

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 18 October 1989
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

CONTENTS

- AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION
- AGENDA ITEM 91: TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE DECLARATION ON SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT
- AGENDA ITEM 92: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS
- AGENDA ITEM 93: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH
- AGENDA ITEM 97: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES
- AGENDA ITEM 99: QUESTION OF AGING
- AGENDA ITEM 101: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS
- AGENDA ITEM 102: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
- AGENDA ITEM 113: FAMILIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/44/SR.12
31 October 1989
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (E/CN.5/1989/2 and ST/ESA/213)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 113: FAMILIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (A/44/407)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that in view of the limited availability of conference services, it would not be possible to establish the open-ended ad hoc working group recommended by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1989/50 ("Second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging"). He wished to propose that interested delegations should meet informally in a conference room in order to consider the conclusions of the second review and appraisal in greater depth and report to the Committee on the matter.

2. It was so decided.

3. Miss ANSTEE (Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna) said that in the years since she had first addressed the Committee, profound changes had occurred in the world and also in the United Nations. In the first place, there had been a major internal reorganization of the Secretariat with respect to social development issues: in early 1987, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had ceased to be part of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, and since that time, the two had carried out their common tasks under a more practical and more flexible management régime. The remaining elements of the reorganization were included in the budget for the biennium 1990-1991 and, once they had been approved by the Fifth Committee, the Centre and the Department could strengthen their co-operation on the basis of a clearly-defined division of responsibilities.

(Miss Arstee)

4. In the second place, all sectors of the Secretariat had been deeply affected by the financial straits of the Organization, but the impact on the United Nations Office at Vienna had been greater because the staffing base at that Office had always been lower than in the other Secretariat departments. Moreover, the Vienna Office's increased responsibilities in the social and drug fields had not been accompanied by an increase in management resources. She therefore wished to express the Secretariat's gratitude to those Member States which had made special financial and in-kind contributions for the implementation of mandated programmes.
5. In the third place, the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women had been streamlined, and the Commission for Social Development had been transformed from an arena of bitter ideological confrontation into an effective body focusing on practical issues of concern to Member States. Between the sessions of the Commission, the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes had been held. Both meetings had marked a watershed, because they had transcended the divisions between North and South, East and West. Then, in December 1988, the new United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances had been adopted. The transformation of the Commission for Social Development testified to the reduced tensions between the super-Powers and the improved political atmosphere, which made it possible to deal much more effectively with universal social problems through international debate. None the less, social problems were infinitely more acute in the countries of the South, which were saddled with debt and had to juggle scarce resources in order to meet development needs. The North could not be indifferent to such a struggle, on which its fortunes also depended. That interdependence also reigned in the activities of the United Nations in the social field, and the United Nations Office at Vienna, taking the Secretary-General's new integrated and multisectoral approach, was striving to forge closer links among all of the disciplines for which it was responsible and which could not be addressed in isolation.
6. Drugs, which had come to be a dominating theme at the current session of the General Assembly in the wake of the recent events in Colombia, were cause for global concern. The tentacles of drugs had infiltrated every sector of society and were undermining political, administrative and judicial structures, distorting the economy, and poisoning financial systems with the gains of trafficking. Developing "producer" countries were seriously affected by the situation, but the problem could not be solved only by development programmes for small farmers who made their living from such crops, or by stepping up law enforcement world wide. The overall situation of those countries must also be taking into account, and access to markets for legal products, on which they could base their economies, must be facilitated.
7. Despite the current sombre panorama, there had been a remarkable transformation in the way the drug problem was conceived, as a result of the unsung work of the United Nations. "Producer nations" had ceased to see the drug problem as essentially a problem of the "consumer nations", and the latter, in turn, no longer believed that restrictions on foreign production or interdiction of supplies

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(Ms. Anstee)

from abroad provided the answer to their domestic problems. In the current circumstances, the initiative of the United Kingdom - endorsed at the Paris Economic Summit, held in July 1989 - seemed highly appropriate. It called for the convening of an international conference on demand reduction in London in April 1990. The United Nations Office at Vienna was helping to organize the conference, for which plans were already well under way. The conference would provide not only a platform for countries to reiterate their political commitment, but also a forum for an exchange of experiences on the treatment and prevention of addiction by the front-line fighters: teachers, social workers, doctors and police officers.

