



THIRD COMMITTEE  
22nd meeting  
held on  
Friday, 23 October 1987  
at 10 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BITTER (Panama)

CONTENTS

- AGENDA ITEM 88: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 89: QUESTION OF AGING; REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 90: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH; REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 93: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS; REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 94: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 141: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 95: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
- AGENDA ITEM 96: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000
- AGENDA ITEM 97: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN; REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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149

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 88: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (continued) (A/42/3; A/42/56-E/1987/7, A/42/57-E/1987/8; A/42/411; A/C.3/42/L.3)

AGENDA ITEM 89: QUESTION OF AGING: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/567; A/C.3/42/L.4)

AGENDA ITEM 90: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/595)

AGENDA ITEM 93: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/551, A/42/561)

AGENDA ITEM 94: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/42/3, A/42/453)

AGENDA ITEM 141: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES (continued) (A/C.3/42/5)

1. Mr. DIRAR (Sudan), referring to agenda item 88, said that co-operatives rooted in the traditional values of solidarity, mutual assistance and self-reliance had always performed an important function in Sudanese rural communities. The first modern co-operatives had begun to operate in 1921 and the first law on the co-operative movement had been passed in 1948. Since then, the co-operative sector had become one of the main sectors of the economy, along with the public, private and communal sectors. The Sudan therefore regarded co-operatives as an invaluable institution for promoting popular participation, self-reliance, democracy and optimal utilization of resources. In view of the current economic crisis, his Government believed that special support should be given to rural co-operatives in the sphere of agriculture, particularly food production. In order to realize their full potential, Sudanese co-operatives must be strengthened by means of training in management and planning. The Sudan endorsed the recommendations in document A/42/56.

2. Turning to agenda item 141, he said that the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes had taken place at a time when all countries were concerned about major social issues and when developing countries in particular were experiencing serious problems of poverty and were unable to provide for even the most basic needs of their populations. It was significant that the goals of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development were still far from being achieved and that their achievement was even more of a problem than had been the case at the time of the adoption of the Declaration.

3. The situation in Africa was particularly alarming. African economies had been hit hard both by natural disasters and by international economic upheavals, and

(Mr. Dirar, Sudan)

there was still no sign of recovery. In the Sudan, the economic crisis, drought and famine coincided with the presence of numerous refugees, who currently constituted 10 per cent of the population. It was currently necessary to reconsider the direction and content of government action in the area of social welfare and take advantage of the opportunities for interregional co-operation. The Sudan stressed in that respect that social welfare was a development challenge. In the absence of resources, the action of Governments was liable to be no more than cosmetic. The developed and developing countries, in the spirit of the Vienna consultations, must jointly undertake to co-operate in finding a solution to the developmental problems which impeded social progress. It was encouraging that the United Nations bodies concerned with social and humanitarian questions had been consolidated at the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Sudan was convinced that the Office, faced with the challenge of that unprecedented social crisis, would be able to make good use of all the resources put at its disposal. The Sudan also believed that the Commission for Social Development should be strengthened and its mandate broadened to cover all the social issues of concern to the international community.

4. Mrs. MATVEEVA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on agenda items 88, 89 and 93, noted that 1.3 billion people were living in poverty, 500 million were starving and innumerable people were unemployed, diseased and homeless. Those people were concentrated particularly in the developing countries; the main cause of that situation was colonialism, which was striving to keep those countries in a state of underdevelopment to strengthen its domination over them. The same objective was pursued by the policy of neocolonialism of which the international monopolies were the principal manifestation. The foreign debt of the developing countries had reached astronomical proportions. Other phenomena (apartheid, racism and racial discrimination, aggression and interference in the internal affairs of States) also impeded social progress.

5. In order to achieve the objectives of social progress, the developed and developing countries must share their experience, particularly within the framework of the United Nations. Since international co-operation was still inadequate, it was necessary, in order to progress in that direction, to overcome mistrust and eliminate stereotypes and condescension. The United Nations had a special role to play in that respect.

