



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/40/64, A/40/256, 298, 336, 359, 390, 546, 570, 626, 701, 706; A/C.3/40/4; A/C.3/40/L.3)

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(a) REPORT OF THE SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. Mr. YOLAH (Under-Secretary-General for the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Committee on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade had recently adopted a set of agreed conclusions wherein it reaffirmed the importance of the broad consensus achieved by the international community and incorporated in one international instrument objectives which linked

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social, political and economic issues, short- and long-term perspectives and domestic and international policy measures. Countries had reaffirmed specifically their commitment to the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy, notably in the areas of employment, health, education, population, environment, shelter and the full integration of women, youth and vulnerable population groups in development.

2. The attainment of economic goals and the realization of social objectives were closely interrelated. Regrettably, there had been no significant improvement in the economic situation of developing countries in 1985, and in all developing regions, except for South and East Asia, real per capita income was either stagnant or declining. In the years ahead, growth in developing countries was likely to be very low due to the slowdown in the growth of the world economy, low prices for commodities, stagnant capital flows and widespread protectionism. Those adverse economic trends had an immediate and direct bearing on the attainment of the social goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy, which, in 1985, seemed more distant than it had five years earlier. Failing, stagnant or slowly rising national output was reflected immediately in increased poverty, lower consumption, more unemployment and fewer opportunities for productive employment.

3. Regarding the goal of eliminating hunger and malnutrition, steady progress over long periods in some areas coexisted with setbacks elsewhere, notably the famine in Africa and dramatic regression in many other countries, chiefly among those with sharply reduced incomes.

4. More positive results were achieved in the area of education. In spite of the current budgetary restraints, in most developing countries expansion of enrolment continued in the 1980s at all levels of education although with adverse consequences for the improvement of its quality.

5. One of the objectives of the Strategy related to the equitable sharing of the benefits of development, which in the first four years of the Decade had been very few. The impact of the lack of progress had often fallen more on the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society; youths, the aged, the disabled and children, although in some instances, those groups had begun to benefit from carefully conceived and executed programmes.

6. With regard to health, infant mortality and life expectancy data suggested a positive trend even though in some regions the gains had been small and the figures did not take into account the likely long-term effects of famine in Africa and the increase in poverty and malnutrition in many parts of the world.

7. Within the context of a continuing economic crisis, the achievement of the social goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy was seriously endangered. Government, appropriately preoccupied by immediate economic problems, opted for curtailed budgets, which often affected social programmes and related concerns. Recently, however, there had been a growing awareness that if certain policies were not corrected, social problems would multiply and the burden would become acute and in some cases, intolerable. The United Nations was in a

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particularly unique position to promote the search for solutions and, in that regard, he offered as always the support and service of his Department.

8. In the area of social development, the United Nations had visibly demonstrated the benefits of multilateralism and that the Organization was a viable and effective forum for pursuing collectively solutions to complex and salient social issues.

9. The positive results of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women would guide national and international action for the advancement of the status of women to the year 2000. That Conference had reaffirmed and expanded the commitment undertaken in Mexico in 1975 through innovative strategies and measures designed to achieve the objectives of the Decade for Women. It had also highlighted the interrelatedness of the three themes of the Decade: Equality, Development and Peace and had given additional dimensions to the definitions adopted in Mexico and Copenhagen. The Conference had forcefully addressed the problems of persistent institutional, behavioral and attitudinal discriminatory practices against women and had endorsed multiple strategies and measures to eliminate all remaining forms of discrimination against women, as well as for the effective enforcement of the law and the adoption of vigilant monitoring measures.

10. The Conference had called for the adoption of strategies to ensure the full and total integration of women in development, as agents and beneficiaries, intellectuals, policy- and decision-makers and planners.

11. The theme of Peace had been stressed in Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi, where it had been defined as not only the absence of war, violence and hostility at the national and international levels but also as the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society, which also encompassed the right to freedom of opinion, expression, information and association.

12. The delegations which had gathered in Milan for the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders were aware that society was currently confronting a deepening crisis of violence and crime. Experience had shown that, as societies changed, as means of communication became more accessible, new economic activities evolved and technology expanded, sophisticated forms of criminality also emerged. Yet society's response had not kept pace with the widening reach and increased sophistication of crime. Criminal justice procedures, developed long ago, had been overtaken by socio-economic changes and the growing transnationalization of crime.

13. Moreover, there continued to be cases of arbitrary and summary executions, enforced or involuntary disappearances, torture, abrogation of justice through different types of discrimination and abuse of power and denial of the rights of victims of crime. Terrorist acts of violence against innocent persons and the insidious operations of organized crime and drug trafficking were also prevalent.

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It was obvious that in many parts of the world, social peace, civility and even public life were under serious threat and that the toll in innocent victims was on the increase.

