



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMFR (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 85: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/631, A/41/435)

AGENDA ITEM 86: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/621, A/41/340-E/1986/1990)

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AGENDA ITEM 90: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/605, A/41/341-S/18065 and Corr.1)

AGENDA ITEM 91: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/618, A/41/354)

1. Mr. YOLAH, (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the vast majority of the world's population still did not enjoy all the rights envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. It was, for example, paradoxical that although world supplies of dietary energy were some 10 per cent greater than the nutritional requirements of the world's population, 500 million people were undernourished, and that despite the current hesitant international recovery, unemployment continued to grow disproportionately in many countries.

2. Many countries had had to adopt emergency adjustment measures and had resorted inter alia, to external financing or debt rescheduling to ease immediate pressures, often at the expense of their long-term development. Despite the initial success of many austerity programmes a large number of debtor countries had been forced by various adverse circumstances to seek additional credit to meet interest payments, thus sinking more deeply into debt.

3. In the search for solutions to the current delicate situation, the needs of the population in the short- and in the long-term had to be taken into account and more attention had to be paid to the human dimension. Investment in human resources had a high yield in the process of economic growth and was a key determinant of improvement in the human condition. There need be no conflict between the goals of balance-of-payments adjustment, the resumption of growth and the protection and promotion of human development.

4. The success of the UNICEF immunization campaign, the agricultural production project in Zimbabwe and the literacy campaigns in Tanzania clearly demonstrated that strategies which mobilized all of society's organized resources to achieve social goals were the most cost-effective. In that context, the Committee might wish to consider how best to monitor the fulfilment of human needs as closely as it monitored the balance of payments, inflation and economic growth.

(Mr. Yolah)

5. In advocating the utilization of all society's resources, particular attention must be paid to the key role of women in all sectors of the economy and to their special needs in health, social services and education. Ideas concerning the key role of women and the need to ensure their full participation and integration had been emphasized in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted at the Nairobi Conference and in the work of the Third Committee and the Economic and Social Council. It was essential that the momentum given to the advancement of women by the United Nations Decade for Women and the Nairobi Conference should be maintained and that even more States should accede or ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. In addition, monitoring was necessary to ensure that the machinery to implement the Forward-looking Strategies was functioning properly.

6. The vital contribution to the development process of other social groups, such as the disabled, youth and the aging, should not be underestimated. Those groups had been brought to public attention by the recent global events dedicated to them, namely, International Youth Year, the World Assembly on Aging, and the International Year of Disabled Persons which had emphasized the themes of prevention, rehabilitation and equal opportunities. It was imperative to ensure that at the international, regional and national levels, the physical environment, social and health services, education and job opportunities were made accessible to all. Assessment of the follow-up activities of those international events indicated that one of the most important results had been the development of a new perspective in which the young, the old, and the disabled were viewed as effective agents for development rather than merely passive recipients.

7. Another critical problem profoundly affecting the human condition was crime in its many forms and dimensions. That problem had been addressed by the seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The universal implementation of the Milan Plan of Action could contribute significantly to reducing crime and alleviating its consequences, and to improving the treatment of offenders.

8. There were other social objectives, such as the ideal of a just and fully participatory society, which transcended the goal of increasing society's productivity. Their implementation required the allocation of some resources to less productive uses.

9. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was actively preparing for the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, to be held in Vienna from 7 to 15 September 1987, with the objective of pointing to additional ways in which the productivity of society could be enhanced and obstacles to social progress and development overcome. Three preparatory meetings had already been held, in Asia and the Pacific, in Africa and in Western Asia. Their reports revealed the interest of Member States in the Consultation. In April 1987, the Government of Poland would host a regional meeting of ECE States and the possibility of holding a similar meeting in the ECLAC region was being explored.

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(Mr. Yolah)

10. With respect to the political and economic situation in Africa, he recalled that at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the problems Africa was facing, the measures initiated and the needs requiring international support had been underlined. It was particularly satisfying that the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990 had been adopted by consensus, and that it recognized the importance of investing in human resources and strengthening the goal of fuller participation.

11. Strategies which mobilized all existing social resources in order to put new knowledge and techniques at the disposal of the people could offer basic protection to a very large number at a cost which was affordable even in today's difficult times. Economic and social programmes were only a means to an end - the well-being of the majority.

