



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait)

later: Mr. GALAL (Egypt)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: QUESTION OF AGING (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 90: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING  
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 107: FAMILIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 144: RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES TO BAN IN THEIR TERRITORY, AND TO  
REFRAIN FROM INSTIGATING OR SUPPORTING IN THE TERRITORY OF OTHER STATES,  
CHAUVINISTIC, RACIST AND OTHER MANIFESTATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE DISCORD BETWEEN  
PEOPLES AND INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE MASS MEDIA IN COMBATING SUCH  
MANIFESTATIONS AND IN EDUCATING PEOPLES AND YOUTH IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACEFUL  
CO-OPERATION AND INTERNATIONAL ENTENTE; AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
DECLARATION ON THE PROMOTION AMONG YOUTH OF THE IDEALS OF PEACE, MUTUAL RESPECT AND  
UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLES (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/43/583)

AGENDA ITEM 90: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/43/601; A/C.3/43/L.13)

AGENDA ITEM 92: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued) (A/43/3, A/43/634)

AGENDA ITEM 93: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/43/3, A/43/354 and Corr.1, A/43/370, A/43/572)

AGENDA ITEM 107: FAMILIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (continued) (A/43/570)

AGENDA ITEM 144: RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES TO BAN IN THEIR TERRITORY, AND TO REFRAIN FROM INSTIGATING OR SUPPORTING IN THE TERRITORY OF OTHER STATES, CHAUVINISTIC, RACIST AND OTHER MANIFESTATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE DISCORD BETWEEN PEOPLES AND INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE MASS MEDIA IN COMBATING SUCH MANIFESTATIONS AND IN EDUCATING PEOPLES AND YOUTH IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACEFUL CO-OPERATION AND INTERNATIONAL ENTENTE; AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE PROMOTION AMONG YOUTH OF THE IDEALS OF PEACE, MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLES (continued)

1. Ms. BYRNE (United States of America), speaking on the cluster of items on social problems, said that the fundamental principle of her country's social welfare system was the partnership between citizens and Government, since the Government could not provide all social services. The United States had consistently supported United Nations efforts on behalf of the aging and, like the Third Committee, which had merged conflicting resolutions into a single appeal calling for attention to the problems of aging, it hoped to see the merging of all trust funds for the elderly. It also hoped that institutes on aging would be financed by voluntary contributions and not from United Nations resources.

2. Young people were an extremely valuable national resource, and they must be prepared to achieve self-sufficiency and fulfil their potential as contributing members of society. The various resolutions relating to youth should be consolidated into one omnibus resolution which would galvanize the work of the Committee.

3. The United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had focused global attention on issues concerning that group. The Secretary-General's appointment of a special representative for the promotion of the Decade was an indication that more resources would be devoted to making public opinion throughout the world more aware of the problems of the disabled. Her country supported the idea of holding a world conference in 1992 to evaluate the activities of the Decade and of proclaiming a second Decade, from 1993 to 2002, to follow up the results achieved during the

(Ms. Byrne, United States)

first 10 years. The United States urged the Secretariat to prepare, within the existing financial resources, detailed plans for a conference to mark the end of the Decade and for a second decade. The plans would be submitted for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in 1990.

4. The United States supported resolution 42/59 on crime prevention, but was concerned that it did not go nearly far enough in underlining the importance of the work of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, which should be strengthened. It was also in favour of holding the 1990 conference in Vienna, which was the most appropriate venue.

5. The United States attached great importance to the role of the family, which the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had been studying since 1963 in connection with development. However, it was premature to consider a proposal for an international year of the family when so much basic work remained to be done.

6. Her delegation shared the widely held view that item 144 should be dropped, because it would detract from the seriousness of the Committee's work.

7. Ms. BROŠNAKOVA (Czechoslovakia), speaking on items 90 and 107, recalled certain fundamental provisions of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the twentieth anniversary of which would be celebrated in 1989. The protection of youth, strengthening of the family and respect for human rights could be ensured only if Governments initiated the necessary social reforms under their general development plans.

8. It was comforting to note that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was establishing as a priority objective the co-ordination of social policies at the national, regional and international levels. Her delegation shared the view expressed by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna regarding the interdependence of economic and social development and the need for a more thoroughgoing social policy which should form an integral part of the development strategy. In his report (A/43/601), the Secretary-General drew attention to the obstacles hindering implementation of the guiding principles for continued planning and appropriate follow-up activities in the field of youth. Many of those obstacles also hampered development, particularly in countries in which economic difficulties were such that only constructive action by the international community could have positive effects. It was only through international co-ordination and incentives that Governments could hope to see their endeavours to resolve the problems of young people succeed. It was regrettable that interdependence of such an important nature had not been stressed in document A/43/601, which otherwise gave comprehensive and detailed information on what had been done on behalf of young people at both the national and international levels and on future prospects.

