



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUGUME (Uganda)

later: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.3/41/SR.21  
24 October 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

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

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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/41/341-S/18065 and Corr.1, A/41/605 and Corr.1)

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

1. Mrs. ARUNGU-OLENDE (Kenya) said that in an attempt to decentralize its services for the disabled, Kenya had established district rehabilitation committees and community-based rehabilitation centres outside the urban areas. Under the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, Kenya had established its own Trust Fund for the Disabled. More teaching personnel were being trained at the Kenya Institute of Special Education, which had been established with the assistance of the Danish International Development Agency. The Institute also planned to run a model school that would demonstrate how disabled children could be integrated into the regular school programme. Recently, the International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement (IMPACT) had begun to operate in Kenya.

2. Her delegation supported the proposal in document A/41/605 that the economic commissions should provide strategy options and guidelines appropriate to their regions within the framework of the Decade. Kenya was apprehensive over the Secretary-General's findings with respect to the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging (A/41/631). Her delegation, unlike others, did not believe that the slow implementation of the Plan was attributable to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA). After all, its Unit on Aging was supposed to be a focal point only, and a staff of three could not be expected to serve global needs and concerns. The Unit on Aging and the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging possessed valuable expertise and technical know-how. Therefore, it would be wiser if the bodies already in place were made to work efficiently.

3. For many years, Kenya had viewed the aging population as the sole responsibility of the families concerned. Families could no longer cope with the larger aging population - reflecting a world-wide demographic change - and it was therefore important for the issue to be kept alive in both national and United Nations programmes.

(Mrs. Arungu-Olende, Kenya)

4. Without strong channels of communication through which they could learn, young people were likely to become idle, discontented and rebellious. As indicated in the Secretary-General's reports (A/41/578 and A/41/621), follow-up to the International Youth Year was of paramount importance. Kenya currently devoted 30 per cent of its national budget to the education of its youth, and was seeking to employ them and integrate them into the national development process.

5. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's suggestions on crime prevention (A/40/618), particularly in the areas of information sharing, research on the relationship between crime and socio-economic development and strategies for dealing with transnational crimes. Kenya urged the United Nations Secretariat to expedite preparatory work for the establishment of an African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

6. Mr. ALHAIYLI (Iraq) said that the efforts of the United Nations to promote social development throughout the world must be continued. Crises arising from the imbalances in international economic relations were aggravating poverty and underdevelopment, as well as hampering progress towards economic prosperity in the developing countries. The establishment of a new international economic order, however, would help to guarantee continuous growth in the world economy, provided that countries were accorded full and unconditional sovereignty over their natural resources, as well as the right to nationalize such resources and to assert their independence and sovereignty in their own territories.

7. Economic crises and confused international relations were preventing the implementation of solutions to the sufferings of both the young and the old. The worst exploitation of youth was to be seen in the conscription of young people for service in destructive wars designed to fulfil aggressive, colonialist and expansionist ambitions. As an example, the war launched by Iran against his country had forced the youth of Iraq into a battle to defend its sovereignty. The young people of Iran, meanwhile, were being used as cannon-fodder by the Khomeini régime, whose view it was that war was a religious obligation.

8. Among the many bodies dedicated to youth affairs in Iraq were the Ministry of Youth and the National Union of Students and Young People of Iraq. In addition to youth centres and sports and social clubs, every region or professional institution had a youth department, and other committees represented the interests of young people in matters relating to trade unions and the arts. President Saddam Hussein himself was aware of the enormous importance of youth for the future, and his country had celebrated the International Youth Year in the appropriate manner.

9. Iraq had taken bold steps to provide all possible services to the disabled and had established a number of national committees with a view to the implementation of programmes in that connection. It had also issued several laws and regulations promoting the rights of disabled persons at all levels during the first half of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Particular attention had been devoted in those laws to ensuring the rehabilitation and renewed employment of disabled persons. In conclusion, he noted that information had played a particularly effective role in making citizens aware of the projects and programmes which assured the provision of services to the disabled.