6. The homeless constituted an acute social problem with very serious consequences (breakdown of the family, growth of crime, drug addiction, degradation of the individual) which deserved priority attention. The State had a primary role to play in that field if real progress was to be made. Non-governmental organizations, voluntary bodies and others could provide relief without solving the problem. The international community had fully recognized the scope and seriousness of the question since it had proclaimed 1987 the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

7. The cardinal role of the State was confirmed by the Ukrainian SSR's own experience. After the establishment of Soviet power, the Republic had had to

(Mrs. Matveeva, Ukrainian SSR)

undertake agrarian reform, industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture, which had then enabled it to make the population literate, provide free medical services and a system of social security, and eliminate unemployment. The Republic was currently trying to accelerate economic development and democratize social life on the basis of the interests of the workers. That restructuring required not only a modernization of the economy but also a strengthening of social welfare. In recent times, only the State could have evacuated and resettled over 135,000 people after the Chernobyl disaster. The fact that there were no homeless people in the Ukrainian SSR did not mean that the housing problem had been solved. The objective for the year 2000 was to guarantee each family an individual apartment.

8. In the Ukrainian SSR, social justice meant equality, well-being and unimpeded development in all fields for all members of society. It also meant ending the exploitation of man by man, political and economic oppression, and social parasitism in all sectors. Social justice was impossible without the democratization of social life and without full guarantees of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Society and the State had a duty to ensure the same advantages to all members of society, including those incapable of working. It was therefore particularly important to develop the social consumption funds, which provided direct and indirect benefits of various kinds. That action was vital for the elderly and disabled; their social and economic rights must be fully guaranteed, and at the same time they must be able to participate fully in the life of society. Elderly or disabled people who lived alone could benefit from home-care services or enter special establishments where they were looked after by the State.

9. Her delegation commended the action taken by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the important recommendations of the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

10. Her country was preparing a draft resolution on social justice for submission to the Third Committee and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

11. Mr. KOUNKOU (Congo), speaking on agenda item 93, said that his Government, in its concern to implement a coherent social policy for its people and particularly, for disabled persons, had established within the Ministry of Public Health a department of social affairs responsible for mental and physical health, the rehabilitation and social and professional reintegration of disabled persons and the social advancement of the population. The goal of its policies was to integrate disabled persons into society by removing the physical, social and psychological barriers which tended to exclude them from education, employment and socio-cultural activities. His country had welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 37/52 establishing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The proclamation of the Decade of Disabled Persons showed that the international community intended to tackle the problems of disabled persons resolutely, leaving no energies or skills untapped. However, as the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning

(Mr. Kounkou, Congo)

Disabled Persons (Stockholm, August 1987), had recognized the action taken had not been decisive and social budgets had been the hardest hit by the austerity measures adopted in response to the world economic crisis.

12. In African societies, disabled persons had always received the attention and protection of their communities. None the less, the urbanization of the population had led to an erosion of traditional social values and feelings of solidarity. It was true that the health of rural inhabitants, often weakened by diseases which were easily prevented by vaccination or simple hygiene, was more precarious than that of urban populations. However, the Congolese Government, faced with the rapid urbanization of the population, had undertaken to establish structures to meet the needs of the disabled. It had set up 10 functional rehabilitation centres, four artificial limb centres, an institute for young deaf people, a national institute for the blind, a pilot centre for the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons, 12 special workshops and an educational psychology institute. The laws on hiring disabled persons had yet to be amended. However, the Congolese Association of Disabled Persons was working with the competent State bodies on reforming those laws. In that connection, his delegation wished to thank the national and foreign non-governmental organizations working in the Congo to help disabled persons, as well as the United Nations specialized agencies. With the help of UNICEF and WHO the Congo had just completed an immunization campaign designed to reduce death and disability caused by childhood diseases. The network of immunization centres set up for the campaign would become permanent, again with the assistance of UNICEF and WHO.