8. In the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, the most significant event would be the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in Havana in the summer of 1990. There, the relationship between drugs and crime, economic criminality, terrorism, environmental offences, computer crime, juvenile delinquency and child abuse would be addressed. The United Nations Office at Vienna had long urged an integrated approach to crime prevention, and it recognized that the economic and social context had a direct relationship to crime rates. In that connection, the situation in developing countries was particularly acute, for it bore the characteristics of a vicious circle. Economic difficulties and impoverishment bred crime, and unchecked crime had adverse effects on economic and social development.

9. The advancement of women was another example of the interweaving of many social concerns. By accepting to strive for equality between women and men by the year 2000, the international community had committed itself to one of the most ambitious targets attempted by social policy. In that connection, the United Nations Office at Vienna had shifted from advocacy to implementation. Following the guidance of the Commission on the Status of Women, it had increased its efforts to analyse the complex interrelationships among economics, society, politics, law and culture. The current review and appraisal of the Nairobi Strategies would culminate early in 1990, and would be the subject of an innovative form of intergovernmental consultation later in the current month. Nevertheless, progress during the past five years had not been as great as had been hoped. Efforts must be redoubled or the vital interdependence between the contribution of individual human beings, in the current case women, and national and international society, would be lost: the advancement of women was not an impossible dream dreamt by women, but a component in the enhancement of life for all.

10. Twenty years earlier, the Third Committee, in adopting the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, had also dreamt an impossible dream. Yet its goals, which had seemed unattainable, had become reality for millions. Much, however, remained to be done in order to alleviate the situation of less fortunate human beings and to promote their capacity to improve their lives by their own efforts for a better tomorrow, if not for themselves, then at least for their children.

(Miss Anstee)

11. The problem of the disabled would soon cease to be the problem of a minority as, by the end of the millenium, the number of disabled people would have risen to 30 or even 40 per cent of the population in some countries. Unfortunately, progress in implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had been less than could have been wished. Since April 1988, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Vienna had been working actively to rekindle interest in the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and to mobilize resources. The global campaign had been launched not only to promote awareness of the problem, but also to raise funds for projects in the developing countries.

12. A more dynamic phase had been entered on the issue of aging, although only on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Aging. While aging was often considered a problem mainly of the developed world, by the year 2025, more than 70 per cent of the aged would be living in developing regions. Aging affected the labour force, health-care provisions, educational programmes, in short, the national economy generally. Unfortunately, only a shoe-string budget was available, but the meagre resources available had to be maximized in order to promote awareness of the problems. That had been done at the XIV International Congress of Gerontology, at Acapulco, Mexico, in June 1989. That was the first time the Congress had met in a developing country, and also the first time the United Nations had played a major role in it.

13. Resources remained the key. In that connection, good progress had been made in developing partnerships with non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In September 1989, the Secretary-General had convened a meeting in New York to develop an international fund-raising strategy. It had been attended by eminent persons from foundations and the private sector. The report on the meeting was before the Committee. What had been begun was a process which could culminate in the establishment of an independent international foundation, under the patronage of the United Nations, to help fill the funding gap on aging, particularly for developing countries.

14. Much also remained to be done on the question of youth. Currently, one out of every five inhabitants of the world was young and, by the year 2000, the number of young persons would have crossed the billion mark. The goal of full integration of young people in society and into development strategies had not yet been achieved, but the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, in 1995, would provide the international community with a suitable occasion to take serious stock of the situation and to adopt more effective measures.

15. The United Nations Office at Vienna was concerned to transform ideas into practical measures. She stressed interdependence and the need for an integrated focus at all levels. At the global level, the Office had given particular attention recently to the preparations for a possible international development strategy for the 1990s which would provide a new opportunity to bring together in a coherent whole the many economic and social issues which were typically dealt with by specialized agencies, too often in isolation. At the country level, an effort was being made to lay more emphasis on the operational sphere because the fine

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(Miss Anstee)

language of international instruments would have no meaning unless practical measures were taken at the country level and unless effective and practical co-operation could be provided to those countries which requested it, mainly the developing countries.