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10. Mrs. RATSISALOVANINA (Madagascar) said that youth represented one of the groups most seriously affected by the world economic crisis. More than ever, young people should be assisted in realizing their full potential, for they were increasingly seen as real agents for development, rather than merely passive recipients of it (A/41/621, para. 50). Communication and exchange must extend beyond International Youth Year, which should serve merely as a catalyst to raise the public consciousness concerning youth, who had long been excluded from the development process.

11. In Madagascar, every effort was made to integrate the younger population into the development programme. Even before International Youth Year had been declared, youth co-ordination committees had been functioning in Madagascar as permanent local structures. In September 1985, International Youth Year was celebrated in Antananarivo by a national fair. As part of its youth exchange programme, young members of the Vanguard of the Malagasy Revolution had participated in a seminar organized by the Romanian Government, and in a Pan African Adventist Youth Congress in Nairobi.

12. As a follow-up activity to International Youth Year, Madagascar had instituted a permanent Supreme Youth Council. It was appropriate that International Youth Year should be followed immediately by the International Year of Peace; it was essential to create the conditions necessary for the permanent and active participation of youth in the attainment of the objectives of development and peace.

13. Mr. SOUBERT (Democratic Kampuchea), referring to document A/41/631, said that young people were no longer the passive recipients of development, but rather its real agents, and as such, they had an active role to play within the international community. On the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, the Organization had reiterated its desire to maintain peace at the same time that it had declared International Youth Year. Youth could only contribute actively toward peace, stability and a better future if State leaders allowed all individuals to develop on a basis of equality. In South Africa and Namibia, where leaders insisted upon racial superiority, young people had little chance of creatively participating in activities.

14. In some countries or regions, the obstacles faced by youth were administrative, social or economic in nature. However, in others, such as Afghanistan and Cambodia, local conflicts had totally denied young people any role in the reconstruction of their countries. In Cambodia, the occupying Vietnamese authorities were attempting to destroy the national identity of the Khmer youth. The Vietnamese language and literature were being taught in place of Khmer culture in the schools, and in other instances, young Cambodians were being taken to Viet Nam and the Soviet Union to be educated. Young Khmers were also diverted from their economic and administrative activities by compulsory enlistment in the occupying army, and subjection to forced labour.

15. The normal development of Khmer youth was stunted by material and spiritual deprivation, by a discriminatory totalitarian régime, by a war of occupation and by colonial exploitation. Normalcy would only be restored once the occupying Vietnamese power withdrew.

16. Mr. BROWNE (Fiji) stressed the importance of follow-up to International Youth Year and the need to expand channels of communication between the United Nations and youth organizations. In developing countries such as Fiji, youth constituted one of the most valuable national resources, and Governments should make every effort to involve young people in all aspects of development. Among the priorities identified during International Youth Year, Fiji attached particular importance to expanding youth participation at all levels, increasing employment opportunities, accelerating technical and vocational training, and involving women more actively in development.

17. Fiji was committed to building a multiracial society and to involving its young people in cultural activities at an early age. It had established a separate department for youth development. Moreover, in the belief that youth issues were primarily a national responsibility, it had incorporated specific youth programmes in its current five-year development plan. The plan called for promotion of cultural, educational and recreational programmes for youth, the creation of employment opportunities and the provision of vocational training, with particular emphasis on young people who left school early.

18. Mr. BRAUN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation agreed that, in view of the current financial restraints, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should concentrate its limited resources on policy-oriented research, exchange and dissemination of information and advisory services.

19. His Government had repeatedly stated that the question of aging should be dealt with in a broad socio-economic context. The elderly must not be viewed as dependent human beings, but rather as active, contributing members of society, leading independent lives and sharing in the political and cultural activities of the community. To that end, his Government encouraged constructive co-operation among all age groups of the population.

20. With regard to the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, his delegation saw no need to modify the present arrangements. Delegations that proposed the establishment of new structures in the United Nations were ignoring the present financial situation of the Organization. His delegation would continue to oppose such actions. The Federal Republic of Germany hoped that the detailed proposals submitted by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Trust Fund on Aging would encourage Governments to contribute more generously to it. He believed, however, that more information was necessary in order to enhance the willingness of contributors. His Government also wished to know, from a legal point of view, how new funds could be established by the Secretary-General, as in the case of the new trust fund to promote the establishment of a United Nations programme on aging.