14. The Congress had stressed the close interrelationship between the problems of criminality, the pressing concerns of development, and the promotion of human rights. It was evident from the six major international instruments and 25 resolutions adopted by consensus at the Seventh Congress, that there was unanimous determination on the part of the community of nations to alleviate the deleterious consequences of criminality in all its forms and dimensions, both new and traditional, and certain essential parameters had been agreed upon to safeguard peace, justice and development and for the protection of fundamental freedoms. The Milan Plan of Action went further than the Caracas Declaration, charting the course of what could be a new era in international and technical co-operation in the field of crime. The new guiding principles dealt with a wide variety of issues, encompassing various types of crime and their impact in the developmental context, sectoral and inter-sectoral planning, the role of the criminal justice system, and the essential requisites of international action in the area of crime. There was a need for a concerted multilateral approach in that area, because the complexity and wide-ranging ramifications of the problem required international deliberation and action. He thanked the Government and people of Italy for hosting the Congress and for their warm hospitality.

15. The General Assembly would soon hold the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year. The designation of 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace was an indication of the continuing international concern for youth and a recognition of the need for more specific strategies to realize its full potential. Progress achieved so far was currently being evaluated in the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities in the context of the preparation and celebration of International Youth Year; long-term objectives were being reassessed; and suitable follow-up measures prepared. In keeping with the strategy for the Year, which gave priority to activities at local and national levels, over 140 Governments had established national co-ordinating committees for the Year, which promoted policies and programmes related to youth as an integral part of social and economic development. Numerous efforts had also been made by Governments and international youth organizations to promote among youth, the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among people. He expressed his sincere appreciation to Romania, which had hosted the International Conference of the National Co-ordinating Committees for International Youth Year at Bucharest in September 1985, the recommendations of which deserved the careful attention of the General Assembly.

16. Multilateral action in youth affairs had both symbolic and practical value. From a symbolic point of view, it was important that Governments working together through the United Nations, had achieved a consensus concerning their responsibilities for youth, as expressed through the observance of International Youth Year. In practical terms, the technical expertise developed and accumulated over the past 40 years by the United Nations and its specialized agencies could be

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of great benefit to Governments as they developed and implemented their programmes and policies.

17. The United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year would provide an opportunity to celebrate the progress achieved during International Youth Year in the areas of participation, development and peace and to reflect on appropriate follow-up action at the international, regional and national levels so as to ensure that the gains achieved thus far were maintained and increased.

18. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs actively participated in the follow-up action to the World Assembly on Aging and the International Year of Disabled Persons, especially during the current United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Both events had increased world-wide awareness of the importance and complexity of those issues and spurred action at the international, regional and national levels. In Senegal, for example, for the very first time, an African regional conference on aging had been convened, in response to the recommendations of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. That Conference had decided to establish an African society of gerontology. Another example was the non-governmental organization, Disabled Peoples International, which, inspired by the principles of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, would send a ship around the world in 1986, manned only by disabled persons, to commemorate the International Year of Peace and to demonstrate the disabled people's commitment to the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

19. He acknowledged the vital role which the non-governmental organizations had played, and continued to play, in promoting international co-operation and in supporting United Nations efforts in all sectors of its activities, particularly in the field of social development. During the past four decades, a very dynamic evolution had taken place in the nature and scope of non-governmental organizations and in their proficiency and technical competence. Non-governmental organizations had strongly influenced the development of many of the United Nations initiatives mentioned, and their continued active involvement was, unquestionably, necessary to the success of those efforts.

20. Mrs. SHAHANI (Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that the observance of International Youth Year had made a considerable contribution to increased global awareness of the situation of youth. Many young people had benefited from new programmes and a greater sense of solidarity. The main factor which had contributed to the goals of International Youth Year had been the decision of Member States to improve the situation of youth. The national co-ordinating committees, of which there were 158, had played a major role in programme formulation and implementation. Another important factor had been the involvement of young people in the preparation and observance of International Youth Year. Further evidence of general interest in the cause of youth came from the manifold activities of non-governmental organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels. Finally, the co-ordinated activities of various intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations

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system, including its regional commissions, had made a major contribution to the success of International Youth Year. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had carried out a variety of activities, which had been regularly reported to the intergovernmental bodies, and had succeeded in developing and strengthening the channels of communication with the national co-ordinating committees, youth organizations and the media. The Centre, together with the Department of Public Information and the United Nations system as a whole, had tried to spread the word about International Youth Year and had encouraged action for and by youth at the national level.

21. With regard to the four documents on youth before the Third Committee, she said that the Centre had adhered to the general policy of the Secretariat in maintaining a balance between evaluative and analytical documents and practical and operationally oriented documents.

22. International Youth Year provided an opportunity for integrating policies and programmes pertaining to youth at all levels. At the national level, Governments had increasingly recognized the importance of youth and had taken many concrete steps towards improving the situation. Document A/40/701 provided information on results achieved. That document, however, sought to do more than update the information regularly reported to the General Assembly. It constituted the first step in the process in which the Secretariat would try to assess and evaluate the experience acquired during International Youth Year and it provided an overview of the implementation of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the Year. An annex provided information on national and local activities, which together constituted the greatest achievement of International Youth Year.

23. The maintenance and strengthening of channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations was an ongoing function of the secretariat of International Youth Year, in the belief that young people, provided with the relevant information, would take a greater interest in caring for their own needs and in participating in development. Document A/40/631 reviewed past activities and evaluated each guideline in order to suggest areas where channels of communication could be further improved.

