

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Friday, 20 October 1989
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/44/SR.14
6 November 1989
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION (continued) (ST/ESA/213)

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

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

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

1. Mrs. JOSHI (Nepal) praised the important work of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna relating to youth. Her delegation hoped that the study to be conducted by the Centre on the situation and needs of marginal youth in selected least developed countries would help those countries to formulate effective new strategies and thereby accelerate ongoing programmes to involve youth in development and peace activities.

2. The Beijing Statement, adopted at the October 1988 Interregional Consultative Meeting on Integrated Planning of Youth Policies, Strategies and Programmes, emphasized the importance of organizing interregional exchanges on youth issues and establishing and strengthening youth-related bodies and organizations. Her delegation believed that the Seminar on the Prevention and Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency through Community Participation would help Member States to avoid the need for corrective action through the proper treatment of juvenile delinquents. The United Nations Youth Fund also played a vital role in providing seed money for youth activities. Her delegation endorsed the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/44/387.

3. Nepal's concern for the well-being of youth was amply reflected in its successive national development plans. The Youth Services Co-ordinating Committee

(Mrs. Joshi, Nepal)

was one of the major institutions in Nepal involved in the area of youth development, and its task was to co-ordinate the activities of the youth movement in the non-governmental organization sector. Moreover, the Nepal Youth Organization operated within the framework of national policy and, among other activities, fought to eradicate drugs and conducted literacy campaigns through its decentralized network, spread over the country's 75 administrative districts. Another prominent institution in the field was the National Development Services Programme, which encouraged graduates of Tribhuvan University to participate in national development efforts at the grass-roots level. The National Sports Council had also helped motivate Nepalese youth to participate in the development process.

4. Her delegation wished to express its appreciation for the help and support provided by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in order to safeguard Nepalese youth from the ill effects of drug abuse and other problems, and to involve them in constructive activities for the nation. Nepal was making every effort to implement the guidelines within the context of the objectives and strategy of the International Youth Year, and trusted that the relevant United Nations agencies would continue to support its programmes related to youth activities.

5. Mr. GANGSØ (Norway) said that youth involvement in the political decision-making process was important. To that end, children and young persons must be taught democratic methods and techniques as early as possible. That goal could best be achieved by allowing young people to take an active part in organizational work - in organizations governed by youth. Norwegian youth believed that it was important for young people to have the freedom to organize and that the right to fight for their beliefs should be recognized, regardless of State policy or military alliances, even if their views were not in line with those of the politicians currently in office. Unfortunately, that right was threatened in many countries.

6. For many years, the Norwegian delegation had included two youth representatives. He, as one such representative, appreciated the opportunity to participate in the General Assembly. Similarly, it was to be hoped that more countries from all regions would include youth representatives in the delegations they sent to the General Assembly and other important forums.

7. Feeling useful, so fundamental for self-respect, was another aspect of such participation. Millions of young people who were currently unemployed or lacked educational opportunities felt that society did not need them, even though they were told that they represented the future. Both politicians and young people must remember that unemployment was a waste of valuable human resources and that investment in education was an investment in the future.

8. It was often said that young people from the wealthy areas of the world were lucky to have grown up in a society rich in material goods. However, young people felt that in the search for economic growth, the environment had often been harmed, and that the time had come to deal with the problem. The environment and development were two closely interrelated questions which would have to be dealt

(Mr. Gangsø, Norway)

with urgently at the national, regional and international levels and, of course, within the United Nations system. Pollution knew no boundaries, nor did it apply for any visas to travel to other countries. The tragic incident at Chernobyl was an example of that.

9. Young people had shown that they could be effective in creating awareness and communicating concern over environmental and development issues, especially among politicians. In May 1990, the World Commission on Environment and Development would hold a regional conference at Bergen, Norway. Moreover, youth organizations in Norway were organizing a conference for youth organizations of the member countries of the Economic Commission for Europe, in which young people from Eastern and Western Europe, the United States and Canada would participate.