9. Since 1981, prompted by the proclamation of the International Year of Youth, Czechoslovakia had been submitting a draft resolution each year on the rights of

(Ms. Brosnakova, Czechoslovakia)

young people, stressing the right to education and work. Like other delegations, her delegation considered that the specialized agencies of the United Nations, and in particular the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO, should take more energetic steps to promote respect for those rights. The information given by ILO on the number of the young unemployed in the developed and developing countries was very useful in that respect. In 1988, Czechoslovakia had not insisted that its views should be reflected in the text of the draft resolution it would be submitting together with Austria, Egypt and the Netherlands. The draft resolution should help to rationalize the work of the Third Committee and to show that youth-related problems could be resolved only through an integrated approach. It was important for the text of the draft resolution to be acceptable to all States, whatever their social system, so that they could all participate in its implementation. The prestige and role of the United Nations would thereby be enhanced.

10. The Czechoslovak delegation had listened with great interest to the statement by the representative of Morocco, who had highlighted the need to deal collectively with the problems of youth. His delegation had emphasized time and again that young people in developed countries should be better informed about the disastrous living conditions of their peers in developing countries and youth organizations and the media could be instrumental in that effort. It was often privileged youth, cut off from the realities of the contemporary world, that succumbed to drug addiction, alcoholism and crime. Young people could not wait passively for objective and balanced information about what was happening in the world; it was up to them to demand to know and to become a force for peace, freedom and social progress.

11. The ideas disseminated during the International Youth Year were still of topical interest in his country where the specific problems of youth were accorded special attention in the context of the general restructuring of society.

12. Many States had expressed their support for the proclamation of an International Year of the Family. Such an event would offer a rare opportunity for the exchange of information on family living conditions, and the role of families in different societies. Better information would support a more in-depth analysis of the problems of families leading to solutions.

13. Mr. MATELA (Poland) stressed the importance that his country attached to policies and programmes concerning youth; only the younger generation was capable of resolving the complex issues determining the evolution of development. The creative spirit of young people, their impatience and their dynamism should provide the inspiration for a global reform of national life. There were approximately 6 million young people in Poland between the ages of 15 and 25 and half the population was under 30 years of age. Poland's youth policy covered social, educational, economic and cultural aspects and was premised on a basic document: the Programme for the Improvement of Conditions for Youth's Life and Professional Start, elaborated in 1982. As a result of an integrated approach to its implementation, that document had generated new legislation and the establishment

(Mr. Matela, Poland)

of social services and employment, educational and vocational training programmes. It had been revised in June 1987 by his Government, which had defined a new set of "Principal tasks with regard to youth in the years 1987 to 1990" and had established a Committee for Youth Affairs and Physical Culture to implement the programme.

14. His country had taken into account the objectives and experiences of the International Youth Year and had regularly informed the Secretary-General and the competent bodies of the United Nations of its own situation in matters affecting youth. Youth organizations played an important role in familiarizing Polish youth with the United Nations. His country fully recognized the work of the United Nations Office at Vienna and, above all, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which had initiated and promoted international co-operation on youth matters and which his country would continue to support.

15. Speaking to agenda item 92, he said that the positive and negative aspects of the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons should be evaluated. The Decade suffered mainly from the absence of national co-ordination structures in many countries, poor national plans based on that major global document, lack of information, insufficient funds and a poor definition of priorities. Higher priority should therefore be accorded for the remainder of the Decade to the promotion of the World Programme of Action, with the international community redoubling its efforts to provide equal opportunities for the disabled.

16. With that objective in mind, the Polish Government, in spite of its economic difficulties, had not stinted in its efforts to help the disabled and had made considerable progress in a number of areas: access for disabled children and adolescents to public schools; real employment opportunities for the disabled; access to specialized health services and rehabilitation centres; accelerated construction of special housing adapted to the needs of the disabled; increase in disability pensions for disabled persons and improvement of the social welfare system under State administration. In addition, the Council for the Elderly and Disabled was providing the Government with analyses and suggestions regarding the major problems facing the two groups. His delegation supported many of the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/43/634) and was prepared to co-operate fully in the elaboration of an acceptable resolution on the subject.

17. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark), speaking on agenda item 92 as a representative of the Danish organizations of disabled persons, stressed the undeniable success of the International Year of Disabled Persons, which had called attention to that population group and had made the public aware of its problems. Nevertheless, progress was slow and the goals of full participation of the disabled in society and equalization of opportunities remained to be achieved.

18. In the quest for information, there was a tendency to cite figures. Thus the world population of disabled persons was reported to number 500 million; however, it would be preferable to say that disabled persons represented 7 to 10 per cent of the population, in order to make it clear that they constituted a minority group.

(Mr. Kallehaug, Denmark)

In a democracy, the minority received what was granted to it by the majority, neither more nor less. It was only when the majority and its leaders became aware of the practical obstacles faced by disabled persons in their everyday environment (for example, lack of auditory information for the blind) that a collective guilty conscience gave rise to hope for the minority. The majority then took action, motivated by charity, which was in fact the first step towards equality for the minority group. The process had begun at the international level, but there was still a long way to go before full participation and equality for the disabled had been attained.