24. Lastly, document A/40/256 represented the culmination of a process which had begun in 1981 with the adoption by the General Assembly of the Specific Programme of Measures and Activities for the International Youth Year. That process had been based on the premise that the year 1985 would be the pivot of a long-term strategy for work in the field of youth. The guidelines contained in that document reflected the experience gained at all levels during the preparation for the International Youth Year and, in particular, the five regional plans of action for youth. They also provided the contours of a strategy for youth activities in the future. Those guidelines were general parameters within which youth policies, plans or activities could be implemented in accordance with each country's policies and priorities. The guidelines, taken in conjunction with continuous reviews of the situation of youth at all levels and further assessments of progress achieved, should provide the basis for an adequate follow-up to the International Youth Year.

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25. With regard to the question of aging, the report of the Secretary-General which was before the Committee (A/40/714) had been prepared in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 39/25 and examined the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging at the national, regional and international levels. Another report of the Secretary-General on the item, entitled "First review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging" (E/1985/6), contained, inter alia, information obtained from a questionnaire sent to all Member States, United Nations organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The results of the first review and appraisal revealed that significant progress had been made in increasing national and international awareness of the impact which the aging of populations could have on socio-economic development and of the contributions which the elderly themselves could make to development. There was also an appreciation of the need for advanced planning to ensure that the concerns of the growing numbers of the elderly were met.

26. One clear indication of awareness of the significance of the problem of aging was the number of requests for technical co-operation submitted by the Governments of developing countries to the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging, which, after three years of experience in financing technical co-operation activities, had gained the recognition of the international community as an essential instrument to meet the increasing needs of the aging in the developing countries. The Fund had demonstrated its effectiveness as a catalyst for implementing the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging by giving priority to projects in the least developed countries. She noted with appreciation that the Economic and Social Council, at its first regular session of 1985, had adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to include the Trust Fund among the programmes for which funds were pledged at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

27. Although its resources were modest, since 1983 the Fund had financed, earmarked for financing or considered financing more than 60 projects. In view of the disparity between the resources of the Trust Fund and the large number of requests for assistance, which currently exceeded its \$5 million budget, she appealed to the Governments of Member States to contribute generously to the Fund.

28. The major function of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in the field of aging was to promote the exchange of information and experience at the national, regional and international levels, in accordance with the recommendations of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. In pursuance of that objective, the United Nations had recently organized an interregional seminar on aging in Kiev, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, attended by high-level policy-makers from 28 countries. The seminar had provided a forum to encourage the exchange of experience among developing countries, to explore strategies for the effective implementation of the Plan of Action at all levels, and to promote of technical co-operation among developing countries in the field of aging.

29. She recalled that at the Expert Group Meeting held in Vienna in March 1985 on

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the standardization of terms, definitions and research methodologies, it had been recognized that standardization of language and research methods would facilitate the exchange of information and that the United Nations was best placed to undertake such a task. She also pointed out that a major work on the world aging situation had just been published.

30. With regard to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the item. In the preparation of that report, information had only been requested concerning national disability committees established during the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons, a number of which were still functioning. In order to monitor the implementation of the World Programme of Action, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had prepared a draft questionnaire that would be circulated to Member States.

31. The organizations of the United Nations system, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies had continued their activities in support of the World Programme of Action. The non-governmental organizations concerned had also actively supported it. As for the employment of disabled persons in the United Nations system, efforts were being made to promote equal employment opportunities.

32. The United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons, which the General Assembly, in its resolution 38/28 of 22 November 1983, had recognized as an important instrument for the implementation of the World Programme of Action, had allocated resources to various projects that would encourage a regional approach to disability issues. The report of the Secretary-General pointed out that during the period January 1980 to June 1985, the Fund had disbursed over \$US 1.1 million in support of 51 projects, but had more than 60 project proposals pending, representing a total of \$US 6.5 million. The Economic and Social Council, at its first regular session of 1985, had adopted a resolution recommending that the Trust Fund should be included, on an annual basis, among the programmes for which funds were pledged at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities. As a result, the Fund would participate for the first time in the Pledging Conference to be held in New York on 14 and 15 November 1985.

33. Points raised in the Secretary-General's report which required action by the Third Committee included the suggestion to decentralize the global 1987 meeting to evaluate progress at the mid-point in the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, the need for adequate publicity for the Decade, the issue of employment opportunities for disabled persons and ways to strengthen the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons to enable it to carry out its activities.

34. In connection with the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, she said that the Milan Plan of Action and the Guiding Principles for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had their roots in the Caracas Declaration adopted by the Sixth Congress. The Milan Plan of Action

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emphasized that crime prevention and criminal justice should be considered in the context of economic development, political systems, social and cultural values and social change, as well as in the context of a new international economic order. It requested the Secretary-General to review existing priorities and programmes and to strengthen activities relating to crime prevention and criminal justice so as to guarantee more effective international co-operation in that area.

35. The Seventh Congress had recognized that, in contrast to the expectations of an increasing number of young persons for a better life, social and economic opportunities were declining in many parts of the world, while one witnessed ever higher levels of involvement of youth in serious crime and drug abuse, and more and more young persons being taken into official custody. In the spirit of the International Youth Year, the Congress should serve to foster the integration of young people into the mainstream of society, as fully participating and responsible members.