10. Another question which affected the young generation in particular was the AIDS pandemic. Norwegian youth did not believe that the problem could be solved by isolating the victims of the disease, but rather by focusing on information and education. It was also important to take care of the victims and to remember that persons providing care in a proper and secure manner did not risk becoming infected. Another important way of controlling the disease was to combat drug abuse, which, unfortunately, had its highest incidence among youth. Drug abuse and trafficking endangered the sovereignty and security of States, and it was important for youth to participate, at both the national and international levels, in the struggle to eliminate them. It must be borne in mind that the production, illicit trafficking and consumption of drugs were closely interrelated, and that without demand, there would be no supply either.

11. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas) said that her delegation was concerned that the valuable work of the United Nations in the social field was not receiving the necessary support, and that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs was facing serious financial difficulties. It would be regrettable if the international community lost the opportunity to build on the achievements of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and improve the quality of life and opportunities for physically disabled persons. However, despite the difficulties, work was continuing, particularly in the areas of regional and international co-operation and public information. Inter-agency co-operation was also important, since the sharing of responsibilities could relieve the financial difficulties.

12. Her Government believed that there was no substitute for national action, and was fully committed to the disabled. It was now considering the Secretary-General's recommendation that national disability committees should be established or strengthened, and concurred with the view that such committees could be vital not only to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, but also to the consolidation and maintenance of the Decade's gains after 1992. Her Government also gave priority to supporting and strengthening non-governmental organizations; in her country, the work of such organizations was closely linked to the national co-ordinating mechanism.

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

13. The Bahamas Council for the Handicapped was the umbrella organisation for more than 20 organizations for the disabled. One of its priorities, which was being considered by the Government, was the establishment of a national bureau for the disabled within the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Affairs. The Council also intended to recommend to the Government the adoption of legislation on the question of the disabled. The United Nations had always emphasized the participation of various social groups in their own affairs, particularly at the decision-making level, and following that approach, a large number of organizations for the disabled in her country were managed by disabled persons. Her Government advocated a broad national policy which emphasized dialogue with the disabled, the formulation of strategies to meet their needs, and increased public awareness. As part of the public information activities, a Physically Disabled Week was held every year in her country.

14. Despite the financial and other difficulties which were impeding United Nations efforts to improve the situation of youth, it was encouraging to note that important activities had been undertaken in that area and that others were planned. Among those regarded as significant by her delegation were the technical publication on youth and AIDS, planned for 1990, and the discussion on the integration of young people into society, to take place at the 1991 session of the Commission for Social Development.

15. Governments must also give priority to youth development and the integration of young people into the development process. The majority of her country's population consisted of youth under the age of 30, and her Government's investment in youth reflected its assessment that they were the country's most precious resource. Education was the key to the participation of young people in national development, but a good education became meaningless without employment opportunities. Accordingly, her Government was giving priority to employment activities, especially by attracting venture capital for the development of industries which required a wide range of skills. Such measures were designed to alleviate the problems of unemployment and underemployment among youth. The issue of employment would be a priority item on the agenda of the Commonwealth Regional Youth Conference to be held in her country on 24 and 25 October 1989.

16. The development of leadership skills among young people, and their participation in politics, prepared them for their role in nation-building. Her delegation was particularly pleased, therefore, that the youth branches of her country's two major political parties had sponsored the Seventh Annual Assembly of the Caribbean Youth Conference, held at Nassau, in August 1989. Her country also promoted sports as a medium for fostering understanding among youth, and 1989 had been a historic year in that regard. In July, the first Bahamas Games had been held, a national sporting event in which athletes from 17 islands in the Bahamas archipelago had participated.

17. The efforts of societies to instil in youth the values and norms which would impel them to participate in the development process were undermined by negative influences, such as drug abuse, which inevitably led to involvement with the

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(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

criminal justice system. The high percentage of youth in prison attested to the destructive effects of drugs and crime on youth, and to the importance of keeping those problems under constant review.

18. Mr. ROBLES (Philippines) said that his delegation shared the view that the economic and social structure had a direct bearing on crime rates, and that there was a need for an integrated approach to crime prevention and criminal justice. An effective and fair criminal-justice system was a crucial prerequisite for a stable environment in which socio-economic development would be possible.

