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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

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DISTR. GENERAL
A/C.3/44/SR.16
27 October 1989

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

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (ST/ESA/213)

AGENDA ITEM 91: TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE DECLARATION ON SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/44/116-E/1989/15 and Corr.1 and A/44/116-E/1989/15/Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 92: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (continued) (A/44/79-E/1989/8, A/44/86-E/1989/14, A/44/448 and A/44/499)

AGENDA ITEM 93: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH (continued) (A/44/387)

AGENDA ITEM 97: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES (continued) (A/44/206-E/1989/69 and Corr.1 and A/44/206-E/1989/69/Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING (continued) (A/44/3, A/44/420 and Add.1)

AGENDA ITEM 101: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (continued) (A/44/406 and Rev.1)

AGENDA ITEM 102: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/44/400)

AGENDA ITEM 113: FAMILIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (continued)

1. Mr. MATELA (Poland) said that the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future constituted an indispensable basis for international actions in the framework of developmental social welfare policies. Owing to easier communication and greater mobility, nations had to deal with the increasing aspirations of various social groups, especially youth, women and the elderly. Social problems such as over-population, unemployment and poverty could not be solved through national policies alone. International dialogue and global mechanisms were necessary since demographic change, employment patterns, economic structures and social welfare systems in different countries all affected one another.

2. Social conditions in many countries had been aggravated by the general slow-down in economic growth, the gap in levels of development and the continuing stalemate in negotiations on indebtedness. The internationalization of social problems had come at a time of growing economic uncertainty. According to estimates, the economic decline in Latin America would continue, the economies of African countries would stagnate, and the debt crisis would continue unabated. Poland, which was heavily indebted and undergoing severe economic difficulties, believed that an integrated vision of the future was essential in order to ensure economic prosperity.

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(Mr. Matela, Poland)

3. Conditions were favourable for promoting international co-operation to respond to global social problems. The Guiding Principles set forth the means for solving social policy problems through concerted action at the national and international level. Owing to progress in disarmament, greater resources could and should be directed towards economic and social progress.
4. The social dimension of economic development should be considered as a major priority agenda item. In that regard, Poland supported the idea of enhancing the monitoring functions on social policy issues within the United Nations Office at Vienna, as requested in resolution 1989/53 of the Economic and Social Council. The main task facing the international community and the United Nations was to select priority topics concerning areas where international co-operation would ensure basic social rights and minimum standards throughout the world. Common approaches could be found to such issues as the role of the family in society, population policies, health care, drug abuse and trafficking, and assistance to the elderly and disabled.
5. Societies should recognize that support for the family as the nucleus of society, demographic policies, health care and assistance to the disabled and elderly were essential to long-term policies for solving social problems. Those questions should be considered further at regional meetings as a follow-up to the Interregional Consultation. Poland supported the convening of a European ministerial conference in 1992 and believed that the possibility of holding similar ministerial meetings in other regions should be explored. His delegation supported the statement made by Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries on evaluating co-operation in Europe in the social field and the proposal relating to the Economic Commission for Europe. The time had come to consider the possibility of carrying out developmental social activities within the framework of the Commission.
6. Regional conferences should focus on the impact of the Guiding Principles on the promotion of interregional co-operation in social questions since the Interregional Consultation in 1987. Holding regional and interregional meetings on a more regular basis would facilitate a broad exchange of experience in the implementation of national policies and promote closer multilateral co-operation in that field. In view of the increased importance of the social dimension of economic growth, social issues should be a major part of the international development strategy for the 1990s.
7. Like other countries, Poland had encountered difficulties resulting from adjustments in its economic and social policies. Those adjustments were aimed at promoting individual initiative in order to trim the national economy and solve pressing social problems. A considerable change in mentality would be required to achieve such aims. There was an open discussion of basic social values and the Guiding Principles were a very useful reference point. The process of rethinking and making adjustments had been accompanied by substantial changes in the political structure of the Government. Although those changes had promoted the development of democracy and the rule of law, they had also revealed immense economic and social problems requiring prompt and, often, unconventional action at the national and international level. His country wished to develop further and refine the

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(Mr. Matela, Poland)

Guiding Principles, which served as a basis for finding ways to solve social policy problems in Poland. Accordingly, he hoped that the draft resolution concerning the Guiding Principles and the follow-up to the Interregional Consultation would be adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.