36. In the matter of juvenile delinquency, the Seventh Congress had focused its attention on the treatment of young offenders, and one of its main achievements in that area had been the adoption of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ("The Beijing Rules"), which constituted a significant contribution to the goals and objectives of the International Youth Year, and clearly demonstrated the commitment of the United Nations to ensuring justice for the young. The Seventh Congress had also called for the adoption of other protective measures on behalf of young persons in relation to justice systems, particularly as they related to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and assistance for juveniles who were marginalized, endangered, or generally at "social risk", and as they related to the protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty.

37. The Seventh Congress had also adopted a Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice relating to victims of crime and of abuse of power, which provided a framework for Governments and the international community in their efforts to secure justice, assistance and redress for such victims.

38. Turning to another matter, she referred to the report of the Secretary-General on the new international human order: moral aspects of development, which had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/170 of 19 December 1983. She stressed the need for all Member States to submit their comments, particularly on the draft declaration transmitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/17. A number of Governments had expressed their views on that issue during the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions of the General Assembly and during the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1983. Since then, however, only a few comments had been forthcoming.

39. Finally, she referred to the report of the Secretary-General on national experience in promoting the co-operative movement, prepared under agenda item 91, which dealt with national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress. She noted that the co-operative

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movement in both the developing and the developed countries had done much to advance the cause of social progress.

40. Mr. MALAN (Director, Office for Development Research and Policy Analysis), introducing the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1 or ST/ESA/165), said that current trends in the global economy gave little cause for optimism. A large number of developing countries found themselves in crisis, either because of sharp reversals in progress painstakingly achieved earlier, or because recent set-backs had aggravated an already distressing situation, as in much of Africa.

41. Nevertheless, one could point to three positive elements. Firstly, there was a broad consensus that the current economic crises were in essence broader crises of political economy and, in some countries, of conflict among national social priorities; there was also a clear understanding that current problems were in part the unwanted side effects of efforts to come to grips with earlier problems. For example, the determination in developed market economies to contain inflation, and in some, to reduce the burden of taxation, to remove structural rigidities and improve efficiency through less government regulation, had in the first instance deepened and prolonged the recession and raised unemployment to levels which in the past had been thought to be totally unacceptable; the expected benefits of that policy, however, were still largely for the future. Such determination, moreover, reflected a new perception of the capabilities and responsibilities of Governments, both nationally and internationally. That recognition of the nature of the problem and its socio-political dimensions, and the convergence of views on the nature of the causes, had opened the way for a more fruitful debate on the quest for solutions.

42. Secondly, as evidenced in the consensus arrived at by the Committee on the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, there had been a reaffirmation of the sovereign right of each country freely to determine and implement appropriate policies for social development, within the framework of its development plans and priorities, and in accordance with its cultural identity, socio-economic structure and stage of development. There was also consensus regarding the external origin of many problems, and the different capacity of countries to cope with them. Current advice to implement the adjustment policies adopted by some developing countries sounded hollow when the external environment was as difficult as it had been in the past half-decade; financial success had often been achieved at great social cost; even with an improved external environment, current needs for further austerity would also mean further reductions in living standards in the many countries which had large external debts. The above-mentioned consensus had therefore stressed the need for the developed countries to support the efforts of the developing ones with substantial resources.

43. Thirdly, the search for greater efficiency in the management of public affairs had been a mark of the first half-decade. Economic difficulties had undoubtedly made it necessary to examine anew the allocation of public resources, and had also

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given impetus to the search for new ways in which all the resources of society could be brought into play to promote the common welfare. National economic development and social justice had been the driving political forces of the post-war period in all countries, regardless of social system or level of development. In some places, social justice had been seen as the primary objective and the condition for sustained development; in others, economic growth had been emphasized as a necessary condition in the quest for social justice. Currently, however, there was convergence towards the middle: for economic progress to be possible, there had to be a minimum of social consensus, security, wide participation in public decisions, and basic fairness in opportunity and reward, as well as a recognition of the importance for social justice of an efficient economic system that provided the required incentives and allocated resources appropriately.

44. The needs of efficiency and equity frequently coincided. Both could be advanced by the extension of services that augmented the talents and capacities of individuals. But the needs of efficiency and equity also conflicted, particularly in the current situation. It was the task of policy analysis to identify further areas of coincidence. It was also its task to clarify the choices when conflict was inevitable, and enable choices to be made with due regard to their long-term implications for both efficiency and equity.

45. Persisting, stark disparities in wealth and opportunity between countries and between groups within countries sometimes gave the idea of social progress the semblance of a privilege reserved for a minority of the world's people. It was evident, however, that the material foundations for achieving widely-shared social objectives did exist on a global level; that failure and pessimism derived not so much from the limitations of the productive capacity of the world economy as from the misdirection of resources and efforts, as for example, for avoidable military purposes. Such misdirection caused the world economy to perform below potential most of the time and disastrously below capacity periodically. In that context of persistent underdevelopment and growing insecurity, the world social situation also remained marked by violence against individuals and groups, the denial of their human dignity through repression, and other similar impediments to social progress which did not depend primarily on economic resources and could be overcome by the determination of societies and their Governments.