19. For some years, Danish donor-policy towards the developing countries had accorded the highest priority to programmes favouring the poorest populations. It was obvious that the disabled were the most underprivileged of that category.

20. Denmark strongly supported the recommendations put forward in the report of the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at the Mid-Point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (CSDHA/DDP/GME/7). He noted the importance of the four headings in that report: prevention, rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and the role of disabled persons and their organizations, with emphasis on the last, since active participation of organizations of disabled people was a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the World Programme of Action. Politicians were the spokesmen of the voters; if the voters were not aware of the problem, then it simply did not exist for the elected officials. Therefore, his country urged all Member States and the United Nations itself to make a special effort to support organizations of disabled persons to ensure their active participation in the rest of the Decade.

21. Since resources were always limited and funding was always inadequate, it was necessary to define the priorities for the implementation of the World Programme of Action. His delegation strongly recommended making budgetary and extrabudgetary funds available for the Disabled Persons Unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. He supported the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General to revitalize the remainder of the Decade, but that task could not be accomplished without adequate resources. To underline the importance of the role of organizations of disabled persons, his country recommended that the Disabled Persons Unit in Vienna, in close co-operation with the non-governmental organization Disabled Peoples' International, should organize a leadership training seminar for disabled persons from developing countries to assist them in creating their own organizations. That seminar would serve as a model for similar events in different regions of the developing world, sponsored by UNDP and the industrial countries.

22. It was encouraging to note that, for the first time, the experts who met in Stockholm in 1987 were themselves disabled persons. In view of the new role being defined for disabled persons and for their organizations in the implementation of the World Programme of Action, concerted efforts were required at all levels to ensure the participation of the disabled in the decisions that affected them.

23. Mr. OSNATCH (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on item 93, said that crime prevention could no longer be viewed solely as a national issue. It was the task of the United Nations to orchestrate the fight being waged by all States against organized crime, which no longer respected borders. The United States representative had described the frightening devastation wrought by drug addiction and illegal trafficking in drugs. To stamp them out, enforcement agencies should strengthen collaboration at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

24. In his country, increasing emphasis was being placed on prevention. With the restructuring, and the resulting democratization, the Code of Criminal Procedure had been substantially re-worked in recent years with a view to providing lighter sentences. The causes of crimes must be attacked and their effects mitigated if crime was ultimately to be eradicated.

25. Such action must be taken particularly with regard to young people. To prevent juvenile delinquency, it was necessary to guarantee the right to education and the right to work, and to give young people the opportunity to participate in all spheres of social life. Legislation favoured an educational and preventive approach. Young convicts could benefit from secondary education or vocational training. Upon leaving prison, they were reintegrated in society with a view to preventing them from returning to crime. Suspended sentences and conditional releases were becoming routine. In the view of his delegation, the success of efforts to control crime depended less on the severity of sentences or increasingly more repressive measures than on the systematic condemnation of crime and on the inevitability that the guilty would be punished.

26. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna would play an important co-ordinating role with respect to international and regional plans; however, it should pay more attention to disseminating information on issues relating to crime control.

27. The various United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had provided opportunities to exchange experience and information, and to support the efforts of the international community in the field. The preparatory work for the Eighth Congress had already generated many interesting ideas and it was to be hoped that the Congress would make further progress towards the complete elimination of crime.

28. Mrs. ALTURAIHI (Iraq), speaking on the agenda items relating to social problems, said that a solution to those problems required a global and interdisciplinary approach, as well as the co-ordination and planning of efforts at the national, regional and international levels. In that connection, Iraq endorsed the proposal by UNDP regarding the co-ordination of various programmes. It stressed the importance of the regional Commissions, which could help substantially to ease the problems caused, in particular, by poverty, famine, drought and floods in many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

(Mrs. Alturaihi, Iraq)

29. Her delegation also expressed its concern about the scourges of unemployment and drugs, which could be attributed in large measure to migration from the rural to urban areas.

30. She turned next to agenda item 107, which was the foundation of all the other items being considered, since the family had an impact on the problems of youth, the elderly and the disabled. Indeed, the family was mankind's basic unit, where, traditionally and universally, people first learned about life. However, developments in modern times had weakened its role, and the disintegration of the family must be rectified by social security and social welfare measures. To that end, her country had adopted a complete and integrated social welfare law which took into account the needs of the family, disabled persons and other vulnerable groups.

31. Difficulties in adapting to technological progress, illustrated by the problems of the ozone layer, the destruction of nuclear wastes, and the disappearance of many medicinal plants and animal species, had created anxiety among young people. Her delegation favoured the proclamation of a Year of the Family and proposed that it should be divided into quarters, each dealing respectively with the problems of youth, the elderly, disabled persons in relation to the family and to the interrelationships between those three population groups. It stressed the role that UNESCO could play in promoting youth exchanges between developing and industrialized countries. The generation gap was a natural phenomenon, but young people could be helpful, for example, in case of natural disasters. Summer courses, technical training courses and continuing education activities should be organized for young people, for example, through regional seminars.