8. Mr. LINDQVIST (Sweden), addressing agenda item 101, expressed disappointment at the inadequate implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The proportion of disabled people in the world population was growing. Their integration into social, economic, political and cultural life still left an enormous amount to be desired. Although a number of declarations had been adopted over the years, there were still no decisive, concerted measures to improve the situation and ensure the full integration of disabled persons in society. Not only disabled people but society as a whole would benefit from such integration.

9. There was a need both to ensure that everyone participated as far as possible in the life of society and to provide further support services for disabled persons. Conditions must be created to enable the disabled to participate fully in decision-making at all levels of the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. Legally binding international regulations must be laid down to guarantee the full implementation of existing international instruments on the rights of disabled persons. There was little use in asserting that all individuals had the right to use public transport, if the need for special services and arrangements for disabled persons was not recognized.

10. Attention should be focused on social engineering measures and support services. His delegation proposed the elaboration of an international instrument emphasizing the priorities for disabled people as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/43/634). Those priorities included the whole range of actions necessary to ensure rehabilitation and equal opportunities. The fundamental issues were housing, employment, transport, finance and social participation. Action in that regard could best be carried out by the United Nations bodies dealing with activities in the social field, in close consultation with the relevant specialized agencies and organizations of disabled people. At the appropriate time, his delegation would request those bodies to prepare a draft international convention on the rights of disabled persons along the practical lines which he had pointed out.

11. A progress report should be submitted to the General Assembly at the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be entrusted with the task of drawing it up. His Government had carefully considered the budgetary implications involved and was prepared to participate in an appropriate manner. Sweden was fully aware of the fact that the necessary work could not be carried out within existing resources and called upon others to set up the needed resource base.

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12. Mr. GALGAU (Romania) said that the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation underscored the heavy social cost of the economic decline in the 1980s, particularly in most developing countries. Lack of social progress, reduced living standards, and increased poverty were very distressing in many developing countries. Average incomes had declined severely in certain developing regions. Extreme poverty was accompanied by a very serious deterioration of social services. The social and, in some cases, political consequences of economic problems, particularly the external debt problem, were threatening the very fabric of society.

13. Adjustment measures based on the unleashing of disruptive market forces and a reduction in the public sector had dangerously high social costs. In order to service their external debts, Governments were forced to reduce already meagre social services to the detriment of the poorest segments of society. Economic stagnation, increasing unemployment, the lack of adequate social services and the inflationary spiral had created a climate of instability which was bound to cause more violence and explosive social tensions.

14. His delegation would have expected the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation to examine those extremely disturbing social problems. The fundamental components of national statistics on social development should have been dealt with in a more analytical manner and in the context of the recent economic difficulties affecting many countries in the world. Topics that had already been examined in previous such reports or were dealt with in other reports under separate agenda items should not have been included in the 1989 Report. In that connection, he hoped that the Secretary-General would take due account of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council calling for a comprehensive, integrated and more relevant analysis of current world social trends. Such an analysis would also facilitate the task of elaborating the next international development strategy.

15. Twenty years after the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, its main objectives had remained fully valid and had even increased in importance in view of recent world economic and social developments. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/44/116 and Corr.1) should have provided a comprehensive review of the actions specifically undertaken by the United Nations to achieve the goals of the Declaration. The replies received from the various organizations and the report itself should have focused more on specific actions and measures taken to implement the Declaration. He hoped that the entire United Nations system would use the opportunity provided by the preparation of a new development strategy to re-evaluate and redirect efforts in the social field in order to meet new challenges.

16. His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress (A/44/86). Unlike previous ones, that report indicated positive long-term changes in such important areas as employment, social welfare, income distribution, rural development and environmental protection. The replies contained in the report showed that national experience in bringing about social

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(Mr. Galgau, Romania)

and economic changes was deeply rooted in each country's specific traditions, needs and priorities and that no alien models of development could be applied for solving the particular problems besetting individual countries. The attempts by certain Governments to impose their own social and economic systems on other countries through coercive measures and economic sanctions were doomed to failure.

