



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZADOR (Hungary)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

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

(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 (continued)

(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 (continued)

1. Mr. MOYA PALENCIA (Mexico), speaking on agenda item 90, summarized the world social situation by quoting the President of his country, who had stated that "the future of civilization is threatened by the arms race, and especially the nuclear arms race, while the world economic crisis grows worse, to the detriment of the developing countries in particular. This is due largely to the vast amount of financial, scientific and technological resources which the great Powers are investing in their nuclear adventure instead of promoting economic production and

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(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

social progress in their own countries. Unfortunately, even in the developing countries, military expenditures have increased, too." The conclusion to be drawn was that it was absolutely necessary to set world policy and the world economy back on course and to promote social progress once again.

2. As indicated in Parts One and Two of the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1), the Latin American countries were bearing the full brunt of the effects of the international economic crisis, which jeopardized the economic and human capital that had been accumulated over several decades, and, more specifically, women's progress in achieving equality with men and young people's prospects of participating in national economic life. In that connection, it was unfortunate that the supplement to the Secretary-General's report, on the effects of the international economic crisis on social conditions, particularly in the developing countries, had not yet been issued.

3. To meet the crisis, the Latin American countries had taken austerity measures which had cost them dearly in social and economic terms and which, unfortunately, had not always produced the desired effect. In fact, as a result of unilateral decisions, their income had been considerably reduced, thus limiting their room for manoeuvring and weakening their capacity for resistance. Only a resumption of economic growth could guarantee the medium-term success of the Latin American countries' adjustment programmes and enable them not only to discharge their external debt, but also to continue to improve the living conditions of their people.

4. Even though the Secretary-General stressed in his report that a more effective use of economic resources required the decentralization of decision-making at the national level, it was striking to note that, at the international level, exactly the opposite was taking place; decision-making tended to be monopolized by a very small number of countries and institutions, which led to an increasingly ineffective distribution of resources. Currently, the developing countries, which had always demonstrated a heightened awareness of their responsibilities, were waiting for the developed countries to display, in turn, a readiness to engage in political dialogue, before the world slipped into chaos. At a time of increasing recognition of the international nature of major problems such as terrorism and drug trafficking, why should the developing countries have to cope with their economic difficulties by themselves? All countries were now responsible for each other, and it was fitting that, during the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the numerous pledges of loyalty to the Charter and the designation of 1986 as the International Year of Peace should, in keeping with the wish expressed by the Secretary-General, be followed up by negotiations among responsible countries determined to solve the major problems of the hour and put an end to the arms race, overcome the crisis in development and promote human rights.

5. Mr. TORRES (Nicaragua) said that until 1979, the social situation in Nicaragua had been that of an underdeveloped and dependent country, with most of the wealth concentrated in the hands of a few families and the bulk of the population deprived of its fundamental rights, such as the right to land, health and education. However, the Nicaraguan people had struggled to bring about profound socio-economic changes after the triumph of the revolution, which had their foundation in the overwhelming participation of the people.

(Mr. Torres, Nicaragua)

6. Accordingly, in education, only eight months after the revolution, more than 150,000 young people had been mobilized to organize the major National Literacy Crusade, which had reduced illiteracy from 50.5 per cent to 13 per cent. The education process was being continued with the establishment of 17,000 people's education centres (CEP), which provided free education to more than 1 million students.

7. The budget for health, like the budget for education, was one of the largest, and the people of the country were actively involved in health administration on a large scale, through people's health days to promote preventive medicine, the Sandinist Defence Committees (CDS) in towns and the Rural Workers' Association in the country. In 1983, the world Health Organization had proclaimed Nicaragua a model country "in the service of health".

8. Following the general elections of November 1984, the National Assembly had been set up which, in addition to its legislative functions, was responsible for drawing up the new political constitution of the State. A special constitutional commission had also been set up within the National Assembly, consisting of two sub-commissions: the Sub-Commission on Constitutional Affairs, responsible for preparing the draft constitution which would then be submitted to the National Assembly, and the Sub-Commission for National Consultation, which had organized the constitutional debate at national level. That debate was to take place in two stages: in the first stage, political and social leaders, women, private enterprise, young people, workers, religious groups and trade unions had all been consulted. All seven parties represented in the National Assembly had submitted proposals and had commented on the principles of the constitution. In the second stage, an initial draft of the constitution would be submitted to the people, meeting in people's councils throughout the country, so that the new constitution would genuinely reflect the will of the people and institutionalize the social conquests of the 1979 revolution.

