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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIRAR (Sudan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 88. NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (continued) (A/42/56-E/1987/7, A/42/57-E/1987/8; A/42/3; A/C.3/42/L.3; A/42/411)

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AGENDA ITEM 141: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES (continued) (A/C.3/42/5)

1. Mr. MAHER-ABBAS (Egypt) said that his delegation appreciated the objectivity of the Secretary-General's reports on the agenda items under discussion. He endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in the report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/42/595), because of the importance of encouraging young people to participate in public service on completion of their studies, take part in literacy campaigns, become involved in family care, etc. Governments must provide housing, education, training, agricultural equipment and credit, juvenile care centres and the like to promote the welfare of young people. The difficult task of encouraging youth involvement also required greater international co-operation in promoting youth activities. He hoped that the General Assembly would adopt by consensus the draft resolution that Egypt and the Netherlands had submitted on the subject.

2. He welcomed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report on the question of aging (A/42/567) and stressed the close interrelationship that existed between the problems of aging and a country's development potential, particularly in the developed countries. Islam preached respect for the aged and his country tried to improve conditions for them through such policies as the provision of care centres, health services, cultural, sports and recreational activities, and social welfare programmes. His delegation supported the International Plan of Action on Aging and the establishment in Malta of an institute on aging (A/42/567, para.24).

3. He welcomed the report on the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/42/551) because of the need to heighten awareness of the problems faced by the disabled and alleviate their suffering through rehabilitation, vocational training, cultural activities and the like in order to give them an active role in development. He also advocated international co-operation in that area.

(Mr. Maher-Abbas, Egypt)

4. In the matter of crime prevention and criminal justice (A/42/453), Egypt had instituted various programmes and measures to combat crime through criminal research, data systems, rehabilitation and vocational training. It supported fully international efforts in that area. The United Nations and its agencies should do more and play a greater role in combating crime and developing strategies for crime prevention.
5. Mr. WOTAVA (Austria) said that social policy and economic development were interrelated and that it was dangerous to concentrate on the latter at the expense of the former. He welcomed efforts to strengthen international co-operation in promoting social welfare and implementing norms in that area. The Secretary-General had pointed to the need to arrive at a deeper understanding of the factors that had to be considered in framing social policy and to achieve the social consensus required to make the required changes. His delegation shared the Secretary-General's view that regional and interregional consultations were required to solve the complex social problems confronting an increasingly interdependent world. The United Nations should co-ordinate developmental social welfare activities and establish close links between its regional commissions, programmes and relevant units. He therefore welcomed the concentration of all major United Nations activities in that area in the United Nations Office at Vienna. That Office must be given the resources and authority it required to achieve its goals.
6. Social policies must take into account the changing situation of the family, the roles of men and women and demographic trends. Such trends, which were characterized by a rapidly aging population in many developed countries and an increasingly young population in developing countries, often coincided with economic crises which increased the danger that those who were not yet, or no longer, active wage earners, namely young people and the aged, would be marginalized. In that connection, he drew attention to paragraph 28 of document A/42/567 and urged all States to help make the second review of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging a success. It was also important that the proposed International Conference on Aging be carefully prepared by convening regional meetings well in advance. Countries interested in the question of aging should also find an acceptable solution to the problems arising from the decline in pledges and contributions to the Trust Fund on Aging.
7. His country had launched an initiative to promote youth employment within the United Nations and welcomed the widespread support that its initiative had received in the form of some hundred projects from participants in 80 countries that had been submitted to the HOPE '87 competition, a joint venture of Austria and the United Nations. In the context of HOPE '87, his delegation would be submitting a resolution in response to resolution 40/16 and was confident that it would receive the same support as the project itself. Lastly, it supported the inclusion of the United Nations Youth Fund in the programme of the Pledging Conference.
8. Turning to the Decade of Disabled Persons, significant progress had been made in heightening awareness of the problems faced by the disabled but further action

(Mr. Wotava, Austria)

was needed and existing activities should be intensified and followed up. Austria would be actively involved in highlighting United Nations activities under the Decade at the winter Olympic Games for Disabled Persons to be held in Austria in 1989.

9. Lastly, his country supported fully the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council concerning the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice.

10. Mr. SINKINSON (United Kingdom) said that although the framework for action offered by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons remained valid and much had been achieved in enhancing understanding of the needs of the disabled and engendering a greater commitment to improve their situation, much remained to be done. Although it was for individual States to determine, in the light of their own circumstance, detailed arrangements for assisting the disabled, exchanges of information, research and experience could play a vital role in enhancing their ability to implement the Programme of Action. The United Nations was ideally suited to act as a focal point for such exchanges, but its capacity in that respect had yet to be fully exploited. More could be done within the United Nations system to ensure that all bodies and agencies received and took account of the valuable information already available.