17. His own country's socialist path of development had long ensured social justice and the enjoyment of human rights to all citizens without exception, and by paying off its external debt Romania had opened up even better prospects for development and modernization. Improved conditions enabling people to perform useful social activities, accompanied by constitutional guarantees for fundamental economic and social rights, had also enabled the Romanian people to enjoy all civil, political and cultural rights and to participate in the management of society while enjoying a constantly improving standard of living. There was no unemployment, illiteracy, drug addiction, poverty or homelessness in Romania. The establishment of broad, direct and representative democracy ensuring equitable representation of all social categories and nationalities had given full scope to the creative abilities of all members of society, who could now participate equally in the country's life and contribute to its further progress.

18. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that she welcomed the introduction of some rationality into the relationship between the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) and the fact that the bifurcation between social and economic issues that had been created by the transfer of the Centre to Vienna was slowly being remedied. The General Assembly should help bridge the gap between Vienna and New York and her delegation supported the strengthening of the Centre through an increase of its staff, particularly by recruiting from the developing countries of Asia. Social issues must be placed within the context of economic development, and the Centre should handle macro-economic as well as micro-economic themes; DIESA, on the other hand, must not ignore the human dimension of development.

19. The international development strategy for the 1990s must focus on the elimination of poverty, human resource development, accelerated growth and environment, and she drew attention in that connection to paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's note in document A/44/343. The Centre should continue to serve as the main forum for dealing with such issues as youth, social welfare, aging, the disabled, crime prevention, the family and women and continue its co-operation with DIESA in preparing the reports on the world social situation and implementing the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

20. The United Nations must also address itself to the implementation of social development at the national level, but with due regard for the understandable sensitivity of States concerned about international interference in internal affairs. It must study ways in which international plans of action could be implemented at local levels.

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(Mrs. Shahani, Philippines)

21. There must be particular focus on the implementation of the plans of action formulated under the mandate of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and the actual process by which social change could be effected through specific approaches must be studied. A more in depth approach was required in analysing national experience, and she hoped that the Committee would support the draft resolution her delegation was preparing on that topic.

22. In her own country, recent political developments in the direction of democratization had led to constitutional reforms that stressed social justice and popular participation and called upon the State to promote better social services, full employment and an improved standard of living, with specific emphasis on youth, women, the family, the aging and the disabled. Unfortunately, social and economic change was being impeded by external debt, insurgency, the economic consequences of the colonial past, excessive population growth and negative attitudes. Ultimately a country must rely on its own inner strength, but she hoped that all nations in her region would benefit from improvements in trade and commerce as well as from peaceful relations among nations.

23. Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia) said that since the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, dramatic changes in the world social scene had confronted countries with new challenges, and that action-oriented social programmes were gaining in scope at the national and international levels, with the United Nations playing a crucial role in developing strategies to eliminate the root causes of social problems. Recent improvements in the international political climate held great promise for promoting the international co-operation that further progress in the social field required.

24. The world's social problems required a long-term response. There was an imperative need for an integrated approach to issues of economic and social development, which were intrinsically complementary. The interrelationship between economic development and social progress should be taken into consideration in formulating the fourth international development strategy, which must provide a framework for co-operation and contribute to economic and social progress in the developing countries, particularly by dealing with the problems of poverty and debt. The next development strategy must be comprehensive and action-oriented and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system had an important role to play in that regard. He commended in that connection ESCAP's activities in the social sphere. Its initiatives in addressing human resources development could be a model for other regions.

25. The 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (ST/ESA/213, E/CN.5/1989/2) could serve as a basis for the evaluation of social and economic developments and for the preparation of the next development strategy because it helped identify new problems and pinpointed the relationship between issues of national and international importance, while at the same time facilitating the exchange of information and experience between nations as well as promoting international co-operation. His delegation looked forward to a report that would contain specific recommendations for overcoming obstacles to social progress and development and that would outline a comprehensive approach for strengthening co-operation in that area.

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(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

26. He supported the proposal concerning the improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development, and particularly the suggestion that specific subjects be selected for in-depth consideration and that expert groups should meet to deal with priority topics. Careful consideration should be given to enlarging the Commission's membership and to having it or the Economic and Social Council hold special sessions on priority social issues.

27. Mongolia was reassessing its own social development policies and stressing the social and human dimensions of development. It assigned an important role to an agricultural and food supply development programme and a mother and child-care programme. Efforts were being made to promote better utilization and development of human resources by giving greater independence to co-operatives and by restructuring public education. He commended the Secretary-General's report on co-operatives (A/44/79) for highlighting the important role co-operatives played, particularly in developing countries. He supported the recommendations contained in it as well as those in the report of the United Nations seminar on the role of Government in promoting co-operative movements in developing countries.