9. Lastly, the agrarian reform introduced by the Government was not designed simply to respond to a historical demand by farmers; first and foremost it was intended as an instrument of socio-economic transformation. Given the characteristics of the country, the agriculture and food industry was the key to that social transformation. There was also a very active co-operative movement in the food sector, which received technical, financial and other assistance. In 1983, the Government had launched a national food programme to make the country ultimately self-sufficient in food.

10. Unfortunately, all the efforts made by the Nicaraguan people were being hindered by the war of aggression against Nicaragua and, most recently, by the forms of chemical warfare of which it appeared to be the victim. Thus, for the first time, the cotton crop which, with coffee, was one of the country's main sources of foreign currency, had been afflicted by a rare disease which had prevented its growth over vast areas of land. The haemorrhagic dengue virus had also caused deaths among the population for the first time.

11. Thus, for Nicaragua, the struggle for peace was not merely a principle but an urgent necessity.

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12. Mr. DIRAR (Sudan) said that his country had devoted increasing attention to young people, the elderly and the disabled since April 1985, when the dictatorship had been overthrown in a popular uprising in which young people had taken part. The Sudan had participated actively in regional and international meetings and seminars devoted to the International Youth Year. At national level, the Government's concern for Sudanese youth had been tangibly demonstrated by the establishment of a national youth and sports council. His country was in complete solidarity with the young Palestinians, Namibians and South Africans who were the victims of racial discrimination and whose human dignity was being trampled on.

13. Elderly people were greatly respected in the Sudan because of the many things they could teach the young, and numerous ambitious programmes were being implemented for them. The Sudan believed that the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging had served to draw the attention of the international community to the problems of aging and that the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging deserved support.

14. The Sudan had participated in the international efforts undertaken within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons through national, governmental and people's organizations. Many projects had been launched in order to enhance the well-being and daily lives of disabled persons, while respecting their dignity. Attention had been paid to their participation in working life, particularly during 1984 which had been proclaimed "Training Year" in the Sudan. Legislative measures benefiting disabled persons were being adopted, and many charitable organizations, such as the Sudanese Association for Support to the Disabled, were working to improve their living conditions. Efforts were being made to prevent disablement, for example by vaccinating children against many disabling diseases. However, a great deal remained to be done at the national and international levels and it was essential to draw up plans of action for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

15. Drought and desertification, which had caused famine on an unprecedented scale, had seriously hindered efforts to help underprivileged groups such as young people, the elderly and the disabled. The Sudan was not the only country affected by those problems, and it was only within the framework of the International Development Strategy that a solution could be found.

16. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the 1985 report on the world social situation (E/CN.5/1985/2/Rev.1) did not reflect in any way the present inequitable distribution of the benefits of progress. Many third world countries were socially underdeveloped as a result of their colonial past, the influence of international monopolies and the unequal distribution of wealth. Although the report mentioned some of the causes of that underdevelopment, it did not go into sufficient detail on the situation of Namibia and Palestine, which were at the mercy of aggression, occupation and the threat and use of force. There was no mention of the social tragedies caused by the ill-treatment, discrimination, imprisonment and forced removal of population that resulted from aggression, occupation and the denial of human rights. Lastly, the report made no mention of the fact that the racists' objective was to intensify the differences that existed between themselves and the indigenous populations of the territories they occupied, in order to strengthen their hold over those populations.

(Mr. Glaiel, Syrian Arab Republic)

17. His country's economic plan was intended to raise the standard of living of the population and to modify the structures of the national economy in order to free it from all dependence on other countries. The aim was to make the best possible use of the potential of the productive sector to distribute national income fairly and to adopt legislation in the fields of social services, agriculture, health, employment, wages and housing.

18. Physically and mentally disabled persons were certainly not considered a burden on society in the Syrian Arab Republic; on the contrary. Efforts were made to get them to participate in economic life. A large number of institutes offered them vocational training and they received services free of charge. Under the technical co-operation agreement between the Syrian Arab Republic, UNDP and UNESCO, a number of handicapped children were being trained in special schools.

19. Elderly people were also accorded special attention by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Employment which adopted special programmes for them. Services were provided for the elderly at very low cost.