32. Although the elderly posed very serious problems, they should be regarded as a national resource, as was the case in Japan. They must not be isolated in special old-age institutions, and their experience and advice should be put to use so that they could contribute to solving their own problems.

33. Mr. SOMOGYI (Hungary) said that despite all the progress made, there was still a long way to go until the objectives proclaimed almost two decades earlier in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development were fully implemented. The contribution made by United Nations bodies to the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international legal instruments was to be commended.

34. Hungary had embarked on the road of substantial reforms which, while they gave priority to cost effectiveness, in no way detracted from its concern with social issues. Indeed, the problems of various social groups, particularly the most disadvantaged, could best be addressed in the framework of global social reform.

35. With regard to agenda item 89, he noted that the acceleration of population aging was indeed a cause for concern. His country fully supported the International Plan of Action on Aging and would contribute to its implementation.



(Mr. Somogyi, Hungary)

It welcomed the establishment in Malta of the International Institute on Aging and all other constructive initiatives of that kind.

36. Commenting on agenda item 92, he said that his delegation followed with great interest the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Recognizing that, in addition to financial assistance, disabled persons required the continuous attention of society as a whole, his Government co-operated closely with non-governmental organizations and associations to improve the living conditions of the disabled. It did its best to prevent disability and promote rehabilitation, and sought to project an image of disabled persons as true partners in the development of society, rather than passive recipients of social benefits.

37. With respect to policies and programmes involving youth, in times of rapid social and economic change, there was indeed a need for a continuous review of national and international policies with a view to encouraging those which genuinely reflected the needs and aspirations of youth. A parliamentary committee had recently been established in his country to co-ordinate the preparation of a new law on youth in consultation with the country's various youth organizations.

38. With respect to follow-up activities to the International Youth Year, his delegation attached paramount importance to unimpeded direct contacts among young people of various countries, which promoted better understanding among youth and strengthened confidence among States.

39. With regard to agenda item 107, his delegation had always believed that greater awareness of the role of the family in the development process was desirable. Policies that took more fully into account the concerns of families and effectively supported their well-being should be implemented.

40. His country had always attached the utmost importance to co-operation among States on crime prevention and criminal justice. It supported the full implementation of the Milan Plan of Action and looked forward to the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The fortieth anniversary of the programme of work of the United Nations on crime prevention and criminal justice afforded Member States the opportunity to reaffirm their commitments and enhance international co-operation in that sphere.

41. With regard to agenda item 144, it was not only manifestations of chauvinism and racism that must be prohibited in international relations but also all other forms of discrimination, all violations of bilateral or multilateral legal instruments and non-compliance with international norms, which were equally detrimental to normal inter-State relations, peace and security. The free flow of information and ideas was an essential condition for educating youth, and, in fact, the entire population, in respect for the dignity and equality of all people and in a spirit of openness and friendship towards other nations.

42. In its concern to show the importance it attached to respect for obligations assumed under international legal instruments and to international monitoring and

(Mr. Somogyi, Hungary)

control procedures, Hungary had recently agreed to recognize the competence of the Human Rights Committee referred to in article 41 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and had acceded to the Optional Protocol. No Government should prevent its citizens or the press from exercising the rights and freedoms enshrined in the International Covenants on human rights. Moreover, good-neighbourly relations between States could develop only on the basis of openness, confidence and mutual respect and not on the basis of restriction and prohibition.

43. Mrs. KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) said, with regard to item 90, that her Government's social policy was geared to the advancement of young people and to their intellectual, physical and moral development. Since they would some day be running the country, they were encouraged to participate in all social, political and economic activities undertaken at the national level. For example, within a quarter of a century, school attendance had increased spectacularly at the primary, secondary and university levels, without any decrease in the quality of education. An effort was made to adapt education, which today absorbed 40 per cent of the national budget, both to the local realities in the society and to the requirements of the modern world. That was why courses were given in civics and ethics as well as data processing, and efforts were being made to enhance the prestige of manual labour in order to help keep young people on the land or bring them back to it. As a result of that work, the policy implemented by the Government to ensure the country's food self-sufficiency through the promotion of food crops but primarily to stop the rural exodus of young people, who often became victims of unemployment, drug addiction, prostitution and delinquency in the cities, had scored a great success with Ivorian youth.

44. While it was important, as the Director-General of FAO had said, to prepare the future of young people, one must still not forget to ensure their current development. Her Government, aware that alienated youth was a factor of political instability, had the representatives of youth movements participate in important decisions on matters concerning them and encouraged them to organize peace-oriented associations, such as the Ghandi Club the Martin Luther King Club, or rural youth co-operatives, which worked to protect the environment, in accordance with the objectives of the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. As part of the International Youth Year, Côte d'Ivoire had also played host to young athletes from the French-speaking countries of Africa, Europe, America and the Indian Ocean, had organized an international French-speaking school and university theatre festival and, at the national level, had encouraged the participation of young people in preserving the country's cultural heritage.