12. Mr. SOKALSKI (Director of the Social Development Division and of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) pointed out that in both developed and developing countries there had been cutbacks in services and social programmes, since the costs of such programmes were immediate and visible, while their benefits were often long-term and sometimes intangible. Those cutbacks meant a loss of investment in people and their future productivity.

13. But social development must continue to remain the foundation for overall development even in times of crisis. While economic growth did not inevitably lead to social development, social development was not in competition with economic progress; it complemented it. To achieve true development, with benefits that radiated out to the majority of people, the social and economic components of development must be integrated.

14. In 1985 International Youth Year had been observed and the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had been held. Also, the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was now at its mid-point. In 1987 the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes would be held in Vienna. Some population groups had developed greater awareness of their specific rights and needs. The international plans of action formulated with regard to disabled persons, youth and aging constituted a global perspective and an agenda for immediate and long-term action.

15. By addressing the concerns of special groups of the population and the effects of the increased incidence of crime, the social dimension of overall development had been brought into sharper focus. The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons called for the integration of the disabled into society on the basis of equalization of opportunities and the Milan Plan of Action stressed the relationship between harmonious development and the reduction of intolerable levels of criminality.

(Mr. Sokalski)

16. The Centre co-ordinated international events, their follow-up activities and preparations for forthcoming events. Follow-up activities commanded much of the Centre's resources. Despite the financial crisis, no efforts were being spared to deploy available resources as effectively as possible, but the Centre could only carry out its mandate if Governments made that possible.
17. Because of the crisis, the Centre was trying to consolidate its resources around three separate but closely related clusters of activities: policy-oriented research; the exchange and dissemination of information; and advisory and support services. Through such activities, the Department could provide more tangible forms of assistance to Governments in their implementation of social development programmes.
18. In carrying out the mandates entrusted to it by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the Centre depended heavily upon the experience, good will and accomplishments of numerous non-governmental organizations. Those organizations had played an increasingly important role in many aspects of the Centre's work, for which it was grateful to them.
19. The report relating to agenda item 90 (A/41/600) indicated that efforts to achieve closer co-ordination and co-ordination with Governments, organs and bodies within the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations were gradually yielding results. During the period covered by the report the following activities had been initiated: the publication of studies, guidelines and research papers focusing on different aspects of policies and programmes dealing with the prevention of disability, the rehabilitation of disabled persons and the equalization of opportunities available to them.
20. The obstacles to the implementation of public education and information programmes were a formidable problem. Another area of concern was the shortage of resources of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The same applied to the other United Nations Voluntary Funds relevant to social development issues such as aging and youth. If the trend continued, the resources of those Funds would soon be negligible. The catalytic role of such Funds, especially in the developing countries, was invaluable.
21. The young and the old together formed an increasingly large component of the world population. Many of the problems currently affecting young people could be attributed to the continuous growth of the youth population and the lack of adequate policies and programmes to deal with such growth. The situation of the aging was similar.
22. The report on young people (A/41/621) illustrated the unified strategy within the United Nations system regarding youth and described the various steps taken at the national, regional and international levels to maintain that continuous United Nations strategy for the benefit of youth.

(Mr. Sokalski)

23. The report on the question of aging (A/41/631) reflected a concern that the work of the United Nations in the field of aging might have lost some of its impetus. It presented information on the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and incorporated the responses of Member States to the Secretary-General's note verbale on the subject.

24. The report on crime prevention and criminal justice (A/41/618) described the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Seventh Congress. Among the activities being given priority were: analysis and research on transnational crimes, terrorism, piracy, economic crime and the theft of cultural patrimony. Guidelines, standards and model legal instruments would be developed to help Governments deal with those problems.

25. Ways were being explored to secure assistance in that endeavour from scholars, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and competent United Nations organs. The network of United Nations institutes for crime prevention and criminal justice had also rendered valuable service in the implementation of the Centre's mandates. Progress had been made towards establishing an African institute for crime prevention and criminal justice. The increasing criminality throughout the world required greater support for such activities at the national, regional and international levels.

26. Mr. TANASA (Romania) observed that young people constituted not only important "demographic capital" but also a basic factor of social action, and must become directly involved in resolving the crucial problems of the day, such as the achievement of nuclear disarmament and the establishment of a new international economic order. Such issues could not be separated from the issues specific to youth, such as unemployment, illiteracy, delinquency, violence and terrorism, marginality and drug abuse.

27. The International Youth Year had promoted a new way of thinking in all sectors, recognized the need to establish youth-oriented programmes and demonstrated the existence of the resources needed to open up new prospects so that young people could make a greater contribution to national development efforts.