46. The forces of social change seemed to remain largely impervious to fluctuations in economic fortunes and, indeed, they independently shaped economies and societies over the long term. Rapid urbanization, the explosion in knowledge and education, the information and communications revolution, the structural transformation of employment, the changing nature of work, and the pervasiveness of new technologies were forcing new values on societies and forging new relations among groups and among countries.

47. The changes had been very uneven in their impact. They had created new inequities and undermined traditional values without always creating solid foundations for new social arrangements, as for example, when they had fostered new uncertainties in relations between young and old and between men and women.

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In some countries in recent years, the beneficial effect of less government intervention had been keenly debated. The need was rather for better and more sensitive government, able to lead the response to those unprecedented challenges stemming from the very speed of change.

48. The debate on, and search for, new forms for managing society were likely to intensify in all parts of the world. There was a continuing need to keep under review what Governments, local and national, could do best, and what Governments perhaps should not do directly. Within the scope of such a review were questions pertaining to the methods of operation of public enterprises, the criteria by which they were held accountable, the norms of co-operation between public and private bodies, the modes of delivery of social services and their financing, the balance between incentives and direction or regulation, and the balance between central authority and other entities in the governmental and public sector.

49. There were a number of aspects of the 1985 Report on the World Social Situation on which the Committee might wish to take action. The Report fulfilled three functions: it provided, for United Nations legislative bodies and for the general public, a panorama of the social situation in the world; it assisted intergovernmental bodies in identifying and analysing issues which were of emerging international concern; and it provided a global synthesis of socio-economic trends as a context within which to view more specific problems. The second and third functions had, with time, received more emphasis. In accordance with the guidelines provided by the Third Committee and by the Commission for Social Development, the 1985 Report, which departed from earlier ones in its format and its organization and treatment of topics, sought to reflect the complex and changing relations between economic and social, national and international facets of development, and provided intersectoral analyses of trends and an intersectoral treatment of issues and policies. The Report focused on the major obstacles to social progress and on the forces of social change. In a supplement, which was about to be completed, the fundamental changes in health, food and nutrition, housing and other social sectors were also being reviewed, with particular reference to developing regions.

50. In view of the fact that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/152, the next report was to be submitted to the Assembly in 1988, a year in which the Commission for Social Development did not meet, the Economic and Social Council had decided in resolution 1985/21 to request the Secretary-General to prepare the next report in four years' time, instead of three, and also to submit a brief interim report to the Commission for Social Development at its thirtieth session.

51. Concerned about the possibility of duplication in the preparation of reports on social issues, the General Assembly had asked to be informed about arrangements for the preparation of such reports and about the co-ordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the collection of social statistics. The Secretary-General's note on those questions (A/40/643) listed the periodical reports prepared by the United Nations system. The 1985 Report discussed the

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various arrangements for co-ordinating the collection and exchange of social statistics, as well as the efforts being made to compile indicators that would facilitate the review and appraisal of plans of action in the social field.

52. Lastly, he drew attention to the Secretary-General's report on national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress (A/40/65 and Add.1). In that context, he emphasized the value of the forthright exchange of views in the Third Committee not only on the successes registered but also on the problems encountered by countries in their quest for social progress. Such exchanges had promoted a better understanding of the need for mutual accommodation and for delineating areas of useful co-operation. The Office for Development Research and Policy Analysis was most interested in continuing to co-operate with the Committee either through reports on the world social situation or in any other way the Committee might deem appropriate.

53. Mr. VOICU (Romania), referring to document A/40/256 on the International Youth Year, containing the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth which had been elaborated and adopted by consensus by the Advisory Committee, said that the consideration of that report would provide an opportunity to assess the implementation of programmes for the preparation and observance of the International Youth Year, a unique event which should go beyond the strict calendar limits. The climate of constructive dialogue generated by the Year should continue to be fostered by a strategic approach to youth issues. It was necessary to focus on the specific needs of young people and take systematic and dynamic steps at all levels to find ways of meeting them.

54. Notwithstanding the success in implementing the various national, regional and international youth programmes, it could not be said that the many economic, political, social and cultural problems involving the younger generation had been entirely solved. That was why the decision-making bodies at all levels must think and act in programming terms to solve the problems affecting the destinies of young people. That was the principle underlying the orientation proposed by the Advisory Committee in document A/40/256.

55. It was a happy coincidence that the International Year of Peace was to follow immediately after International Youth Year. Both events had essentially the same objectives. The forthcoming United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year would, for the first time, offer all Member States an opportunity to consider in depth specific youth problems and to exchange ideas and experience on the most suitable means of solving those problems and of strengthening and diversifying future international co-operation in the field of youth.

56. The recent World Conference of National Committees for the International Youth Year, held in Bucharest, had highlighted national experience and actions and policies intended to improve the status of youth, and increase the responsible participation of the younger generation in shaping the present and the future of world peace and progress. On the basis of the valuable experience of the national committees and in the light of the views expressed at various international

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(Mr. Voicu, Romania)

meetings on the International Youth Year, his delegation believed that the national committees for the International Youth Year should be kept on after 1985 as national committees for youth affairs, development and peace.