13. Mrs. FLOREZ (Cuba) said that, since the adoption of the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order more than 10 years previously, the developing countries had fought to win respect for the principles set forth in the Declaration, and for justice and equality in relations among States. However, the economic gap between developing and developed countries had only widened and the peoples of the third world were sinking into a poverty aggravated by inflation, protectionism and the crushing debt burden. The goals of the new international economic order were thus still relevant, despite the attempts made in some quarters to exclude them from United Nations documents. Moreover, the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development had acknowledged that the resources released by disarmament must be urgently reallocated to development. The struggle for development was therefore indissolubly linked with the struggle for peace.

14. It was impossible to separate economic development from social development. That was why the debt of the Latin American and African countries could not be repaid, for humanitarian reasons: that would spell the ruin of those countries and condemn the majority of their populations to extreme poverty. The Guiding Principles adopted at the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, despite the opposition of some countries was a good starting point for taking national, regional and international action to solve the most acute social problems.

(Mrs. Florez, Cuba)

15. After the International Year of Disabled Persons had been proclaimed in 1981, the Cuban Ministry of Public Health had established a national committee consisting of various governmental and non-governmental organizations to conduct technical and educational exchanges in that field with other third world countries. In 1982, the year of the World Assembly on Aging, the national committee responsible for implementing the measures recommended in the International Plan of Action on Aging and establishing technical co-operation with other third world countries had also been placed under that Ministry.

16. Her delegation supported the conclusions of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. There was a direct link between crime, poverty and unemployment and criminality would be eliminated only when the new international economic order was established and the right to development was enforced - Cuba supported the recommendation in Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/53 that the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch become a specialized body. Countries must participate actively in preparations for the Eighth Congress and give increased assistance to the component regional and interregional United Nations institutes in that field, in particular, the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

17. Cuban youth had just held their fifth congress, which had given them an opportunity for a frank and open exchange of views on the problems they encountered in their studies and at work. Proud of their leaders and content with their lot, Cuban young people were devoting their energies to development and were the best guarantors of the revolution.

18. In order to respond to the aspirations of youth, the international community must try to build a better world in which human rights and fundamental freedoms were guaranteed, crime, prostitution and drug addiction were unknown and young people could take part in building their future and defending peace.

AGENDA ITEM 95: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (A/42/3, A/42/38, A/42/383, A/42/627)

AGENDA ITEM 96: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (A/42/3, A/42/516, A/42/528, A/42/597/Rev.1)

AGENDA ITEM 97: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (A/42/3, A/42/444)

19. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Branch for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), introducing the documents for agenda items 95 and 96 on the status of women, noted from the report on the sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/42/38) that the Committee had considered eight initial reports at that session, bringing the total number of initial reports examined to 34. Both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had emphasized how important it was for States parties

(Mrs. Sellami-Meslem)

to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to comply with its provisions and submit their initial reports in accordance with the guidelines. That would facilitate and expedite consideration of reports by the Committee. The Council had welcomed the Committee's efforts to rationalize its procedures and had recommended that the General Assembly consider authorizing the Committee, on an exceptional basis and taking into account the views of delegations, the Organization's financial situation and programme budget priorities for the biennium 1988-1989, to hold additional meetings in order to consider the backlog of reports.

20. Among its substantive recommendations, the Committee had urged States parties to adopt education and information programmes to help eliminate prejudices and current practices hindering the social equality of women, and to withdraw any reservations they had entered to the Convention.

21. The annual report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention (A/42/627) indicated that four more States had become parties to the Convention, bringing the total to 94 (25 States from Africa, 15 from Asia, 10 from Eastern Europe, 25 from Latin America and 19 from Western Europe and other States). Switzerland had also signed the Convention and two States parties had withdrawn their reservations.

22. With regard to agenda item 96, the report in document A/42/528 described the action taken by the United Nations system to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. She drew the Committee's attention to the conclusions in section V of that document.