45. Her country had studied with interest the Secretary-General's reports on the policies and programmes undertaken by the United Nations in the social field (A/43/601, A/43/583, A/43/570 and A/43/572), which contained proposals to ensure the social development of the developing countries. Unfortunately, many countries in Africa and America, hard hit by the world recession, lacked the means to implement them. Moreover, the measures advocated by the IMF at the beginning of the 1980s to reduce the balance-of-payments deficit of the debtor countries and

(Mrs. Kaba, Côte d'Ivoire)

promote their economic growth had, by entailing substantial reductions in social expenditures, further aggravated the situation of the population in general, and particularly that of such vulnerable groups as children, young people, the aged and the disabled. To learn more about the effects of those measures (spread of malnutrition and infectious diseases, deterioration of the quality of education and a drop in school enrolment, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Latin America), one had only to refer to the UNICEF publication Adjustment with a Human Face. Member States must therefore stress the social priorities of the developing countries in preparing the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, a matter to which the Economic and Social Council had in fact devoted its resolution 1988/76.

46. Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador), speaking on agenda item 107, welcomed the Secretariat's proposal to formulate an active, integrated and interdependent social policy in the economic, scientific, demographic and cultural fields with a view to promoting the welfare of the underprivileged sectors of the population and thereby preserve the social harmony and political stability of countries. That policy presupposed a positive development of international relations and the just and rapid solution of the economic problems of the developing countries, particularly the debt problem, which prejudiced the population's right to development and threatened the foundations of democracy. It also presupposed an awareness of the general crisis of values experienced in all countries, whatever their level of development.

47. Ecuador was pleased that the question of the family in development was the subject of a separate agenda item, because the family played the role of intermediary between the individual and society and could therefore take an active part in national social policies and in the development process. It now played a decisive role in the prevention of drug abuse, alcoholism and delinquency and in promoting respect for the disabled and the aged. It was therefore all the more disturbing to note that the family was a victim of the world economic crisis and its attendant poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and reduction of social expenditures. Nevertheless, owing to increased interest in the family, studies had been undertaken on the right of women to participate equally with men in social and economic development, progressive urbanization and immigration, free union, increased divorce, violence in the family, child-neglect, single-parent families and adolescent pregnancy.

48. An important role had also been assigned to the family in the guiding principles for developmental social welfare policies and programmes in the near future adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 42/125. A meeting had recently been organized by UNESCO in Caracas (Venezuela) to consider the topics of family, development and family policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. That meeting had provided an opportunity for constructive exchanges of information and experience between the representatives of public and private organizations of the region on the strengthening of the family as an agent of development. It had adopted a final document containing a number of conclusions and recommendations concerning the definition of the family with a view to Government policy-making,

(Mr. Jativa, Ecuador)

the legal protection and promotion of the family and the role of the State and non-governmental organisations at the family level. Just as State support for the family, particularly among the underprivileged segments of society, was indispensable if the family was to play a constructive role in development, the active participation of the family was also indispensable to the State in order to orient development to satisfying the needs of the entire population. Participants in the Caracas meeting had informed the General Assembly that they supported the proposal to proclaim an international year of the family. His country also supported that proposal which would make it possible to produce more studies of the family at different levels, identify obstacles to the welfare of family and sensitise public opinion to the role the family played in development, while at the same time promoting international co-operation.

49. At the national level, his country in 1988 had established a National Child and Family Institute with the participation of the highest organs of Government. The Institute's task was to improve the quality of the services provided for children and families by various means: the establishment of organisations, training, dissemination of specialized material, legislation and policies geared to the needs of minors and the Ecuadorian family, through increased support and technical and financial co-operation at the national and international levels. A programme to promote a positive change of attitude towards family and social matters by getting the fathers of families to participate in the child-raising process had been organized with the participation of a regional body specialized in questions pertaining to children and the family. The Institute was among the bodies the new Ecuadorian Government wished to strengthen. The world economic crisis, which had affected the least privileged sectors of the population even more severely, called for priority social action on their behalf, action which the Government intended to pursue out of a concern for social justice and equality and respect for freedom.

50. Mrs. TAVARES ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) welcomed the results obtained during the year by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, despite the tight financial constraints which threatened to reduce its activities. The report of the Secretary-General on aging (A/43/583) gave a clear, concise and thorough analysis of the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging and pragmatic recommendations for the Third Committee, several of which deserved special attention. There was for example the very necessary establishment of an information exchange centre on aging within the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the appointment at the Vienna Centre of an adviser on aging policies and programmes. The Dominican Republic attached particular importance in that regard to the proposal to make aging a priority theme in the proposed medium-term plan for the period starting in 1982 and in the elaboration of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade (1991-2000) and the system-wide approach to the implementation of the Plan of Action on Aging. In addition, it supported the recommendation that the next inter-agency meeting should coincide with the second review and appraisal in March 1989 and with the thirty-first session of the Commission for Social Development.

(Mrs. Tavares Alvarez,  
Dominican Republic)

51. With regard to the second review and appraisal, her delegation agreed with the suggestions of the Secretary-General, particularly that concerning the possibility of holding, after the March 1989 review, an interregional consultation whose findings could serve to formulate a concerted programme of measures to the year 2000. During that review, in which non-governmental organizations and the private sector should be encouraged to participate, the Commission for Social Development could elaborate a world-wide round of activities to be undertaken on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Aging.