28. Mrs. TAVARES de ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that ample statistical evidence showed that, since the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development poverty and underdevelopment, particularly in developing countries, continued to be the main obstacles to social progress. In the Latin American and Caribbean countries, for example, reduced living standards and widespread economic insecurity arising from drastic adjustment measures taken to balance their accounts had resulted in increased social tension and violence that threatened democratic institutions. Unemployment, inflation, cuts in expenditures and contraction of business activity were a liability for the future. The social problems of the developing countries were largely the consequences of a crushing debt burden that turned a political and economic problem into a serious human problem.

29. She drew attention to Economic and Social Council resolution 830 (XXXII); its suggestions were as valid as ever and should therefore be implemented. She therefore supported the recommendation that the report on the World Social Situation should be considered in a joint debate of the Economic and Social Committees of the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session.

30. Mr. COTTAFVI (Italy) said that the Declaration on Social Progress and Development was the background to the group of items now under discussion. The global strategy involved should be the main social task of the United Nations and particularly of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The magnitude of the task called for a realistic assessment of priorities and the allocation of a significant amount of the limited resources available for the promotion of the social development of the most disadvantaged. The active participation of young, aging and disabled persons in social and economic development was an essential way of helping society to take care of itself. It was astonishing, therefore, that the important initiatives taken by the United Nations in that field should be matched by a decrease in financial resources. His delegation supported the appeal of the Director-General of the United Nations office at Vienna for a reversal of the trend.

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(Mr. Cottafavi, Italy)

31. His delegation attached high priority to the United Nations programme in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, as shown by its support for the work of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, and the organization of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held in Milan in 1985. Crime was no longer a national problem. The increasing international character of its most serious forms called for an internationally co-ordinated response, based on exchange of experience, common policies, and effective co-operation. The United Nations should establish a pattern of international co-operation within which all countries could satisfy their needs.
32. His delegation attached great importance to the work of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, in particular its preparations for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the five regional preparatory meetings. At the same time, it felt that the activity of the United Nations should not be confined to preparation and organization of five-yearly congresses, but should include other kinds of action, such as criminological research or data collection, exchange of information and the provision of expertise and technical assistance to countries requesting them.
33. In connection with part IV of the Secretary-General's report in document A/44/400, the establishment of the African Regional Institute, the reorganization of the Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, and the development of the information network had enabled the United Nations to help countries to make their criminal justice systems fairer and more effective. In view of the high demand for technical assistance, financial resources should be significantly increased and he urged all countries to contribute generously to the Trust Fund for Social Defence.
34. The Milan Plan of Action adopted by the Seventh Congress, which included recommendations to the international community to combat terrorism, illicit drug traffic and organized crime, was still valid, and his delegation hoped that the Eighth Congress would endorse it and further develop its important recommendations.
35. Mr. PAPUCIO (Albania), referring to agenda item 92, said that social progress had always been one of Albania's main objectives during its 45 years of freedom and independence. During that time economic and social development had been - and still was - based on socialism, with a view to ensuring a happy and prosperous life for the workers and guaranteeing the democratic rights and freedoms of all citizens. As a result of progress in a wide range of fields, including education, public health, science, culture and sports, the population had increased threefold and life expectancy had risen from 38 to 72 years.
36. In connection with the same agenda item, and referring to a comment by the representative of Greece on document A/44/448, he pointed out that there were publications which gave inaccurate figures on the population of various countries, including Albania, since they used religion as a criterion for determining nationality. Document A/44/448, transmitted by the Permanent Mission of the

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(Mr. Papucio, Albania)

People's Republic of Albania to the United Nations, contained statistics from the population census taken in April 1989 which gave the exact number of the inhabitants of Albania on the basis of nationality and not of religion.

37. As a result of his country's policy of principle and the friendly relations between Albania and Greece, the Greek minority in Albania had become a factor of harmony and friendship between the two neighbouring countries and their people.