11. In the United Kingdom, there was an extensive network of specialist bodies and vigorous non-governmental organizations of and for disabled persons which provided an invaluable source of advice and expertise on ways in which the full participation and integration of disabled persons in the community could be best promoted. Those organizations played an essential part in pursuing the goals of the World Programme of Action within the United Kingdom. His Government recognized the need to enhance awareness of the needs of the disabled and had also substantially increased in real terms its expenditure on benefits for them. At the international level, it had committed development aid funds to a number of projects designed to help disabled persons overseas; in 1986-1987, \$US 9 million had been allocated in support of over 700 projects aimed at the most disadvantaged communities, including the aged and the disabled, and focusing on prevention and rehabilitation.

12. The Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had shown clearly the need to revitalize the second half of the Decade so as to stimulate global implementation of the Programme. Areas of high priority and potential efficacy must be assessed in order to avoid placing an overwhelming workload on the system. Some proposals might require resources which were simply not available, and others would result in duplication of effort. All the proposals must be considered in greater detail before appropriate follow-up action could be recommended.

13. The implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging remained problematic; many of the requisite structures and agencies already existed but were not yet fully operational. Then too, the exchanges of technical information,

(Mr. Sinkinson, United Kingdom)

professional expertise and research were vital, not only through the United Nations but also through non-governmental organizations, whose role remained largely unrecognized. The United Kingdom participated actively in the promotion of research and training in the field of aging at the international and regional levels.

14. It was gratifying that the momentum of the International Youth Year was being sustained through a broad range of activities and improved dissemination of information, leading to a greater understanding of youth needs and concerns and enhanced awareness of the complementarity of the work of different bodies. Non-governmental organizations were doing vital work in that area.

15. His delegation felt that the drafting of new international instruments to protect vulnerable groups was of questionable potential value. There was a risk of undermining existing major international human rights instruments, diverting attention and resources from more immediate practical steps to help the groups to be protected, and also stigmatizing or marginalizing the disadvantaged. His delegation therefore strongly supported measures to make use of and strengthen existing mechanisms, such as the bodies established to monitor implementation of the major human rights instruments, to ensure that the vulnerable could enjoy fully their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

16. In the Economic and Social Council, his delegation had endorsed the recommendations of the Secretary-General's final report on the review of the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice (E/1987/437). Some of those recommendations needed further detailed consideration by experts. Suitable documentation must be prepared well before the meeting of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control. His delegation was concerned at the disproportionate depletion of the human and financial resources of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which had prevented the branch from implementing its mandate and would make it difficult for it to prepare adequately for the next congress in 1990. His Government hoped that the Secretary-General would ensure that adequate resources were made available to the Branch.

17. Miss AL-HAMMAMI (Yemen) said that when Yemen had entered the modern world in September 1962, after enduring a long period under an obsolete régime, it had had none of the facilities of modern civilization. The people of Yemen, in particular young people, were participating extensively in the national development process and co-operative bodies had been established at the village level to ensure such participation.

18. Her delegation attached great importance to the recommendations and conclusions of the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. It was aware of the plight of disabled persons and had established prevention and treatment centres to help the disabled become integrated in society on an equal footing with other citizens.

(Miss Al-Hammami, Yemen)

19. On the question of aging, Yemen was convinced of the need for mutual solidarity among members of the community; the principles of Islam called for fraternity and assistance within society and elderly persons normally lived within the family until they died.
20. At a time when the world was facing intractable economic problems resulting from the deterioration and imbalance of economic relations, particular attention must be paid to young people, especially in developing countries, to ensure that they were involved in development and their potential was used to the full. Action must be taken to create a better future for them. Extensive activities to benefit youth were being carried out in every sphere in Yemen to ensure their integration into economic and social life.
21. Mr. AHNE (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that his delegation agreed that it was vitally important to strengthen the role of the United Nations as an international forum for highlighting the main issues and problems with regard to the aging, and that there must be greater participation by committees on aging at the regional, national and local levels, and by non-governmental organizations. Programmes for the elderly should focus on preserving their human dignity, independent social functioning, and links to the family or community. For over 500 years, Korean society had preserved the tradition of respect and care for older family members and the elderly had played an active role in community affairs. With Korea's recent industrialization and urbanization, however, nuclear families had begun to replace large, extended families; the elderly were becoming increasingly isolated and the sense of duty to support elderly parents had begun to weaken. The question of aging had thus emerged as a new social issue in Korean society, particularly since the number of the aged had increased drastically. The International Plan of Action on Aging provided a basis for the formulation of national policies and programmes. His Government had established an institutional structure made up of various schemes for implementing welfare policies for the aged while maintaining the Korean tradition of honouring the elderly in family and social life. It was also co-operating in efforts at the regional level; in 1986, it had participated in a study conducted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on emerging issues of an aging population.
22. The International Year of Disabled Persons had played a catalytic role in Korea, which was striving to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Concerted efforts would be required to reinvigorate those activities during the second half of the Decade and beyond. His delegation greatly appreciated the results of the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which had identified the obstacles to progress.
23. The Seoul Olympic Games for Disabled Persons would be held from 15 October to 24 October 1988, immediately following the 24th Olympic games in Seoul. More than 4,000 athletes from more than 50 nations were expected to take part and would compete in 17 areas. It was hoped that the Seoul Olympics would provide an opportunity for co-operation and co-ordination of activities for disabled persons at the national, regional and international levels.