16. The United Nations Office at Vienna was in the final stages of preparing an advisory note for UNDP on ways and means of incorporating social policy objectives into national development strategies. It was also working closely with UNDP and UNICEF on the provision of technical co-operation in that area. The Office was constantly trying to respond to the many requests received from developing countries for projects in the specific areas under its mandate. Unfortunately, because of the low priority usually given to them in the final determination of country programmes, they seldom qualified for the limited UNDP funding available. That was why the trust funds for social defence, for the disabled, for youth and for the aging played such a vital role although they were diminishing yearly. She appealed to all Governments which were in a position to do so to reverse that calamitous trend at the Pledging Conference at the end of the month.

17. It was a well-known fact that the social area was vast with many different aspects all interfacing with economic and political issues in many places. It was therefore impossible for one gigantic department to deal with so many different concerns. But because of the close substantive links which existed, there also had to be close organizational links. In that context, the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs collaborated closely in a number of their different areas of competence. The Office's links with other United Nations agencies and programmes had also become closer. She wished in particular to mention its collaboration with the World Health Organization concerning AIDS.

18. She pointed out that the United Nations Office at Vienna had achieved progress by intensifying work on the mandates for which it had long had responsibility, by dealing in a more integrated way with substantive programmes which had previously been handled as discrete activities, by developing an operational focus which would translate the integrated concept into effective supporting action at the country level, and by maximizing resources which were, by any standards, scant in relation to the enormity of the tasks required. In her statement she had felt it important to show that, contrary to what might be thought, the work of the United Nations Office at Vienna was directly relevant to the political and economic considerations that tended to predominate at Headquarters.

19. Mr. SOKALSKI (Director, Social Development Division of the United Nations Office at Vienna) drew attention to the six reports of the Secretary-General which had been prepared by the Social Development Division and were currently before the Committee. The first, under agenda item 93, was document A/44/387, relating to the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. It provided an overview of activities carried out at the national, regional and international levels, identified emerging youth issues and analysed the current situation with regard to the channels of communication between the United Nations

(Mr. Sokalski)

and youth and youth organizations. For the first time, the report highlighted issues such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), other sexually transmitted diseases, drug abuse and the degradation of the environment. The report emphasized the fact that, while much progress had been made, the overriding goal of improving the global situation of youth remained elusive, owing to a number of constraints, including lack of financial resources, of adequate mechanisms, of trained personnel and of the necessary co-ordination between institutions. In consequence, it proposed a number of specific recommendations to ensure the better promotion of youth programmes and issues.

20. Under agenda item 97, he referred to the Secretary-General's note (A/44/343) on his report to the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council on the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes (E/CN.5/1989/3). In a sense all the activities of the United Nations Office at Vienna could be viewed as complementary to the Interregional Consultation. Consequently, the main task was to decide on priorities for international action on matters that were in the domain of developmental social welfare, and, therefore, the specific guidance which the Third Committee could give would be of the greatest assistance. Another question of the utmost importance concerned the follow-up activities which Governments could take at national levels. Both aspects could be examined in the course of the next two years at regional meetings at both ministerial and expert level. It had not been possible to hold or to schedule such meetings except in Europe, since they would have required extrabudgetary financing. As a result, Governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America might also wish to consider hosting regional conferences on the follow-up to the Interregional Consultation meetings, which would not cause them additional expense, requiring only the provision of adequate conference facilities. The Secretariat would offer its full co-operation in the organization of such meetings.

21. Under agenda item 99, he introduced the Secretary-General's report on the question of aging (A/44/420). The current level of global awareness of the phenomenon of aging was due, in part, to the Assembly's endorsement in 1982 of the International Plan of Action on Aging. During the current year the Economic and Social Council had conducted the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan, and its conclusions were contained in the Secretary-General's report on this topic (E/1989/13), as well as in Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/50. The Secretary-General's report (A/44/420) developed further a principal substantive theme of the second review, namely, the contribution which the elderly could make toward development, and placed stress on participation. It stated, in conclusion, that for humanitarian and economic reasons, active support for the elderly was important in developed and developing countries alike.