38. The new generation, which constituted one of the largest and most active parts of the world's population, was a vast force which determined the present and future of mankind. Unfortunately, in many countries the democratic and progressive aspirations of young people were met with political domination and capitalist exploitation. As pointed out in document A/44/387, youth issues were not regarded as meriting priority, even when resources were available, and the economic crisis, rising unemployment, drug abuse, terrorism, and increased crime gave young people an uncertain future.

39. Albania, with a young population - average age about 27 - was particularly concerned about youth questions. Its young people enjoyed all the rights and conditions - health, medical care, education, cultural activities, sport and so forth - for the enjoyment of a creative life. They played an important part in the country's economic and social development and were active members of society. Paternalist attitudes and admonitions about behaviour at work, in school or in the street, were things of the past. Albania recognized the need to consolidate the role of young people, to promote their initiative, stimulate their creative ability and involve them in the administration of the country.

40. Mr. KRENKEL (Austria) said that it was clear from the report of the Secretary-General in document A/44/406/Rev.1 that, with the slow progress in achieving the main goals of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the lack of political commitment by member States, the decline in interest in the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the decrease in contributions to the Voluntary Fund, the Decade would not achieve the desired results. His delegation therefore welcomed the idea of developing a strategy for action to the year 2000.

41. His delegation was particularly concerned about the plight of deaf people. Approximately 80 million people were affected by deafness or severely impaired hearing and Austrian organizations had pointed to the need for special attention to the problem at the international level. Austria hoped that a campaign could be started and looked forward to a meeting of the Board of the International Organization for the Deaf to be held in Vienna at the beginning of 1990.

42. On the question of aging, he noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/44/420 and Add.1) that implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging was proceeding in stages. His delegation supported the Secretariat's intention to establish a world-wide series of participation projects. It noted with appreciation that co-operation between the Government of Senegal, the Centre

(Mr. Krenkel, Austria)

for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme had resulted in the establishment of an African Society of Gerontology. It also noted that two further international institutes were under consideration in Belgrade and Buenos Aires respectively, in addition to the one already established in Malta; that a meeting had been held in New York in September to explore international fund-raising strategies for aging; and that consideration was being given to the establishment of a world foundation on aging.

43. His Government welcomed the decision of the General Assembly (resolution 43/135) to observe an international year of the family which would strengthen international support for the family as the basic unit of society and enhance family participation in economic and social development. The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria had participated in the studies of the Colombo Commission set up under the Council of Europe, whose work had included promotion of the family as one of its main issues. The Austrian Federal Ministry for Environment, Youth and Families had recently requested a survey on the family, to deal with the significance of the family in society and changing family structures, as well as legal and financial safeguards and psychological support for families. The report would form the basis for future decision-making at government level and might also contribute to the preparatory activities for the international year. The Ministry had contributed \$US 27,000 towards preparation of a United Nations report on family policies by the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

44. With regard to agenda item 93, although the highest percentage of youth was to be found in developing countries, the review and appraisal of the situation of youth now being carried out by the secretariat indicated that youth issues were of concern to both developing countries and the industrialized world. Issues such as youth and employment, drugs, environment, AIDS and crime prevention were equally important to all countries and the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be instructed to cover those specific issues, rather than limit itself to general topics such as youth and development. Further guidelines should be provided to that end, and the United Nations should be encouraged to find extrabudgetary resources, since the funds could not be provided from the regular budget alone.

45. The Austrian Government had established an institute called the "HOPE 87 Institute" to promote youth employment on a world-wide scale. The Institute had already started providing advice and finance for youth employment projects in Colombia, Kenya, Bangladesh and Nepal as well as in Austria. The projects were all income-generating and designed in due course to lead to profitable business. A number of youth employment projects from all over the world were currently being considered for possible subsidizing. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, a letter of understanding was in preparation to establish closer links between the United Nations Office in Vienna and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the HOPE 87 Institute. Whatever the form of closer co-operation between the Institute and the United Nations, it would not entail any financial commitment on the part of the United Nations.

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46. Monsignor MARTINO (Observer, Holy See), speaking on agenda item 113, said that the Holy See endorsed the proposed international family year and agreed with the comment in the Secretary-General's report (A/44/407) that the family constituted the basic unit of society - or, according to the Second Vatican Council, the first and vital cell of society - and therefore warranted special attention. Solidarity with needy families had been a cardinal principle of social action in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Church had continued to support healthy families and assist families which were disintegrating.

