establishing re-integration centres with vocational rehabilitation workshops in which disabled persons could learn crafts such as carpentry, bookbinding and brushmaking, the aim being to help them become self-sufficient and to enable them to participate fully in the development of the country.

70. Mr. AGUILAR-HECHT (Guatemala), referring to agenda items 86 and 87, said that the participation of young people in economic, social and political development, a prerequisite for a just and democratic society, had been a matter of concern to the United Nations since its establishment. It had manifested that concern by proclaiming 1985 the International Youth Year, by convening a world conference on the subject and by the adoption, in 1985, of resolution 40/14 in which the General Assembly had endorsed the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth, guidelines which Guatemala had supported. But the task was still not completed. Much remained to be done before young people were fully integrated into the national development process and involved in the search for solutions to social problems. In that connection, his delegation was gratified by the enthusiasm with which the national committees established for the International Year had fulfilled their tasks and by their efforts to improve the flow of information between youth organizations and the United Nations. It also supported the activities proposed in document A/41/621, in particular in paragraph 58, for follow-up of action initiated during the International Youth Year.

71. Guatemala also considered the activities undertaken by the United Nations during the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons to be very constructive. Although the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons was not an easy task, particularly in view of the economic difficulties facing developing countries, it was nevertheless heartening to note the growing number of initiatives that were being taken to improve the well-being of the disabled.

72. On the question of aging, he shared the concern expressed by the representative of the Dominican Republic regarding the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging which left much to be desired. The matter required urgent attention.

73. He was also concerned about the increasing violence throughout the world, in particular in developing societies where criminality manifested itself in many ways. The Guatemalan delegation therefore supported the Plan of Action adopted by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held in 1985 in Milan. The implementation of that Plan of Action could help lower crime rates. It was to be hoped that the Seventh International Congress of Social Defence which was to be held later in 1986 in Buenos Aires would strengthen international co-operation in that area.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.