57. The creation of conditions for the permanent, direct and active participation of youth in the implementation of the objectives of development and peace would be of paramount importance for carrying out the guidelines, involving younger generations in activities relating to the celebration of the International Year of Peace, and implementing the International Development Strategy. At the same time, the United Nations must find ways of ensuring that the problems of the younger generation continued to enjoy attention. The absence of a United Nations body dealing directly with youth issues made it necessary to make full use of all the mechanisms and structures within the United Nations system that had competence in the field of youth. His delegation believed that the Vienna Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should organize its activities in such a way as to be able to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it for the implementation of the guidelines.

58. Mrs. TAVARES de ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that the specially vulnerable groups whose human rights the United Nations had thought must be protected included women, children, the disabled, migrant workers, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, and the elderly. It soon became apparent that older persons had been one of the most neglected groups, despite the fact that aging was a universal experience and that the world population was steadily growing older. It seemed incredible that, although there was a Declaration on the Rights of the Child, a Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations had not adopted a formal declaration of the same kind to protect the rights of the elderly.

59. After describing the background of the consideration of aging in the United Nations, she expressed pleasure at the success of the World Assembly on Aging. With 124 Member States participating, it had produced up-to-date information and demographic models as well as projections for the future, had prompted the establishment of the United Nations Trust Fund for the Aging, and had resulted in the drafting of the International Plan of Action on Aging (Vienna Plan). That Plan included programmes, recommendations and policies to be applied at the national, regional and international level, and had been unanimously adopted by the General Assembly.

60. Simply having held the World Assembly did not exempt the United Nations from the obligation to continue its study of the problem. However, there was no organization within the United Nations system that could devote itself fully to the implementation of the Plan, responsibility for which had been allocated to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which dealt with matters relating to women, minorities, human rights, refugees and the family. When the World Assembly had been held, some representatives had felt that issues of aging would require the attention of an autonomous body wholly dedicated to matters relating to older persons. In order to be able to deal with the problems caused

(Mrs. Tavares de Alvarez,
Dominican Republic)

by the aging of the world's population, more staff and more funds were needed than were currently available. The Aging Unit at the Vienna Centre had a small staff that changed frequently, thus impairing the continuity and coherence of its work. The implementation of the Vienna Plan depended on a Trust Fund that had remained very small.

61. The Trust Fund had been set up in 1980 to make preparations for the World Assembly on Aging, and in 1982 the General Assembly had decided that the remaining funds, together with additional donations, should be used to assist Member States in formulating and implementing policies and programmes for aging in order to meet the rapidly increasing needs of older persons. In 1980, contributions to the Trust Fund had totalled \$250,000. Between 1981 and the end of 1983, they had totalled \$1,141,559. In 1984, they had dropped to only \$42,500.

62. It could be seen from document A/38/6 that regular budgetary resources allocated to the subprogramme on aging for the biennium 1984-1985 totalled \$625,000 (7 per cent of programme total). Document A/40/6 showed that those resources would be reduced to \$401,800 for the biennium 1986-1987 (5 per cent of programme total). However, the Centre's total budget had been reduced by only 1.3 per cent, in other words although the funds allocated to some programmes remained the same or were reduced only very little, the appropriation for the elderly was reduced by 30 per cent. The document also showed that estimated expenditures for substantive activities to be paid for out of the Trust Fund for the Aging had also declined considerably, from \$450,000 in the biennium 1984-1985 to \$150,000 for the period 1986-1987. The Trust Fund itself would virtually cease to exist by the end of 1987.

63. Nevertheless, the needs of older persons, far from decreasing, were growing daily. In 1950, according to United Nations estimates, there had been approximately 200 million persons aged 60 or over in the world at large. By 1975, that figure had increased to 350 million. United Nations projections for the year 2000 indicated that the number would rise to 590 million, and by 2025, to more than 1.1 billion, in other words an increase of 224 per cent since 1975. It was forecast that over the same period the world population as a whole would increase by 100 per cent, from 4.1 billion to 8.2 billion. Accordingly, in 45 years the elderly would constitute 13.7 per cent of the world population, a proportion whose problems and needs could certainly not be dealt with by a reduced staff and a tiny fund.

64. Her delegation was deeply concerned that among the new priority fields for future action, Governments were urged to establish co-ordination centres for questions relating to aging as part of their national offices charged with population affairs (E/1985/6, para. 151 (a)). Although aging was of course related to population matters, its social, economic, cultural and spiritual aspects must not be downgraded. It would be preferable, therefore, to assist the developing countries to strengthen the co-ordination centres set up for the World Assembly on Aging, or to help them to set up such centres if they were still without them.

(Mrs. Tavares de Alvarez,
Dominican Republic)

65. She was also concerned at the fact that neither the First Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging (E/1985/6) nor the report of the Secretary-General (A/40/714) contained a breakdown of the ways in which the resources of the Trust Fund had been used to implement the International Plan of Action. A detailed report on the types of assistance given to the various recipient countries would have served as an inducement to donor countries to increase their contributions to the Trust Fund.