22. Under agenda item 101, the Committee had before it the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/44/406). He noted that in May 1989 the Secretary-General had sent an appeal to Member States, asking them to establish and strengthen national committees on disability issues and

(Mr. Sokalski)

similar co-ordinating bodies. As further action at the national level remained the key to effective implementation of the World Programme of Action, it was to be hoped that Governments would clearly reaffirm their determination and commitment to reactivate national disability committees and to revitalize the Decade. To support government efforts, an international meeting on national disability machinery in developing countries had been proposed for 1990. In addition, closer links had been established between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in the field of disability. With funding from the Government of Sweden a network was being established to provide regular, close contacts and consultations between the United Nations Office at Vienna and non-governmental organizations, and to promote more systematic co-operation among them at all levels.

23. Another question of great importance was the access of disabled persons to United Nations buildings, meetings and information. The Secretary-General's report indicated the improvements necessary to ensure that United Nations buildings and meetings would be fully accessible. Although modifications had been carried out during the current Decade to the United Nations Secretariat buildings in New York, Vienna and Geneva, it was necessary to allocate funds and to make updated surveys before further action could be taken. He noted, by way of example, that the necessary work to make the buildings, meetings and information at the United Nations Headquarters in New York accessible to disabled persons could have additional financial implications amounting to approximately \$US 4 million.

24. He drew the Committee's attention to an international meeting on human resources in the field of disability, held at Tallinn, Estonia, USSR, from 14 to 22 August 1989, and convened by the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. The report of the meeting would be made available to the Committee.

25. Under agenda item 102, he referred to the Secretary-General's report on crime prevention and criminal justice (A/44/400), a document of special importance in view of the advanced preparations for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, scheduled to be held from 27 August to 7 September 1990. The preparations were proceeding according to schedule, and it was impossible to over-estimate the importance of the Congress for the international community, since it would provide the opportunity for the adoption of measures to combat such problems as terrorism, drug trafficking and offences against the environment and to strengthen international co-operation in crime prevention. At the same time, in pursuance of Economic and Social Council decision 1989/133, preparations were under way for the eleventh session of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, scheduled to be held in Vienna in February 1990. That session would be of particular importance, since it would give the Committee an opportunity to make a final review of its draft instruments and recommendations to be submitted to the Eighth Congress, based on the results of the interregional and regional preparatory meetings.

26. Under agenda item 113, the Secretary-General had presented a report to the current session of the General Assembly on preparation for and observance of an

(Mr. Sokalski)

international family year (A/44/407). Until recently, the international community had been concerned with the various aspects of development and other policy options, but only rarely had given its attention to their impact on families. For too long it had ignored the fact that the family was the basic unit of society. No other institution merited more support or was more important than the family in the fight against drugs, but instead it had always been one of the chief victims of drug abuse. Nor could the contribution of families to the advancement of women be ignored. While in the past certain values had been inculcated in families which impeded the advancement of women, in the present families were now playing a crucial role in fostering equality between women and men within families and fuller sharing of domestic responsibilities and employment opportunities. With those and other important considerations in mind and in response to General Assembly resolution 43/135, the Secretary-General had included in his report a number of recommendations concerning the preparation for and observance of an international family year. Prominent among them were the recommendations that the year 1994 should be proclaimed "International Family Year" with the theme "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world"; that its main purpose should be to enhance awareness of family issues and to improve institutional capability to tackle those problems considered to be most serious; and that an attempt should be made to achieve that objective largely through encouraging activities at the local and national levels primarily.

27. Mrs. TAVARES DE ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that in its second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, the Commission for Social Development had reached a conclusion similar to that following its first review: little progress had apparently been made in the implementation of the Plan of Action. The world's elderly population was increasing each month by 1 million, and 70 per cent of that increase was taking place in developing countries. It was regrettable that the necessary resources had not yet been found to solve the problems being created by that drastic change in the world's demographic structure. The developing countries, burdened by serious and prolonged financial crises, did not have the necessary resources to transform the Plan of Action into practical programmes. At the international level, the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging, whose resource base had been progressively eroded, had such limited resources that it could not even meet the most immediate needs of the elderly population. In addition, there had been enormous cuts in the budget and personnel of the Division of Aging of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which, in spite of the cut-backs, had carried out much excellent work.