23. The Committee's discussions would serve to inform the Commission on the Status of Women and would also provide guidance to the Secretariat as it grappled with the issues of administrative reform, enhanced co-ordination and improvement of the services it provided to Governments.

24. Mrs. PASTIZZI-FERENCIC (Director, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)), speaking on agenda item 97, said that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/38, INSTRAW had succeeded in performing its role as a catalyst more effectively by strengthening its network of co-operative arrangements with women's organizations, United Nations bodies and organizations outside the United Nations system and by pooling expertise and resources, making its activities on behalf of women more cost-effective. In response to the General Assembly's concern at the insufficient awareness and understanding of the multifaceted relationship between development and the advancement of women, which slowed down planning, programming and project formulation, the Institute had developed innovative methodological approaches which had enabled it to integrate the rich and diverse body of knowledge in the area of women's studies into the mainstream of pragmatic action to benefit women, their families and societies.

25. In future, following the recommendations of its Board of Trustees, INSTRAW would closely monitor new international trends related to development

(Mrs. Pastizzi-Ferencic)

policy-design, with a view to strengthening the national capabilities of developing countries in the areas of research, training and information through co-operation with research and training institutions and other intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations. Also at the request of its Board of Trustees and pursuant to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, INSTRAW would prepare methodologies for monitoring and evaluating the relevance and efficiency of programmes, thereby enabling Governments, the United Nations system and development agencies to evaluate the impact of programmes for women on mainstream development activities. INSTRAW also planned to strengthen its co-operation with the five regional commissions, which were currently ex-officio members of its Board of Trustees.

26. INSTRAW's long-term perspective would reflect the requirements of the system-wide medium-term plan on women and development, paying particular attention to comprehensive approaches to women and development, the collection and analysis of data and information, women's access to productive resources and their participation in decision-making processes.

27. The scope of INSTRAW's work programme encompassed three major areas: improvement of indicators and basic statistics on women, policy analysis at the macro-economic and micro-economic levels, and the role of women in particular sectors of development. It had given priority to the improvement of statistics and indicators on women and development, in co-operation with the United Nations Statistical Office, the International Labour Organisation and regional commissions. It had intensified training activities targeted at producers and users of statistics and had devoted special efforts to securing the measurement of women's invisible contribution to development, with a view to inclusion of that contribution in macro-economic aggregates and the update of the world survey on the role of women in development. The programmes undertaken by INSTRAW in the area of policy analysis at the macro-economic and micro-economic levels covered the role of women in the world economy and in South-South co-operation, as well as the choice and assessment of technology for mobilizing women's participation in development and financial policies for improving their access to credit in developing countries. Prototype guidelines and checklists had been developed to help planners gauge how their projects would affect women and men and understand their different needs. Another important aspect of INSTRAW's work programme was to consider the specific roles of women in such areas as water supply and sanitation, new and renewable sources of energy, management and entrepreneurship in industry, and rural development. INSTRAW's main efforts had been devoted to training, however. Recognizing the urgent need for a shift from didactic instruction to more participatory methodologies, and also the general lack of training materials on women and development, INSTRAW was producing multimedia autonomous training units adjustable to the two main target audiences: development officials and women's organizations. The advantage of such a modular approach was that it permitted decentralized training and also institution-building in developing countries.

28. Through its information, documentation and communication programmes, INSTRAW tried to secure programming and interlinkings of computerized data bases and thus

(Mrs. Pastizzi-Ferencic)

facilitate access to information on women and development. It was also exploring how communication technologies might be put to work for development, especially in the field of training.

29. She noted with satisfaction the increase in contributions to INSTRAW and hoped that trend would continue so that the Institute could fulfil its mandate successfully and respond to growing demands for its co-operation.