21. His Government welcomed the initiatives taken by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the disabled. It noted with appreciation the action taken to meet the concerns of disabled persons in programmes for developing countries, with special emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation. The Federal Republic of Germany funded many development projects on the basis of bilateral agreements in order to assist the disabled in third world countries. His Government also supported the idea of global publicity and

(Mr. Braun, Federal Republic of Germany)

fund-raising events to promote disability-related activities within the framework of the Decade of Disabled Persons. In addition, it regarded increased bilateral aid by Member States for the disabled in the third world as a good opportunity to help to solve the special problems of those countries.

22. Mr. VILLAGRA DELGADO (Argentina) said that the United Nations had done very valuable work in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, particularly with respect to developing countries. His delegation feared that the current financial crisis might have a negative effect on the substantive programmes being carried out in that regard. Rationalization measures should not imply the suppression or delay of substantive activities in such an important field. That would send a wrong signal to the world on the priorities of the United Nations.

23. All were aware that the increase in crime and the variety of its forms constituted one of the greatest problems facing today's societies. The treatment of offenders and the victims of crime were questions which also required ever-increasing attention in all countries. His delegation attached great importance to the continuation and increase, where possible, of the technical assistance activities carried out by the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. His country had benefited greatly from such assistance through an interregional advisory mission on crime prevention and criminal justice. At the regional level, Argentina also welcomed the United Nations assistance to the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

24. In view of the current financial crisis, his delegation believed that the General Assembly should endeavour to improve the functioning of the Unit on Aging of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and also to improve the administration of the United Nations Trust Fund on Aging rather than seek to create new institutions. A recent Latin America and the Caribbean conference on gerontology had adopted a resolution recommending the establishment of two subregional centres on aging for Latin America and the Caribbean. If such a proposal was viable, once the financial crisis had been overcome, Argentina was prepared to serve as the headquarters of one of those centres. If established, those centres should work under the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in order to avoid useless duplication and to maintain a focal point for activities related to the implementation of the Plan of Action. Finally, his delegation agreed that a biennial discussion of the item would permit the General Assembly to free resources being used in the frequent preparation of reports to finance concrete activities within the framework of the Programme of Action.

25. Mr. DARWISH (Egypt) said that his delegation had always stressed the importance of involving young people in social and economic development programmes with a view to finding practical solutions to the dangerous problems facing them. His delegation wished to repeat its suggestion that all constructive recommendations from different world conferences should be carefully examined and formulated into an international convention on the rights and duties of youth.

26. His delegation believed that crime was a multi-dimensional problem that influenced social, political and economic development. In that connection,

(Mr. Darwish, Egypt)

inter-agency co-operation was of the utmost importance and should be encouraged, strengthened and co-ordinated with a view to combating the new wave of terrorism and the destructive phenomenon of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking. The role played by the United Nations regional institutes in the field of crime prevention was indispensable in that regard.

27. Egypt had hosted the first African Conference on Crime Prevention Research and Studies in late 1985. The purpose of that Conference was to enhance bilateral, regional and interregional co-operation among African States with a view to achieving social and political stability in the continent. Finally, his delegation favoured the view that crime prevention and criminal justice should be considered in the context of economic development and social and cultural values.

28. Mr. BUZO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation attached great importance to international co-operation on problems of the aging and the disabled, but was opposed to creating new bodies or programmes, particularly out of the regular budget, when existing ones were already dealing with them. The main responsibility in those areas was still with national programmes and policies and the most important contribution the United Nations could make would be to promote the exchange of information and experience.

29. Paragraph 12 and the conclusions of the report in document A/41/631 provided a useful basis for discussing the problems of the aged, which could best be solved when treated as part of the general social and economic development of a country, and when the aged were enabled to continue to work and contribute to society to the extent their health permitted.

30. In his own country, the aged received pensions and allowances that were entirely State-funded, as well as free and comprehensive medical services, which enabled them to keep their jobs, from which they could not be dismissed because of age. The aged were even encouraged to continue working, and comprehensive measures were taken to provide them with suitable jobs. Similar policies and measures also applied to the disabled, and comprehensive measures were taken to protect the health of workers, reduce the incidence of occupational disease, prevent disablement and rehabilitate the disabled. Increased pension and other benefits, at no cost to the recipients, were provided for in the current five-year plan.