20. Mr. DARWISH (Egypt) said that his country attached great importance to questions relating to youth. The theme of the International Youth Year - participation, development, peace - had special meaning at a time when the threat of the arms race, both nuclear and conventional, hung over the world. The Gulf war was claiming thousands of victims among the young. Hundreds of young South Africans, who had risen up against the unjust and immoral policy of apartheid, were dying in South Africa and occupied Namibia. On the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupying forces were closing universities and schools, depriving young Palestinians of their right to education and freedom of opinion. His delegation hoped that all those problems would be addressed in greater detail at the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year, to be held in November 1985.

21. The question of channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations was also of great importance. Those channels of communication should be strengthened by increasing the circulation of information relating to youth in every part of the world. The Youth Information Bulletin should be improved in order to be more appealing to young people. His delegation hoped that that question would remain under consideration.

22. With regard to item 98, his delegation noted with satisfaction the outcome of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. He considered that it was of crucial importance to take into account the different values, traditions and socio-economic structures of a society when research was being undertaken with a view to implementing a programme in that society. It also believed that it was essential for information on crime prevention measures and research into juvenile crime to be disseminated in that society. Lastly, his delegation considered that inter-agency co-operation was a vital tool for the prevention of juvenile crime.

23. Mr. RAJAIE-KHORASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on item 89, recalled that the Iranian revolution had basically been carried out by young

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(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

people. When the Shah's secret police had caused a climate of suspicion and oppression to reign, creating a feeling of paranoia among people to the point of eliminating all opposition or organized protest, the universities had become the principal centres of political action and revolutionary protest. Young people had quite naturally found themselves in the forefront of revolutionary political action and had made the greatest sacrifices for the revolution. It was not surprising therefore that they now occupied positions of responsibility in all sectors of the administration, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where age was normally a highly prized quality. The Co-ordinating Committee for the International Youth Year and other committees had launched various programmes which included the preparation and implementation of 62 special research, teaching and training programmes; the publication of articles concerning youth in Iranian newspapers and magazines; the participation of young people in regional and international seminars; the holding of sports seminars at which programmes devoted to youth were presented; the organization of various cultural activities and the granting of facilities to young people to enable them to participate in International Youth Year; the organization of photographic and book exhibitions, competitions on educational themes, exhibitions of young people's inventions and projects, sports programmes and events for International Youth Year, and radio and television programmes; and the co-ordination of the festival of sports films and the holding in universities of seminars or meetings specially devoted to the Year.

24. Thanks to the information media, which had become a powerful educational tool, young people were aware of major international problems and in particular, of all aspects of the question of apartheid.

25. Among the bodies established by revolutionary youth, the Jihad-e-Sazandegi (fight for construction) had launched literacy programmes and school, road and factory construction programmes, undertaken agricultural projects and assumed various responsibilities, thereby helping to ensure the country's self-sufficiency and assisting the Government in its task. It was the help of that organization that had enabled Iran, without outside assistance, to pay off the debts inherited from the previous régime, finance an extremely expensive war, survive the various sanctions and limitations imposed on it and rebuild the country. Had it not been for the war that had been imposed upon it, Iran would have profoundly transformed the economic and social situation of its people.

26. The importance accorded to young people must not be perceived as a rejection of the older generation. Elderly people were in no way a social problem in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where they were far from being considered a burden on society. As the guardians of moral and social traditions, full of experience and wisdom, old people enjoyed the respect and care prescribed in the Koran and preserved an active role in society. In other words, the recommendations of the Committee in that area did not really apply to Iran, whose experience in that regard might even be of use to others.

27. Miss AL-TURAIHI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that she had no intention of referring to all the aspects of the war between Iran and Iraq, which had already been discussed in detail. Each time it attacked, Iran

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(Miss Al-Turaihi, Iraq)

tried to raise its people's morale by assuring them that that would be the last offensive, and when it suffered another defeat, it tried to justify its position. Why did it persist in ignoring Security Council resolutions and the will of the international community; and why did it not reply to Iraq's appeals for peace? Iraq very much wished to abide by international law, whereas Iran approached its obligations selectively and only retained those provisions that enabled it to pursue its aggressive policy towards Iraq.

28. Mr. RAJAIE-KHORASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he was astonished that the representative of Iraq should touch on the very substance of the question of the war, the proper place for the discussion of which was another body. If he had alluded indirectly to the war, it was only to show what his people had managed to do in spite of it. As a result, he considered the intervention by the representative of Iraq to be uncalled for.

OTHER MATTERS

29. The CHAIRMAN announced that Singapore had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/40/L.3.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.