30. Mrs. SNYDER (United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) recalled that UNIFEM existed and was celebrating its tenth anniversary because of the Third Committee's desire to create a linkage between women and development and to demonstrate that women were not simply the victims of crisis, but could, as they were already doing in many countries, provide for their families' needs and even play an essential role in national economies. UNIFEM, like UNICEF and UNFPA in their respective areas, had been created so that expertise and advocacy might be combined with financial incentive in order to work as catalysts for change. Since then, thanks to the United Nations Decade for Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, Governments had recognized the need to maximize the contributions of all resources, especially human resources, to development and had decided to take advantage of the contribution that women could make.

31. Since women were the hardest hit by the current debt crisis and structural adjustments, UNIFEM had an even more important role to play in fulfilling its two priority objectives of promoting women's participation in mainstream development activities and taking innovative and experimental action, to benefit women, in fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to it by General Assembly resolution 39/125. The report on UNIFEM (A/42/597/Rev.1) gave examples of the Fund's activities in Barbados, China, India, Kenya, Peru and Togo, where it was working on its own or in co-operation with UNDP, UNIDO and UNICEF to ensure that women's concerns were taken into account at round-tables or in government development projects.

32. Specific measures had therefore been taken to strengthen UNIFEM's capacity to manage its increased workload: three P-5 posts were to be created, using UNDP financing, a computer expert was to be recruited for the financial services, and agreements were about to be signed to define the principles which would govern operational links between UNIFEM and UNDP. In the field, follow-up systems would be strengthened by making further use of national officers, local project personnel and United Nations Volunteers. Moreover, UNIFEM's financial resources had been enhanced thanks to the efforts of the Third Committee and the Advisory Committee, and should amount to \$US 6.6 million in 1987. In that regard, she heartily thanked all Governments which had contributed to the Fund. Lastly, she recalled the words of the President of the Philippines, who had stated that UNIFEM, owing to lack of means, had been unable to respond to half the requests for assistance submitted to it, and who had urged countries to contribute generously to the Fund.

33. Mr. ELEISH (Director of the Division for Inter-organizational Co-operation and Programme Development, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) said that his Department accorded programmes for the promotion of women all the

(Mr. Eleish)

priority they deserved. The Department was currently examining the relationships between the status of women and population, and was preparing statistics and indicators to monitor implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

34. It was working on the methodology to be followed in preparing the cross-organizational programme analysis on the advancement of women (COPA), requested by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1987/86 and to be submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in 1989. That analysis would deal in part with the important question of women and development and would provide data to monitor system-wide progress in achieving the medium-term plan's objectives.

35. In addition, the Department was taking the necessary steps to give effect, in the various system-wide medium-term plans and programmes, to the operational guidelines contained in the plan; such provisions would be examined by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in March 1988.

36. Ms. LARSEN (Denmark), speaking on agenda item 96 on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Economic Community, said that the success of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, and the adoption by consensus of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, had marked the culmination of the United Nations Decade for Women. The achievements and momentum of the Decade and the Conference must be maintained through expeditious application of the Strategies throughout the world; the task was difficult but essential for the United Nations and Governments alike.

37. The special session of the Commission on the Status of Women, convened in January 1986 by the Economic and Social Council, had had the task of integrating the goals of the Strategies into the medium-term plan for women in development for the period 1990-1995. At that session, the Commission had made recommendations on the action to be taken by the United Nations system to enhance women's role in development and to translate the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies into all programmes. The Twelve, while welcoming the progress made, underlined the need for continuous review and follow-up by all the organizations concerned of the implementation of the plan, which consisted of six large programmes and 23 subprogrammes.

38. Having reviewed its methods of work and agenda, the Commission should be able to improve its functioning by discussing in depth the priority themes and developing the necessary framework for co-ordinating, programming and monitoring implementation of the Strategies throughout the United Nations system.

39. The adoption of priority themes should lead to the avoidance of repetition and the formulation of suggestions on the specific policies to be followed. The Twelve supported the idea of establishing sessional working groups and welcomed the Commission's return to its former practice of adopting all decisions by consensus.