47. The Holy See believed that the Church had a vital role to play in the proposed international family year. The true definition of a family was a father and mother living in faithful and permanent union with one or more children. Other forms of living together could not capture the essence or serve as the corner-stone of a healthy family.

48. Noting that the Secretary-General's report urged the review and reform of family law during the proposed year of the family, he stressed that it was the duty of Governments to foster and protect the stability of the marriage bond. Couples should rely on morally licit methods of family planning. It was the role of Governments and international organizations to assist them by creating a social and economic order conducive to family life, child-bearing and child-rearing, and by providing accurate information on the demographic situation so that couples might properly assess their duties and responsibilities.

49. Equally necessary was a review of international policies. His Holiness Pope John Paul had denounced it as gravely unjust to make international economic assistance dependent on programmes of contraception, sterilization and procured abortion. Today society was justifiably concerned over the destruction of rain forests and the earth's environment, but paid far less attention to the destruction of the life existing within the human womb before birth.

50. The Church was also concerned about the question of familial and work responsibilities referred to in the report. As stressed by His Holiness, while it must be recognized that women had the same right as men to perform various functions, society must be structured in such a way that wives and mothers were not in practice compelled to work outside the home.

51. Mr. KONKOBO (Burkina Faso) said that social development was a matter of constant concern for his country. He emphasized that the gradual deterioration of the social situation throughout the world, including Africa, was closely tied to the economic situation. Deteriorating social conditions in low-income countries were the result of the interrelated phenomenon of decreasing revenues and increasing numbers of persons living in poverty. Financial institutions now recognized that correlation and agreed that structural adjustment programmes should take social considerations and income distribution into account. In that connection, if social development was to be ensured in the current period of economic crisis, additional support and co-operation was needed from the international community, Member States and non-governmental organizations for ongoing African efforts to foster economic growth.

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(Mr. Konkobo, Burkina Faso)

52. At a seminar held in June 1989, government officials, programme directors and officials of non-governmental organizations reached an agreement on the need to consider social development as a priority concern in designing economic development programmes. Many problems - the debt burden of developing countries, various regional conflicts, the pandemic of AIDS, illegal drug trafficking, planetary warming - threatened harmonious development. While environmental issues were extremely varied, in many developing countries, poverty was one of the major causes of the destruction of the environment. In Burkina Faso, an intensive campaign was under way against desertification and drought, and steps were being taken to combat brush fires, excessive harvesting of wood and unlimited grazing.

53. Burkina Faso supported resolution 42/48 calling for the celebration in December of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

54. Burkina Faso had developed programmes designed to improve the conditions of the most vulnerable social categories, particularly children and disabled persons. Efforts were also being made in the area of providing housing and employment for women, whose participation was imperative for development. In addition, measures improving health services, health coverage and education had been taken and were constantly being strengthened.

55. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark) said that, while it was deplorable that sufficient funding had not been available to the United Nations system for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, the responsibility for the failure of the Decade to meet expectations thus far lay solely with the Governments. The United Nations and its various bodies could give inspiration and some support, but the hard work had to be done at the national level by government and local authorities. It was important to note that the three main goals of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons - prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities - could never be reached totally. However, the process of attempting to reach those goals had started, and it was important that it should proceed and gain momentum, until it eventually became self-perpetuating.

56. The best instrument to that end was the disabled themselves. By integrating disabled persons, society not only gave the disabled individual a better chance, but also allowed other people to understand what disabilities were all about through his or her example.

57. Disabled people belonged everywhere. While simple and banal, that basic claim and goal of the handicapped movement was neither universally acknowledged nor universally accomplished. Special solutions, such as special schools, special transportation and sheltered workshops, could be useful, but whenever possible they were to be avoided, because they were expensive and seldom provided the same quality services as those offered to the non-disabled.

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(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

58. Governments should be urged to promote and strengthen organizations of disabled persons and to co-operate with them as equal partners and legitimate spokesmen for their members. It was encouraging to note that almost all the Member States replying to the Secretary-General's questionnaire referred in a positive way to co-operation with organizations of disabled persons. Since such co-operation demanded more consideration than money, it was to be hoped that many more Member States would follow suit before the end of the Decade.

59. According to the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations system, almost all agencies seemed to have integrated programmes for disabled persons into their ordinary activities. Denmark was pleased with that trend and hoped to see it develop further.