52. The report of the Secretary-General contained for the first time a comparative analysis, supported by figures and graphs, on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging during the period 1983-1986 and the period 1987-1988. That analysis showed an evolution, which the Dominican Republic regarded as positive, in the projects financed by the Fund, 90 per cent of which had related, in 1983-1986, to research, training and exchange of information, while in 1987-1988 they reflected the importance attached to exchanges of knowledge and experience among developing countries, in accordance with the Plan of Action in which technical co-operation had a special role. The report also drew attention to the deficit in the Fund, which was increasing and resulted from the growing number of requests for priority assistance to which the Fund was called on to respond. If that trend continued, there would be an urgent need for action by Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The report of the Secretary-General also indicated that the modest donations made by the Fund since its establishment had been used to mobilize four times as many additional resources, which proved that it could act as a catalyst in mobilizing financial resources for activities connected to aging.

53. The Dominican Republic, aware of the reduced financial and human resources available to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, could not, however, but deplore the staff cuts within the Aging Unit even while General Assembly resolutions called for its strengthening. Those reductions seriously called in question the capacity of the Unit to carry out its mandate. The Dominican Republic believed that it would be interesting to know what was the current staffing situation of the Unit in comparison to previous years, whether it had been more affected than the other services of the Centre by the financial crisis, whether it was true that the Unit might be merged with another branch in the Centre, which was absolutely contrary to the wishes of Member States and would have negative effects on the implementation of its programmes, and what was the current balance in the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. It recalled the request which it had made to the Secretary-General, and to which he had agreed, to approve the use of resources in the Trust Fund for the Promotion of a United Nations Programme for the Aging with a view to convening an ad hoc group of experts to explore the possibility of creating a world foundation on aging and the elaboration of a concerted programme of measures to the year 2000. That foundation, whose creation was envisaged along the same lines as other innovative approaches to the question of aging, could attract private funds, unquestionably strengthen the activities undertaken in that field and contribute to broadening

(Mrs. Tavares Alvarez,  
Dominican Republic)

existing co-operation between the United Nations and non-governmental organisations. It could also serve to strengthen the capacity of the Fund to mobilise resources for activities on aging, particularly with a view to launching the major fund-raising effort referred to in the report of the Secretary-General.

54. Mr. Galal (Egypt) took the Chair.

55. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta) said that his country had participated actively in the discussion of the question of aging since the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, during which Malta had requested the inclusion in the agenda of an item on the elderly and the aged, an item which had since been included every year. Malta had seriously contributed to the work of the World Assembly on Aging convened in 1982 and had presided over the work of the Committee of the Whole which had elaborated the International Plan of Action on Aging.

56. Malta had offered to host in its territory the International Institute on Aging, whose establishment had been approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1987/41. That Institute had been established as an autonomous body by the agreement signed on 9 October 1987 between the Prime Minister of Malta and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Since its inauguration, on 15 April 1988, the Institute had established contacts with a number of specialized agencies, other organisations, programmes and institutions of the United Nations and non-governmental organisations concerned with aging. Mention might be made in that connection of an agreement on collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe, whereby the latter made available to the Institute its computerized demographic data bank basic population data and national projections for the majority of ECE countries. The Commission would also make available to the Institute studies and reports to be prepared on policies related to aging within the framework of projects financed by UNFPA. The Secretary-General of the International Federation of Associations for the Elderly (FIAPA), on the occasion of his visit to Malta in July 1988, had agreed to send experts to assist the Institute in its training programmes, research and data collection and to publicize the objectives and activities of the Institute and its affiliates, particularly in developing countries. FIAPA would organize in Malta in November 1988 a world congress on aging, which would be attended by more than 1,000 participants. The International Labour Organisation would organize, in collaboration with the Institute, a meeting of experts to assist the Institute in developing a short-term programme on work and retirement and to develop training materials. The Institute would also make contacts with the World Health Organization and the Medical School of the University of Malta with a view to convening jointly a meeting of experts on short-term training in geriatrics.

57. The Institute was financed by voluntary contributions from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, those organizations were invited to support the operations of the Institute by providing the services of specialists, paying for housing and other allowances, and financing research projects, meetings, seminars and conferences. The United Nations could,

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

if it had the financial and other resources, reinforce the activities of the Institute in the areas of technical co-operation and support services (specialists, fellowships, documentation, training materials and statistical information). It could also assist the Institute in fund-raising and in enlisting the support of other Governments and intergovernmental agencies and programmes.

58. The Maltese Government had concluded agreements with UNDP and UNFPA and, as a result, would be able to finance various activities over the next four years. In connection with the UNDP project, the Institute had contacted consultants from eight countries who would conduct national surveys which would enable the Institute to determine the training needs of developing countries with a view to developing appropriate programmes.