28. In response to the critical situation, the United Nations had had to devise new and innovative measures, among them the promotion of the active participation of the elderly in the development process. The idea that elderly persons could be productive and active members of society was the main theme of the second review and appraisal. A set of practical recommendations had been formulated with a view to integrating the elderly into the development process. Those recommendations were of great importance, for developing countries in particular, and should be disseminated as widely as possible. Furthermore, all reprints of the Plan of Action should include the recommendations as an annex.

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(Mrs. Tavares de Alvarez,
Dominican Republic)

29. Among the important activities in the field of aging carried out in 1989, she wished to mention the XIV International Congress of Gerontology, held in Acapulco, Mexico. The participation of the United Nations had helped to broaden the international dialogue on aging and to bring the International Plan of Action to the attention of the many experts at the Congress. Moreover, closer links had been established with non-governmental organizations and the private sector, both of which could provide support for the Programme of Activities for 1992. Worthy of mention also was the meeting, held at Headquarters on 18 and 19 September 1989 and chaired by Miss Anstee, of the group of eminent persons exploring international fund-raising strategies for aging, including the possible establishment of a world foundation on aging. That meeting represented the first time that the United Nations, in collaboration with four non-governmental organizations, had held a meeting with a group of eminent persons and participants from enterprises, foundations and non-governmental organizations in order to consider an issue such as aging, which was of global importance.

30. In his statement at the meeting, the Secretary-General had stressed the need to establish a link with the private sector, not only for the formulation of fund-raising strategies, but also for the creation of mechanisms to allocate those funds. After a consideration of various possibilities, it had been agreed that the establishment of an international independent foundation on aging, under the auspices of the United Nations, was both timely and imperative. The foundation's main objective would be to increase substantially the volume of resources apportioned to programmes on aging throughout the world, using new funding sources. It had also been decided to set up a working group to consider the feasibility of establishing that foundation and make concrete recommendations with regard to organization and functions. Finally, it had been agreed that the working group should also formulate an implementation strategy, to include a schedule of activities and financing proposals for the initial phase, with a view to having the foundation in operation and implementing its programme by 1992.

31. Mr. TANASA (Romania) said that his delegation wished to emphasize the importance of the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving young people (A/44/387), whose presentation of activities in that field provided a convincing demonstration of the significance of the International Youth Year. In spite of a serious shortage of resources, the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs continued to play an important role by creating awareness of the main problems of youth and of possible solutions to those problems; co-ordinating global efforts to achieve the objectives of the International Youth Year; and strengthening national capacities in developing comprehensive youth policies and programmes by providing policy guidance, information, advisory services and direct operational support.

32. The observance of the International Youth Year had sparked the awareness that youth constituted a social group with its own specific needs and problems. His country had repeatedly stressed that the International Youth Year should not be considered an end in itself, and that the activities of the international community and the United Nations in that sphere must continue on a permanent basis. In many

(Mr. Tanasa, Romania)

countries, young people were affected by problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, terrorism, violence and drug abuse. Juvenile delinquency was another problem which had reached disquieting proportions. It was therefore necessary to develop specific programmes with a view to enabling young people to exercise their fundamental right to education, work, culture and information, and their right to participate in decision-making. The younger generation should play a larger role in development activities, the promotion of disarmament and world peace, and the establishment of a new international economic and political order.

33. His country was participating fully in the implementation of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. Since the International Youth Year, his country's National Committee for the Year had been reorganized and had been functioning as the co-ordinating body in that field. Romanian youth took an active part in the economic and social development programme of his country and, at the international level, maintained ongoing contact with young people in many countries of the world who were involved in peace and disarmament activities. On 16 October 1989, his country had hosted a round-table meeting on youth and the establishment of a new international economic order, in which young people from more than 30 countries, representing every continent, had participated. Among the measures adopted by his Government to satisfy the needs and aspirations of youth, he wished to highlight the establishment of a system of 12 years of free education for all young people.

34. The year 1990 would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. At its forty-third session, the General Assembly had adopted by consensus a resolution on that Declaration, in which it had called upon all States to adopt effective measures in the fields of education, culture and information with a view to the strengthening of efforts to achieve the aims of the Declaration.

35. Mr. McGANN (United States of America) said that, on behalf of his Government, he wished to express his appreciation to the representatives of the Dominican Republic and Romania for their expressions of sympathy on the occasion of the earthquake in California the day before.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.