28. In the preparations for and the observance of the Year, an important prerequisite had been the establishment of national committees or similar machinery which took into account the perspective, conditions and traditions of each country. The guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth were very significant, since the problems and concerns of young people could be resolved only as part of a long-term process. Romania had taken an active part nationally and internationally in various activities concerned with International Youth Year issues, and it supported the proposal made in document A/41/621, paragraph 59 (b), that a specific day should be designated to be observed every year as International Youth Day.

29. Mrs. TAVARES DE ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that General Assembly resolution 40/30 had been a clear affirmation of the growing importance which the United Nations attached to the question of aging. It was significant that the Group of 77 had also directed its attention to the question, which was an integral part of the process of development. The situation described in document A/41/631, which had admittedly been submitted so late that there had been very little time for careful study, was alarming, despite the work done by some agencies and organizations in the United Nations system, especially the World Health Organization, and despite the support of non-governmental organizations. Where research was concerned, what was lacking was an analytical study of the information received by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the constructive utilization of that material.

30. Although the appropriate unit of the Centre had gathered abundant data, it had not analysed, selected and disseminated them so that they could be used for the adoption of positive measures. The 1985 publication entitled The World Aging Situation: Strategies and Policies (ST/ESA/150, contained already published material and contributed no new information. Other publications, such as the Bulletin on Aging and the Periodical on Aging had not appeared in all the official languages of the United Nations and were published after much delay.

31. It was disquieting to read in document A/41/631 that the number of donor countries to the United Nations Trust Fund on Aging had diminished from 25 in 1981-1983 to three in 1985, and that contributions had declined from \$334,300 in 1982-1983 to only \$8,000 so far for 1986-1987. The Trust Fund seemed to have lost credibility, which was disturbing since it was the cornerstone of the Plan of Action.

32. Another cause for concern to the Dominican Republic was the vague and general account which the report gave of the financial status of the Trust Fund. Similarly, a lack of communication and responsibility had been a factor in the erosion of credibility and of confidence in the administration of the Trust Fund. The request by the Government of the Dominican Republic for an evaluation of its programmes and policies in the field of aging and for assistance in planning future policies in that area had never received an answer.

33. The percentage distribution of projects financed by the Trust Fund given in paragraph 49 of the report was disproportionate. Moreover, although more than half the projects approved by the Trust Fund were regional or global projects, invitations had not been issued to all States Members of the United Nations.

34. Her delegation, fully aware of the financial crisis confronting the United Nations, believed that it was essential, before taking action, to bear in mind the recommendations of the Group of 18. Unless action was taken now, the aging of populations would lead to a crisis in the next century; consequently, it was necessary to establish priorities and to act with responsibility, vigour and dedication. Her Government recommended to the Third Committee that all the activities of the United Nations system in the area of aging, and the allocation of funds for that purpose should be co-ordinated; practical strategies for the

(Mrs. Tavares de Alvarez, Dominican Republic)

execution of the International Plan of Action on Aging should be devised, including measures leading to the elaboration of a United Nations programme on aging; research and analysis of policies on aging should be done regularly; questions related to aging should be included in the preparations for the interregional consultations on developmental social welfare policies and programmes; the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging should be incorporated into the new Trust Fund set up on 16 July 1986 at the request of her Government, which was to be called the United Nations International Fund for Aging, and would be administered by the United Nations Development Programme.

35. Those measures would be a response to the urgent request of the President of the General Assembly to make the United Nations a vital, viable and effective organization.

36. Mr. PRATOMO (Indonesia) said that the question of aging was not a serious problem in Indonesia. For decades, the Government had provided institutional assistance to the poorest of the elderly. However, in most cases, it was the families which cared for old people. As Indonesian development progressed, the Government, in co-operation with community groups, had been assuming a wider role in the care of the elderly.

37. In conformity with the Basic Design for Social Welfare Development in Indonesia, efforts were being made to facilitate continued care of the elderly at home through Government support programmes. From 1984 to 1985, over 60,000 elderly people had received non-institutional aid, enabling them to remain with their families. Those who were physically able received vocational training, enabling them to play a productive role and to contribute to the development of society. The destitute received institutional support and resided in homes subsidized by community groups and by the Government.

38. Indonesia would continue to participate in international and regional meetings and forums on aging and to implement the International Plan of Action on Aging adopted in 1982 by the World Assembly on Aging.