31. Mrs. MARCOULIS (Cyprus) said that the old and the young constituted two important and yet vulnerable groups that required special attention; hence the efforts of the international community to improve the life of those groups and their integration into the development of societies. Her own Government's policy was to strengthen the family unit and encourage families to keep old people at home where possible, and studies of the problems of the aged had resulted in suggestions that were in the process of being implemented. Research projects had focused on special needs and problems, such as the housing problems of the aged, the impact of the 1974 invasion and military occupation, and the forcible displacement of one third of the country's population. Those studies and projects had led to better understanding of the needs of the aged and further planning of appropriate services in such areas as health, housing, social welfare, recreation and community participation.

(Mrs. Marcoulis, Cyprus)

32. Turning to the item on youth, she said that the international community had long recognized the need to inculcate in youth the highest humanitarian ideals and to encourage its dedication to progress, prosperity and development. Her own Government, with a view to formulating a long-term policy for youth, had solicited and received recommendations from a committee set up for that purpose, and was establishing Government-assisted and subsidized bodies to deal with youth matters and to promote the dissemination of information on youth issues by the mass media, as part of a national youth policy.

33. One of the main problems confronting youth in her country was unemployment, and appropriate measures were being taken to deal with it, but even more serious for youth had been the traumatic experience of invasion, military occupation and the forced division of the people and the country, thereby denying them the opportunity to engage in a common struggle for peace and reunification.

34. Mr. SERGIWA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the International Year for the Disabled in 1981, which had been declared as a result of an initiative on the part of his country, had been one of the most successful events organized by the United Nations.

35. A large number of people in his country had incurred disabilities as a result of injuries sustained from explosive devices and minefields remaining in that country's territory since the time of colonial wars. It called upon the international community to recognize that dangerous situation and to oblige those States which were responsible both to pay compensation for the damage and to provide the maps and information required to eliminate such devices.

36. His country had established a national committee for the care of disabled persons, among the principal activities of which had been the promulgation of a law according a number of specific rights to the disabled. Conferences, seminars and sports festivals had also been arranged, and a number of sophisticated centres for the rehabilitation of disabled persons had been established. His delegation stressed the importance of technical co-operation, particularly between the industrialized and the developing countries, in providing assistance to the disabled and urged the international community and the United Nations to continue to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. He hoped that United Nations bodies would follow up the activities of Member States, particularly those of the developing countries, and provide them with the facilities necessary to implement the Programme.

37. The celebration of the International Youth Year in 1985 had provided evidence of the concern of Member States for youth affairs. While his country did not suffer from the problem of youth unemployment, it was well aware of the difficulties felt in that connection by young people in many other countries. Adequate and appropriate solutions must be sought to that problem, since it was on the foundation of youth that the social, economic and political future of any country depended. Plans to solve the problem of youth unemployment should not be confined simply to the creation of jobs but also to the provision of opportunities for young people to fulfil their aspirations in a manner compatible with their own wishes. Accordingly, his country had revised its own teaching programmes and

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(Mr. Sergiwa, Libyan Arab Jawahiriya)

replaced them with a new system which took into account the intellectual and physical capacities of each student and prepared him for employment in a field appropriate to his chosen skill after completion of his studies. His country had also completed a number of sports grounds, tourist complexes, student camps and youth clubs with the aim of facilitating recreation activities for young people.

38. The right to live in dignity and peace was among the most important aspirations of youth, and it was therefore important that the United Nations and other international organizations should devote particular attention to those young people living under the shadow of colonial and racist régimes, including the system of apartheid, who were forced to engage in a struggle for the legitimate rights which had been usurped from them. Congratulations should also be extended to those young people in the United States and Western Europe who continued to demonstrate against the arms race and the dangers of nuclear war.

39. His country supported the International Plan of Action on Aging in view of the strong family ties encouraged by that country's Arab heritage and Islamic religion. Its social security system devoted particular attention to the aged, and a number of institutions had been established for the welfare of those elderly persons who did not have families to care for them. His country was particularly mindful of the provision in the Plan of Action that opportunities should be provided to older persons to contribute to national development.