59. Various meetings of experts would be convened, as recommended in the UNDP and UNFPA project documents, to assist the Institute in developing training courses, curricula and training materials and adapting them to the needs of developing countries. Training seminars were also being planned. The Institute and the University of Malta had already had a number of meetings to prepare jointly the first expert group meeting on long-term training and education aimed at developing curricula and courses at the university level to train students in gerontology and geriatrics, which should lead to a university degree. The Institute was reviewing existing training programmes in various institutes and universities throughout the world. An International Seminar/Expert Group Meeting on policies and strategies for the participation of the elderly in development had been held in Malta in February 1988. That meeting had provided a forum for an exchange of experience and a review of policies and programmes on aging in developing countries. Eleven experts had participated together with observers from United Nations bodies and from Malta.

60. The Institute's Board had held its first regular session in October. It had examined the work programme for 1989 and had given guidance to the Institute on the establishment of the 1990-1991 work programme.

61. Since, by the year 2000, more than three fifths of the world's elderly would be living in developing countries, it would be opportune to work towards the formulation of a concerted programme of measures aimed at maximizing resources and benefits. All unproductive overlapping should, however, be avoided. At present, Malta's elderly represented 13 per cent of the total population, a figure which would reach 20 per cent by the first half of the twenty-first century. Malta, fully aware of the dimensions of the problem, had appointed a parliamentary secretary to deal exclusively with the needs and interests of the elderly.

62. Malta believed that all countries should support the solution proposed by the Director of the Institute, namely, an expansion of extrabudgetary resources devoted to programmes which deserved, in the opinion of many Member States, priority attention. Malta was concerned about the considerable reduction in staff in the Aging Unit. A world-wide round of activities should be prepared in 1992 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Aging. Malta strongly

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

supported the appeal launched by the Secretary-General in his report (A/43/583) for a major fund-raising effort, setting a goal of resource mobilization of \$2 million by the year 1992.

63. Finally, Malta had worked closely with the delegations of Austria and the Dominican Republic to arrive at a draft resolution on aging which, it hoped, would obtain general acceptance by members of the Committee.

64. Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) resumed the Chair.

65. Mrs. LEOW (Singapore), speaking on agenda item 90, said that the behaviour of youth was a reliable barometer of the health of a country. For those not endowed with natural resources, youth was their most valuable resource. Indeed, human resources were even more valuable than finite resources because they could be continuously renewed and enriched. Youth was therefore the key to a better future and a better society. Her delegation was therefore pleased to note, on reading the report of the Secretary-General (A/43/601), that some countries had taken steps to develop new youth programmes and strengthen their youth-oriented activities as a follow-up to International Youth Year. The Year should not be regarded as an end in itself. Governments must continue to increase the scope of their activities relating to youth at all levels so that young people could be more active and become creative participants in society. Governments should have a conscious and comprehensive policy so that young people would feel fully integrated into society and believe that there was concern about their problems and psychological and other needs.

66. The Government of Singapore had emphasized the training, education and social development of young people. Singapore being a multiracial society, they were taught from an early age to respect the rights of others, regardless of colour, race or creed. In that way, young citizens learned to coexist peacefully not only among themselves but also with the inhabitants of neighbouring countries.

67. Education was a highly important factor in the development of young people and a field in which Governments could take action to change or strengthen policies. Each Singaporean child had access to education; at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, students were guided towards courses which best suited their capacities.

68. Given the rapid advances in telecommunications, it was inevitable that youth would absorb values and cultures which clashed with their own. Aware of the serious consequences which that could have, the Singaporean Government, through the People's Association, organized sporting, recreational, creative, educational and social activities for young people. It also organized youth festivals (accompanied by sporting and cultural events) and televised inter-school debates during which young people were able to discuss serious problems of the day.

69. Turning to agenda item 89, the Secretary-General had mentioned in his report (A/43/583) that the demographic profile of the world population would be



(Mrs. Leow, Singapore)

substantially changed in the years to come, since the number of elderly people in the world would increase notably. Measures should therefore be taken to prepare for it. Aware that it would not be sufficient to provide financial or material aid to the elderly, the Singaporean Government had undertaken, through its policy, to ensure that they were kept socially, physically and mentally active. Basing itself on the extended family, the Government encouraged young citizens to look after their parents and grandparents, a policy which had happily resulted in a large number of women being able to join the labour force. The Singaporean Government provided social and recreational activities for the elderly in community centres. The Central Provident Fund ensured that retirees enjoyed financial security. They could use their savings in the fund to purchase a home or to cover their medical costs. The elderly were thus less dependent on the State and the younger generation. They therefore felt less of a burden on society.