60. Being a woman and being disabled combined personal qualities that gave rise to cultural and social conflicts both within the woman herself, in her family and in society. For that reason, disabled women needed to receive special attention within the various programmes for the disabled as well as through specially designed programmes.

61. With respect to possible options for marking the end of the Decade, Denmark wished to emphasize that a whole series of well-situated regional conferences might be preferable to a global conference, especially since regional conferences would create much greater awareness and give far more disabled people a chance to participate.

62. One important goal of the conference or conferences would be to formulate a new, more successful policy in the area of the equalization of opportunities. Denmark believed that the best strategy was to ensure that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was understood to apply also to disabled persons. To dispel any doubt in that regard, consideration might be given to adopting a new proclamation stating that all human rights instruments should be applied to disabled and non-disabled persons without distinction of any kind. Such a proclamation would be a worthy way of marking the end of the Decade and would provide an important guideline for future action.

63. Mr. BEN-YOHANAN (Israel) said that the welfare, education and well-being of children and youth had traditionally been given a central place in Israel's social structure. Youth programmes in Israel were aimed at the creation of suitable and equal opportunity for every young person in Israel, irrespective of religion, race and sex. Education promoted the understanding and respect of others as equals, freedom of thought and expression, and pride in one's Israeli citizenship without prejudice to one's Jewish, Arab, Christian or Druse identity. Israel had a nation-wide network of institutional youth clubs that were available to every child and offered both informal education and cultural, art and sports activities.

64. A large amount of the resources invested in those activities was funneled to programmes to help young people who had dropped out of school and had neither found jobs nor embarked on vocational training. In most such programmes, a professional

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(Mr. Ben-Yohanan, Israel)

youth worker was assigned to a small group of marginal youth in order to assist them in their contacts with the legal authorities and to organize activities and social meetings. The population of young people potentially in danger of alienation had been mapped, information centres had been established at a local level, and a data bank on organizations and institutions to which young people in need could be referred had been created. The success of the programmes was shown by the large number of school drop-outs that had returned to school.

65. Schools and youth organizations fostered active participation in community life, and some 40,000 high school students took part annually in week-long voluntary activities in the service of the community.

66. Israel encouraged relations between its young people and their counterparts in other countries through exchange study trips. It also sponsored international conferences on youth-related issues.

67. U THAN (Myanmar) said that his country believed that a nation's potential could be judged by the wealth and quality of human resources it devoted to its youth. Myanmar consistently invested around 17 per cent of its total budget in education. Its education system and youth activities were geared to the all-around physical, spiritual, intellectual and moral development of its youth.

68. Foremost among the social problems currently affecting youth the world over was the problem of narcotic drugs. Myanmar had a national, comprehensive multidisciplinary anti-drug programme, and it had already put in place an adequate legal framework to combat the drug menace. Those laws and rules prescribed stern measures for drug traffickers and required young drug addicts to register with state institutions for proper treatment.

69. Myanmar was attending to the problem of juvenile delinquency and other youth-related problems. Also, while young people in Myanmar were fortunately still spared the horrible scourge of AIDS, Myanmar authorities were not relaxing their vigilance against the threat of the possible spread of that disease to their country.

70. Myanmar had observed the International Youth Year in 1985 with a wide range of activities, which had included the Youth Sports Meet and the planting of 6.2 million trees by its young people. The spirit and objectives of the International Youth Year should not be considered as the affair of a single year, and he was happy to note that significant progress had been achieved at all levels in implementing the guidelines endorsed in resolution 40/14 for suitable follow-up to the activities of the International Youth Year.

71. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was doing an excellent job in highlighting the main issues and problems of youth and their possible solutions, in co-ordinating global efforts to achieve the objectives of the International Youth Year and in enhancing national capacities in developing comprehensive youth policies and programmes. Myanmar fully supported the

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(U Than, Myanmar)

Commission's decision to choose the integration of young people into society as a priority topic for discussions at its next session in 1991. It also fully endorsed the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving young people (A/44/387).

72. Mr. SAAD (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that any occupying Power such as Israel, which was torturing and killing young people, children, disabled persons and elderly persons every day, had no right to speak of its programmes promoting democracy, equality among people and youth.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the interest of the orderly conduct of meetings, those wishing to exercise the right of reply should place their names on the speakers list in advance.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.