40. Ms. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that the emphasis on questions relating to women stemmed, in her view, from the awareness that women, despite their enormous contribution to the welfare of the family and the improvement of rural living conditions, had been discriminated against, their needs, interests and skills having been undervalued or ignored. The United Nations Decade for Women and the various conferences devoted to the question of women had helped to remove a number of obstacles.

41. Her country, absorbed in its development efforts, was striving to ensure that women participated equally with men in the development activities. The Constitution of Bangladesh provided for equal opportunity for all citizens irrespective of race, religion or sex. The Government had enacted legislation in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Health care and vaccination programmes had been targeted specially at women. The Third Five-Year Plan aimed, inter alia, at promoting women's education and providing women with training of various types. A number of public-service posts had been reserved for women, including 50 per cent of primary-school teaching posts. The Ministry of Women's Affairs monitored all those policies closely. Women had always played an important role in agriculture, especially tea-picking, but in addition were currently employed in large numbers in the garment industry. And women constituted 60 per cent of the employees of a renowned credit institution.

42. She drew attention to the assistance provided by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, which had financed a development project involving the most vulnerable groups, in which almost 400,000 landless rural women, many of them heads of households, had participated. The President of the World Bank had stated that the Bank intended to involve women in the development process.

43. She drew the Committee's attention to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/42/38) submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session in May 1987 in New York, when her delegation had expressed its deep concern at certain inappropriate, presumptuous and biased observations relating to Bangladesh. Her country likewise objected to the highly prejudiced comments of members of the Committee who had linked problems relating to the status of women with Islamic Law, even though the two subjects were entirely unconnected. Her delegation had given an objective description of the situation of women in her country.

44. Since a number of merely editorial changes had been made to paragraph 511, despite the assertion at the time that no change at all was possible to the text, she urged that the unfounded remarks contained in paragraphs 511 and 517 should be deleted; likewise, paragraph 583, which contained the recommended decision No. 4 of the preliminary report, should be withdrawn. Many delegations shared that view, as had been apparent during the adoption by consensus of resolution E/1987/L.27.

45. Mr. QUINN (Australia) said that, even though the principle of equality between the sexes had been included in the Charter, the international community had

(Mr. Quinn, Australia)

been slow to acknowledge the importance of the advancement of women. Since 1975, world conferences on the topic of women had made international public opinion aware of the discrimination against them and had turned quickly to the practical problems to be solved. Women's concerns were no longer treated as a marginal issue; women were now unable to participate in United Nations programming, planning and budgeting. Likewise, a number of countries had been striving to integrate women further in the national decision-making process. Australia, too, had taken initiatives, including assessment of the impact of the federal budget on women, the provision of equal employment opportunities for them and the provision of a national agenda of activities for them.

46. The 1987 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women had been a landmark. After some preliminary difficulties, the momentum had been renewed and faith restored in the Commission. His delegation was pleased that the revisions adopted by the Commission had been based on proposals by Australia's representative. He welcomed the fact that the Commission was to meet annually in future, as a means of enhancing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies and hoped that the Commission would now be able to concentrate on its substantive mandate rather than on procedural issues. It would also seem desirable to give the functional commissions an opportunity to comment on proposals emerging from the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council before final decisions were made. Any reform of the Council should take due account of its unique cross-organizational mandate which was of particular importance in bringing together the economic and social aspects of the advancement of women.

47. The success of the Commission's 1987 session had been due in part to the useful exchange of views between delegations and the Secretariat in the Third Committee.

48. The United Nations had a unique role to play in respect of the three themes of the Nairobi Conference. In the field of equality, it was important to avoid the marginalization of women's bureaux. Under the development theme, the special problems of rural women must be considered. As to the third theme, attention should be focused on violence against women within the family and society. Over the coming three years, his Government would be undertaking a major education campaign with the aim of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and changing attitudes to it.

49. His Government had decided to commit 50,000 Australian dollars for the financial year 1987/88 to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which could play a significant role in monitoring the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, in information-gathering and in establishing comparable benchmarks. In that connection, it would be advisable, in the interests of rationalization and efficiency, to combine agenda items 97 and 96. There was also a pressing need to make better use of the invaluable material submitted by States parties and the material available in the United Nations Statistical Office, the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies.