40. Mr. Hamer (Netherlands) took the Chair.

41. Mrs. KALININA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that caring for the aged was not only a moral, but also a social and economic duty. The aged, thanks to their experience and knowledge, were still valuable members of society and many of them wished to continue working for it, not only for material reasons but also because of an understandable need to feel like useful members of society. Hence, those who could should be allowed to work, but all had a right to proper food, housing and social and health protection.

42. Even economically, neglect of social development had undesirable consequences and her delegation was therefore concerned at the reduction of social programmes in many States, which might be comprehensible for the developing ones suffering from the world economic crisis, but not for the developed ones, which had the means to combat hunger, poverty, illness and unemployment.

43. In her own country, the quest for social justice had sometimes been undermined by insufficient attention to the social aspect of production and a new and dynamic social policy had been introduced to remedy the mistakes. That policy stressed substantial improvement in the material welfare of the aged through such measures as higher minimum pensions and expansion of opportunities to participate in the country's economic, social and political life.

44. Her country supported the International Plan of Action on Aging, the successful implementation of which depended primarily on national efforts and on the effective use of existing machinery and programmes. In the light of the current financial crisis, new programmes or funds would be inadvisable. The

(Mrs. Kalinina, USSR)

additional measures to implement the International Plan of Action referred to in the report in document A/41/631 deserved support.

45. The Soviet Union also supported United Nations activities to help disabled persons and felt that rehabilitation and efforts to prevent disablement should be an integral part of any social development programme. In her own country, the current five-year plan gave much emphasis on restoring the capacity for work of the disabled and finding them suitable places of employment.

46. Mr. BASALEH (Democratic Yemen) said that the self-evident fact that youth constituted a massively important resource for the future had been propounded by the United Nations since its inception. The international community had gradually become convinced of the need to exert greater efforts to encourage the participation of young people in national development and international co-operation. His delegation was pleased to note that considerable progress had been achieved as a result of the International Youth Year in drawing the attention of the Governments and peoples of the world to the problems of youth and creating a greater understanding of their needs and aspirations.

47. The observation in paragraph 50 of the report (A/41/621) that young people were increasingly seen as real agents for development, rather than merely passive recipients of it, was clearly relevant to young countries such as his. The Constitution of Democratic Yemen obliged the State to concern itself with the welfare and activities of young people and to devote appropriate attention to their organizations and clubs, with a view to ensuring the conscious and active participation of youth in the building of a new society. The Fatah Yemeni Socialist Youth Union organized the efforts and creative energies of young people, which were directed into such activities as voluntary work for industrial and agricultural projects and participation in the national campaign against illiteracy.

48. On the regional level, Democratic Yemen had recently hosted the session of the Central Council of the Arab Youth Union, which had been attended by representatives of 17 youth organizations from 15 Arab countries, in addition to representatives of regional and international organizations. The Council had concluded its session by reiterating the determination of Arab youth to continue its struggle for freedom, progress, unity, peace and disarmament against the forces of imperialism, zionism, neo-colonialism, racial discrimination and fascism. In conclusion, his delegation stated its support for the two lines of action the pursuit of which was proposed in paragraph 59 of document A/41/621.

49. Mrs. SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic) said that in his country, the full integration of disabled persons in the normal processes of life had been ensured by the promulgation of appropriate laws and regulations and by practice. The experience of the German Democratic Republic showed that a system that co-ordinated the needs of health care, education and employment, and which was no financial burden on families, could be achieved only under social conditions where there was harmony between the interests of society and those of the individual.

(Mrs. Saelzler, German  
Democratic Republic)

50. The German Democratic Republic attempted to ensure that disabled children grew up as far as possible in close contact with healthy children. There were special institutions for disabled children who needed special care. In addition, mothers with disabled children worked shorter hours, without reduction in remuneration, in order to help parents to reconcile care for a disabled child with the demands of a job. That measure also served to guarantee equal rights for women.

51. The implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons might require initial assistance to some Member States to enable them to develop their potential to the point where they could rely on their own means. Experience had shown that the solution of social problems required a high financial input and the most realistic way of making those means available was by radically reducing the costs of armaments, in other words, by making the world a planet of peace.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.