24. Mr. BUSACCA (Italy) said that, as crime gained a more international character, the fundamental role played by the United Nations with respect to crime prevention and criminal justice acquired even greater importance. The continuing relevance of United Nations programmes in that field was emphasized in Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/53 entitled "Review of the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice", which recommended, *inter alia*, that the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs be developed into a specialized body and facilitating agency, and that diversified working strategies be devised. However, financial constraints had led to a far from satisfactory situation with regard to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, which had recently suffered a considerable reduction of its capacities due to drastic staff cuts. If the present scarcity of available resources continued, it might seriously jeopardize not only the progress achieved to date, but also future activities.

25. With respect to preparations for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, several steps were necessary to maximize the results of that gathering. Discussions at preparatory meetings should focus in depth on a limited number of subjects. Timely circulation of documentation was of fundamental importance, as was the necessary allocation of resources. The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control had a special role to play in preparations for the Congress; consequently, at least two sessions of that Committee should continue to take place in the interval between each Congress, one session to occur at the time of the finalization of working papers and other arrangements.

26. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the decisions of the Economic and Social Council, thereby giving them the necessary authority to guide future activities.

27. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta) said that his delegation attached great importance to the various issues before the United Nations in the social sector, in particular, the question of aging. The Secretary-General's report on that question was comprehensive and provided a good basis for the deliberations and future orientation of the Third Committee. His delegation also appreciated the significant contribution made by Ms. Margaret Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, in implementing the Secretary-General's decision to make that Office a nucleus for social policy and social development activities.

28. It was universally recognized that the issue of aging was a concern common to all countries and that, unless concerted action was taken immediately, it might present insurmountable difficulties in the future. It was encouraging that, in the past year, the question of aging had received considerable attention at both the national and international levels. For instance, the Economic and Social Council had adopted unanimously two resolutions promoting the implementation of the 1982 International Plan of Action on Aging. It was important that the momentum that had been achieved should be maintained.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

29. As the Secretary-General reported in document A/42/567, the status of the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging was far from satisfactory and its operations were in danger of termination. It was essential to ensure the viability of the Trust Fund through substantial financial contributions from all those in a position to help.

30. Malta had always been in the forefront in pressing for serious attention to be given to the problem of the elderly. It was on that country's initiative that the question of aging had been included in the agenda of the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session in 1969. While fully conscious of the limitations constraining a small developing country, his country intended to contribute its efforts on behalf of the cause of the aging. As it was in the interest of all concerned to implement the goals of the Plan of Action, concrete steps must be taken by all Governments and organizations committed to that cause.

31. In response to the world-wide need for training and research in the field of aging, his Government had, in 1985, offered to host an International Institute on Aging, the establishment of which had been finalized in October 1987. In August 1987, Malta had made a \$5,000 contribution to the Trust Fund for Aging, earmarked to help participants from developing countries undertake training courses at the International Institute, and had also pledged an annual contribution in support of its activities. Furthermore, an historic building in his country had already been allocated as the site for the Institute, as well as the necessary technical, logistical and administrative support staff.

32. His delegation welcomed and supported the excellent proposals and initiatives set out in the Secretary-General's report, and wished, in particular, to emphasize the following: generous financial contributions were urgently needed to strengthen the Trust Fund on Aging; Governments should institute appropriate policies and programmes at the national level in the field of aging; the crucial role played by non-governmental organizations must be acknowledged; United Nations specialized agencies, regional commissions and other relevant funding organizations must continue to support activities related to the question of aging; and the United Nations system must continue its review and appraisal of all activities relating to the implementation of the International Plan of Action.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.