66. The First Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging had clearly demonstrated that a concrete programme was required within the United Nations to deal with the urgent needs - economic, social, cultural and spiritual - of the world's aging population, such as the programme developed with the establishment of UNICEF in response to a comparable critical demographic change. In 1946 the world population had been young and war-torn and third-world countries did not have the resources needed to care for the child population. Children had been the victims of hunger, disease and lack of education and health care, and the United Nations General Assembly had responded to one situation by establishing UNICEF, whose work had been so effective and so far-reaching that the organization had won the Nobel Peace Prize and the gratitude of the entire world.

67. World population trends had changed since 1946, and in the coming years the elderly would find themselves in the same critical situation that children had faced in 1946. Accordingly, since 1981 her country had advocated the establishment of a body structured along the lines of UNICEF to respond to the needs of the elderly: a United Nations Programme on Aging. As an autonomous body within the United Nations system, it would be financed from voluntary contributions and would receive the same proportionate financing from the regular budget as did the Aging Unit. Its major task would be to implement the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging. It would deal solely with matters pertaining to older persons, and would endeavour to solve their problems, study relevant demographic issues and execute badly needed programmes. The new body, which would pool resources from the United Nations system and other sources, including the Aging Unit, would also promote co-operation among the developing countries through the exchange of information and technology, serve as a forum for all national, regional and international organizations concerned with aging and disseminate the results of research and data on the subject.

68. The commendable efforts of Governments and some non-governmental organizations to promote the implementation of the Plan of Action on Aging were inadequate in the face of an undertaking of such magnitude. The question of aging, which was a universal problem, should be resolved in a unified and concerted manner by the international community. Her delegation intended to submit to the Third Committee a draft resolution calling upon the Secretary-General to establish an administrative committee within the Secretariat which would be able to call on expert consultants sponsored and supported by Governments and interested non-governmental organizations, to study the necessity and viability of a United

(Mrs. Tavares de Alvarez,
Dominican Republic)

Nations Programme on Aging and possible sources of financing. The draft resolution would also request the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-first session on conclusions reached by the Committee. She urged all Governments to support the draft resolution in order that the theme of the fortieth anniversary, "United Nations for a better world", could become a reality for all older persons.

69. Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic) said that the exchange of experience with a view to achieving far-reaching social and economic changes in the interest of social progress was extremely important. It called not only for the political will of Member States to work with realism, reason and prudence, but also for determination to overcome the serious obstacles which, 40 years after the victory over fascism and the establishment of the United Nations, still prevented peoples from exercising their right to self-determination and impeded their striving for social progress. Accordingly, the Commission for Social Development, at its twenty-ninth session, had called on Member States to ensure the rapid and complete elimination of such phenomena as colonialism, neo-colonialism, occupation, foreign domination and other forms of inequality and exploitation. The social and economic crisis which had persisted for years in the Western industrialized nations had aggravated the situation of many working people and had seriously affected the developing countries' struggle to overcome the difficulties inherited from colonialism and to achieve economic and social progress.

70. In that context, it was indispensable to raise the problem of the ever-increasing waste of material and intellectual resources on the arms race, which not only enhanced the danger of nuclear war, but also deprived mankind of resources that were urgently needed for economic and social progress. Therefore, it was essential to adopt resolute, even radical, measures of arms limitation and disarmament, one of the conclusions reached by the Commission for Social Development at its last session. The numerous and constructive proposals on disarmament made by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the other Socialist States indicated the path to be followed to achieve that objective.

71. In order steadily to improve the living standards of its people, his country had maintained economic growth at all stages of its social development despite changing international conditions. Socialist ownership of the means of production was the basis of the country's stable development. The existence of co-operative and nationally-owned property permitted comprehensive planning of economic and social development for the benefit of the entire population and optimal utilization of all resources.

72. Social development in his country which had begun in 1971 was at a stage characterized by a new synthesis of economic and social policies. Convinced that economic and social policies were closely interrelated, his country continued constantly to raise the material and cultural living standards of the people by establishing a higher rate of growth in socialist production and increased efficiency and labour productivity. The implementation of that policy was served

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

by combining the advantages of socialism with the achievements of scientific and technological progress. In that way, stable economic growth was guaranteed, while the planning of social production protected workers from possible adverse effects. The right to work, education and health care and a wide range of benefits for families, particularly children, had long been a daily reality in his country, where it had always been believed that the enjoyment of economic and social rights was indispensable to the exercise of all other basic rights and fundamental freedoms.

73. With regard to the concrete results of the social policy of the German Democratic Republic, he noted that the information which his delegation had communicated to the Secretary-General in October 1984 had not been reflected in the respective report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fortieth session. Since 1971, under a housing programme, more than two million newly-built or modernized flats had been provided for the people, thereby considerably improving living conditions for over six million citizens in a country with a population of 16.9 million. Women and children received extensive care. Paid leave for pregnancy and maternity amounted to 26 weeks. If they so wished, mothers could take a one-year leave from work after the birth of the first and second child, and 18 months' leave after the birth of each additional child. Apart from leave after the birth of the first child, mothers received normal sickness benefits during that period. In addition, a State maternity benefit of 1,000 marks was paid on the birth of each child. While mothers were on leave, their jobs remained secure.