70. Mr. BANIA TOURE (Mali), referring to item 90, said that the implementation of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth was of crucial importance for his country. In celebrating International Youth Year with the theme "integration of young people into production circuits", Mali had been able to carry out a socio-economic survey of youth. The National Committee for International Youth Year, on the basis of data collected during the survey and of the guidelines and 10-year planning cycle recommended by the regional conference on International Youth Year (Addis Ababa, June 1983), had drawn up a national plan of action for youth, taking account of the following requirements: the need to place the proposed activities within the context of major national development priorities and Mali's national economic and social development plan; the need to take account of the basic requirements of young people and of the contribution they might make to development in general and to production in particular; and the need to formulate a national youth policy comprising a consistent body of policies and programmes. The plan of action had been designed in seven stages: strengthening of the organization of youth activities and development of non-formal education infrastructures; creation of conditions conducive to improved integration and participation of young people in rural areas; prevention of social maladjustment among young people; promotion of the social rehabilitation of young delinquents; promotion of the economic and social integration of young people threatened with marginalization; artistic and cultural promotion of young people; and promotion of sports activities for young people, including young disabled persons.

71. Those programmes comprised 29 projects aimed in particular at providing youth leadership, creating employment and providing practical training for young people. Such training would enable them to participate in the protection of the environment, in action to combat desertification, in the development of natural resources and in the achievement of food self-sufficiency. One of those projects, which concerned the Youth Agricultural Training Centre, had received assistance from the United Nations Youth Fund.

72. Mali, with its predominantly young population, was convinced that it could develop successfully only by taking into account all aspects of the situation of youth and by enabling young people to participate in the country's development. In

(Mr. Bamba Toure, Mali)

doing so it was making a major investment and that was a sound way of guaranteeing the future.

73. Mr. KOUNKOU (Congo), speaking on agenda items 90, 92 and 93, said that Congo could boast of numerous achievements in the social sphere. Education was entirely free, there was a school enrolment rate of 100 per cent and admission to university was facilitated by study grants. Young people, the nation's lifeblood, were represented and took an active part in all administrative, political and social institutions. In order to combat unemployment, increasing numbers of young people were forming co-operatives in rural districts, relying primarily on their own resources.

74. The Congo was proud of its medical and social infrastructure. Disabled persons had been as much a focus of the Government's attention as other groups. In accordance with the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, numerous functional rehabilitation centres and specialized institutes had been set up.

75. With the new Family Code, which had entered into force three years previously, legal provisions concerning the Congolese family had been modernized, particularly by eliminating certain negative attitudes which penalized wives and children.

76. The action taken by the Congo in the social sphere was particularly commendable since the country faced an extremely difficult economic situation with its inevitably adverse consequences for the maintenance and development of its social policy.

77. His delegation was satisfied with the social action taken by the United Nations throughout the world. It also appreciated the assistance provided by the specialized agencies, in particular UNICEF, which was vitally needed by the developing countries.

78. Mr. GRILLO (Colombia), referring to item 107, said that the strengthening of the family which was the basis for a more just and progressive society was one of the priorities of the Colombian Government's social programmes. Those programmes were primarily concerned with establishing new human settlements, improving disadvantaged urban areas, creating jobs, providing primary health care to persons not covered by insurance and generalizing formal-type primary education. Colombia welcomed the results of the meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean on the family and development which had been held recently in Caracas (Venezuela) under the auspices of UNESCO.

79. With regard to the elderly (item 89), Colombia, in accordance with the recommendations of the conference on gerontology for Latin America and the Caribbean which had been held in Bogotá in July 1986, had drawn up, on the basis of statistical studies concerning persons over the age of 55, a national plan for senior citizens, which placed emphasis on the interdependence of all sectors of the population and was aimed at ensuring the participation of the elderly in the life of society with due regard for their dignity. The plan was composed of various

(Mr. Grillo, Colombia)

programmes in which the needs and aspirations of the elderly, especially with regard to health, were taken into account.

80. With regard to item 90, the Colombian Government was aware that many young people from a disadvantaged urban environment fraught with social, economic and cultural problems turned to delinquency, drug addiction and prostitution, thereby jeopardizing their personal and social development. It had therefore endeavoured to develop policies that would avoid the marginalization of young people by improving the living conditions of families in those environments and foster the reintegration of young people into society by various means.

81. Turning to item 93, he welcomed the progress made towards convening in Havana the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders, and expressed the hope that special attention would be given to the prevention of criminal activities of a terrorist nature.

82. Mr. AL-HAMAD (Kuwait) said that his country was aware that all elements of society were interdependent and important in their own right.

83. Disabled persons had been neglected for a long time and Kuwait was endeavouring, on humanitarian and moral grounds, to provide them with social assistance as well as improving their living conditions by enabling them to exercise their due rights as citizens. Kuwait was moreover the permanent headquarters of the regional Arab committee for the training of disabled persons.

84. The family derived its importance from the fact that it brought together young people, who were a society's strength, and the elderly, who were a source of wisdom and experience.

85. Because of its demographic make-up, Kuwait had no problems with regard to aging. Moreover, the Koran advocated respect for the older members of the community. Young people under the age of 25 accounted for 70 per cent of the population of Kuwait, which was endeavouring to provide them with the means of shouldering their responsibilities in the future. There were numerous legislative provisions to that effect, reflecting the values of Islam.

86. A modern State could not be built unless all those composing it, young and old, men and women alike, were in a position to meet the challenges of our time. Concerted efforts were therefore needed at all levels, locally as well as internationally.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.