39. Indonesia was also concerned with the situation of young people. In celebration of the International Youth Year, activities had been organized in which young people had participated as volunteers in environmental, social and humanitarian projects. Of particular interest had been the formation of volunteer anti-narcotics brigades belonging to the Indonesian National Youth Movement, Karang Taruna. On 10 January 1986, the National Decade on Youth 1986-1996 had been inaugurated for the purpose of maintaining the momentum generated by the International Youth Year. Indonesia welcomed the continued attention of the international community to the problems of young people, who were hard hit, at least in his country, by the high unemployment rates and other consequences of the world economic recession.

(Mr. Pratomo, Indonesia)

40. The Government had initiated legislative measures relating to young people, had adopted labour-intensive development projects and training programmes to increase job opportunities for young people, and was continuing to improve the national education system. In 1978, it had abolished fees in primary schools, which were attended by over 90 per cent of children between the ages of seven and twelve years. As a result, the literacy rate had gone up and education had become one of the four priority sectors of the national budget.

41. With regard to agenda item 90, Indonesia remained firmly committed to easing the suffering of the disabled and ensuring respect for their human rights and the realization of the goal of their full participation in social life and development. To that end, it was implementing a national strategy within the framework of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Programmes for the disabled were part of basic policy on social welfare development and were integrated with other development programmes. With a view to co-ordinating those programmes, the Ministry of Social Affairs had set up a Co-ordinating Team for the Social Welfare Effort for the Disabled, which included representatives of the Departments of Health, Manpower, Co-operatives, Industry, Information and Home Affairs. The co-operation of non-governmental organizations was worth mentioning.

42. Under the current five-year plan, the Government had begun a national rehabilitation programme, with participation ranging from volunteer community social workers to national rehabilitation centres. As a result of the interest shown by Indonesia in improving its health services, external assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources had increased and imports of medical equipment had risen. Indonesia was grateful for that co-operation, and was encouraged by it to forge ahead in its task.

43. Mr. BRAAM (Netherlands) said that the participation of enthusiastic, talented young people in social processes stimulated the material and non-material development of countries. In that regard, the efforts of the various United Nations organs, specialized agencies, funds and programmes for youth must be co-ordinated so as to avoid duplication, gaps and the inefficient use of available resources at both the Secretariat level and the intergovernmental level.

44. With regard to the subject referred to in General Assembly resolution 40/14, he said that it was necessary to democratize education so that all young people, in particular girls and those having few opportunities would have access to it, and could have more influence on its substance. Functional education was important for a more effective use of human resources. It was also necessary to promote technical, vocational and science education.

45. Employment provided young people with the opportunity to contribute to society, enabling them at the same time to become more independent. Self-employment should also be fostered, and access of young people to industry must be widened. Increasing automation was a challenge to their flexibility and ingenuity.

(Mr. Braam, Netherlands)

46. Youth had its own sub-culture which was a source of enrichment for culture as a whole. Without neglecting traditional culture, which was the common heritage of mankind, the contemporary youth culture in all its forms must be seen in a new perspective, since it bound together young people all over the world and strengthened the ties of brotherhood between the different peoples. For that reason, he requested that the Secretary-General should further encourage the participation of young people, who needed an outlet for their gifts, talents and aspirations.

47. With a view to achieving that participation, not only was it necessary for young people to have wider access to the mass media, but also to be taught how they worked. Schools might offer courses in mass communications, and consideration should be given to the participation of youth in the production and transmission of radio, television and news programmes and films.

48. The problem of housing was extremely important in the developing countries. However, there were also homeless people in industrialized countries. That problem was a difficult one for young people in particular, since they had lower incomes than older people. Equal housing opportunities must be offered to young people, and the housing market must be adjusted so as to achieve an adequate supply of living accommodations. The future of children and young people lacking adequate housing in refugee camps or in the large cities was in serious danger, and priority should therefore be given to solving those problems.

49. It was essential for young people to participate in technical co-operation activities, and youth must be integrated into all United Nations programmes. The Committee should adopt a resolution requesting that no efforts should be spared to implement the guidelines for planning and follow-up in the field of youth, and that measures should be adopted to strengthen Governments' youth programmes and policies. Moreover, the Secretary-General should include youth-related projects in the activities of the United Nations, financial resources should be reallocated for that purpose, and, as a general rule, the participation of youth in various projects should be promoted.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.