74. The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations had set Member States the task of employing international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The Commission for Social Development of the Economic and Social Council was the most appropriate forum for a detailed exchange of views on national experience in achieving social progress. That forum should be used to a far greater extent for the discussion of such questions, which it should pursue more actively. In that connection, due account should be taken of the close links existing between the preservation of peace, the maintenance of international security and the striving for social progress; that linkage had been enshrined in Article 55 of the Charter and had been reaffirmed in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

75. Mutually beneficial international co-operation among States based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and respect for the right of peoples to self-determination was a fundamental prerequisite for achieving social progress in all countries. As before, the German Democratic Republic was willing to contribute its share in that effort and to support relevant initiatives of the Third Committee.

76. Mr. BORG (Malta) said that only economic expansion and social reform could create the necessary conditions to bring about a sustained improvement in the well-being of youth, the aged and the disabled. The Government of Malta had first formally raised the question of aging in the United Nations General Assembly

(Mr. Borg, Malta)

in 1969. Eventually, in 1971 a resolution sponsored by Malta had been adopted giving the United Nations the mandate to study the question as a basis for international action. Malta's interest had further been manifested by its active role before, during and after the World Assembly on Aging held in Vienna in 1982; that interest had been reflected in the voluntary contribution made by his Government, within its modest means, to the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging during the current year.

77. On the national front, the policy of his Government towards the aging was clear and unequivocal: citizens who had worked to make Malta what it was today received what was theirs by right and not by charity. In line with that policy, his Government was co-ordinating the various contributions made by the family, the community and voluntary organizations and had provided services to meet the needs and requirements of that age group. In that connection, he referred to the establishment of an Institute of Gerontology at the University of Malta to help implement the International Plan of Action on Aging.

78. In harmony with the spirit of the International Plan of Action on Aging, and, more specifically, pursuant to recommendation 57 of the Plan, his Government, on 24 September 1985, had proposed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that a United Nations institute on aging should be established in Malta. Malta, in pursuit of its policy of acting as a bridge between developing and developed countries, and as the home of an old-established university of international reputation, was ideally suited to the role of host for such an institution, in close collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

79. The institute would be of assistance to the developing nations to prepare them for the inevitable consequences of a massive increase in the elderly, would provide facilities for seminars and meetings and would help to collate and co-ordinate the updating and availability of data, information and training material in developing countries. Against that background, his Government had invited the Secretary-General, through the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, to initiate a feasibility study on the proposal for submission to and consideration by the Third Committee during the forty-first session of the General Assembly.

80. In conclusion, with reference to the Secretary-General's report on the question of aging (A/40/714), which had stressed the need for accelerated attention and action at the national, regional and international levels, he agreed with the Secretary-General's finding that, despite heightened awareness, opportunities had in fact remained limited for actual implementation of the concrete policies and programmes recommended in the Plan of Action on Aging. The situation was even more acute in the fields of health, employment, income, security, retirement and housing. His delegation accordingly appealed to all countries to collaborate with the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and with the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, in continuing to build on what had been achieved by the Vienna Plan of Action.

81. Mr. BACKES (Austria) said that the international community's interest in, and dedication to, older members of society had been manifested at the 1982 World Assembly on Aging, which had been attended by 124 Member States. During the discussion in the World Assembly there had been agreement that solutions to the issues could only be found through mutual understanding among nations and particularly among the different age groups of society. The outcome of that conference was adequately reflected in the International Plan of Action on Aging, which had been one of the rare occasions in the recent history of the Organization when such an instrument had been adopted unanimously.

82. It was essential to preserve the momentum generated by the World Assembly, particularly at the national but also at the regional and international levels. Otherwise, the credibility of the United Nations would be at stake, as it could then rightly be argued that the United Nations was primarily concerned with organizing large gatherings of policy-makers, government officials and diplomats and was less concerned with following up debates and with the effective implementation of the recommendations adopted.

83. The United Nations Trust Fund for Aging had been established within the framework of the preparations for the World Assembly on Aging and continued to function in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/25. Thanks to the generosity of several contributors, it still had resources for project financing, but those resources had now become very limited. His delegation was confident that further contributions would be forthcoming, especially as the Fund had been included in the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities to be held in November 1985.

84. Austria could support some of the points made by Ambassador Tavares de Alvarez of the Dominican Republic, but the cure for the problem of aging could not be found in the establishment of a new United Nations agency. The Plan of Action on Aging had been adopted in 1982 but the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which had been mandated to implement the Plan, had never been given the necessary staff to fulfil that task. The proposed programme budget for 1986-1987 showed that the social sector of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was not only stagnating in real terms but had even seen its share diminished compared with the economic sector. It was obvious that social development was still accorded little priority, particularly when compared with economic development.

85. His Government did not wish to see the duplication of trust funds or of any other United Nations bodies. In the case of the Trust Fund for Aging, there was a special need to find resources urgently. His Government had provided \$148,000 since the establishment of the Fund and was prepared to continue its support at the forthcoming Pledging Conference. He appealed to Member States to do likewise.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.