(Mr. Quinn, Australia)

50. The status of women throughout the world would have much to gain from a strengthening of the role played by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee which monitored its implementation. Unfortunately, little publicity had been given to the Convention. The United Nations, and the Department of Public Information in particular, had a key responsibility for disseminating the text of the Convention in all United Nations languages, especially by means of radio broadcasting and through the United Nations information centres.

51. Australia had moved quickly to ratify the Convention and had strongly supported the activities of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was a vital element of the international legal framework and had built up a significant body of international jurisprudence on the subject. It was important to defend the Committee's independent expert character, and that meant providing resources commensurate with its importance. The number of meetings of the Committee should be increased and its secretariat strengthened, to enable it to discharge its functions more effectively.

52. He hoped that progress on the advancement of women would not be sacrificed because of the current financial stringency affecting the United Nations and its Member States. Australia had decided to increase substantially its contribution to UNIFEM in the current year. It applauded the Secretary-General's commitment to achieving the target whereby women would occupy 30 per cent of the Professional posts in the United Nations Secretariat by 1990. However, the achievement of that target would not be possible without a corresponding enhancement of the role of the Women's Co-ordinator, who had played such an important role in advancing the status of women in the Secretariat. The Australian delegation hoped that, by designating the advancement of women as a priority in the budget for the coming biennium, the Secretary-General would maintain the momentum which the Nairobi Conference had given to the pursuit of a goal embodied in the United Nations Charter more than 40 years earlier.

53. Mrs. KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, of all the United Nations activities in the past 25 years, the most delicate yet the most inspiring had been the advancement of women. When International Women's Year had been proclaimed in 1975, it had been realized that it would take a decade to implement its goals. At Nairobi, a review of the Decade had shown that its goals were far from achieved and that further time would have to be allowed. That had led to the adoption of the Forward-looking Strategies to the end of the century. The different stages brought out the difficulty of the task in both human and economic terms. It meant reorganizing social structures, changing attitudes rooted in age-old traditions and raising the living standards of women.

54. For French-speaking African women Nairobi had been an exceptional opportunity for exchanging views with their sisters from other continents. As a result of the 1985 NGO Forum, representatives of African non-governmental organizations had set up the International Committee of African Women for Development, which brought together the non-governmental organizations of 17 French-speaking countries and

(Mrs. Kaba, Côte d'Ivoire)

co-ordinated development projects by women for the benefit of women. Her Government, through its Ministry for the Advancement of Women, supported private activity and the action of the non-governmental organizations in the social sphere and had always assisted women determined to progress.

55. In her country, the majority of workers in the primary sector were women. They were the backbone of the Government's policy of food self-sufficiency. The Government had therefore set up training centres for personnel for market gardening, small production units, handicrafts, hygiene and health and nutrition education.

56. State action was supplemented by the Association of Côte d'Ivoire Women, which comprised 193 sections throughout the country and was engaged in improving the economic and social well-being of women, through consciousness-raising and training, and promoting the establishment of village production and marketing co-operatives.

57. Schooling for girls was progressing rapidly, and increasing numbers of girls were attending all the university-level colleges and faculties. The women took part in the economic and political life of their country at all levels. They were joining the professions in increasing numbers, where they organized themselves in associations. Their awareness had arisen out of the United Nations campaign to promote awareness, and all States should support the Organization's action to help women. The financial and logistic support provided by UNDP and UNIFEM for national and regional activities to assist African women was vital to the African countries, particularly in the current recession.

58. Her delegation was grateful to the donors who had made that assistance possible. However, while efforts to increase the percentage of women in senior posts in the secretariats of the international organizations were commendable, account must be taken of geographical distribution and the problem of training women.

59. Her country was a member of the Commission on the Status of Women and supported all efforts to improve the status of women both regionally and internationally, because that would benefit society as a whole.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.