19. On the eve of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, his delegation expressed satisfaction with the results of the five regional preparatory meetings. His Government had established a series of major policies and programmes in order to implement the recommendations contained in the Milan Plan of Action adopted by the Seventh Congress. With regard to the strengthening of national crime-prevention mechanisms, his country had adopted a national strategy to reduce crime, containing guidelines in that area. Furthermore, crime-prevention and control policies and strategies had been incorporated into the national development plan for 1987-1992. Priority had been given to the maintenance of peace and order; the establishment of Peace and Order Councils had been one of the first steps taken to place the police back under civilian control. It should be recalled that under the Marcos Government, the military had controlled the police.

20. With regard to bilateral and multilateral co-operation in action-oriented crime-prevention programmes and projects, consideration was being given to sharing police resources, facilities and expertise, and developing new techniques of police administration, through the National Police Chiefs Conference of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEANAPOL).

21. Concerning the strengthening of research and data-base capacities with regard to crime and criminal justice, he said that the National Police Commission, designated as the criminological research centre of the Peace and Order Council, had undertaken crime-prevention programmes and research studies for the Council. The Dangerous Drugs Board had completed a five-year experimental project, with research and training components, on strategies and approaches for drug-abuse prevention in the schools.

22. His country had launched major efforts to control drug trafficking, drug abuse and organized crime. On drug trafficking, a programme of action to prevent and control drug abuse had been launched, including investigations and inspections, education campaigns, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and international co-operation. On organized crime, two major initiatives had been undertaken: the adoption of standardization and legalization procedures, and the updating, in collaboration with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the embassies of the countries concerned, of the blacklist of identified gang members.

(Mr. Robles, Philippines)

23. The Philippine Commission on Human Rights, established in accordance with the provisions of the 1987 Constitution, was responsible for recommending to Congress various measures aimed at promoting human rights and providing compensation to victims of human rights violations or their families. While racial discrimination was not a problem in his country, as a safeguard against other forms of oppression, the principles of social justice and human rights had been embodied in the "Declaration of Principles and State Policies" part of the Philippine Constitution.

24. Among his Government's efforts to combat terrorism were the deployment of special operating units in urban centres and densely populated areas and the use of volunteer organizations for community self-defence activities. With a view to improving the criminal justice system and making it more responsive to the changing conditions and new dimensions of crime, his country had adopted various reforms designed to strengthen law enforcement. The number of prosecutors had been increased; prosecution of offences had been decentralized; the administration of criminal justice had been speeded up; the period for appeals had been shortened and the judiciary had been granted fiscal autonomy.

25. Community involvement in the criminal justice system had been institutionalized at the level of the "barangay", the smallest political unit of the nation. Village courts had been established in the country's 42,000 "barangays" and litigants themselves had the right to choose members of the conciliation panels dealing with the amicable settlement of disputes. His Government had also set up the adult probation system, under which convicted persons were allowed to remain in the community, and community members participated in efforts to rehabilitate them.

26. The developed countries could provide the assistance needed to fight new forms of crime. International co-operation in that regard was imperative. The United Nations should assist in the exchange of information, formulate multilateral agreements and carry out specific measures. Lastly, programmes and projects that had been successful in other countries should be given the widest possible dissemination in order that other countries could adapt them to their own socio-economic and cultural conditions.

27. Mrs. LAFORTUNE (Canada) said that the 1989 Report on the world social situation, presented by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, contained an abundance of valuable statistical information which both delegations and Governments could use as a basis for social protection policies and programmes tailored to local priorities. Nevertheless, since the main objective of that study was the improvement of the world social situation, specific recommendations aimed at improving living conditions for all were needed. At the same time, ideological debate, the exploitation of tensions between different regions and the duplication of statistical information or evaluations should be avoided. Her delegation would like to see such a pragmatic approach, based on those priorities, reflected in the next report, which was to be considered at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

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(Mrs. Lafortune, Canada)

28. Six years after the proclamation of the Decade, disabled persons should begin to see the results of the recommendations of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. In Canada, where the principle of equal rights for disabled persons had been enshrined in the Constitution, the barriers which had systematically prevented disabled persons from participating in community life were gradually being eliminated. In May 1988, Canada had celebrated its first national week for the integration of disabled persons. In addition, funds were allocated from the national budget to advocacy organizations for the disabled, among others, with a view to assisting in the defence of the rights of the disabled and encouraging their participation in government consultations on integrated policies. Press and information campaigns were undoubtedly contributing significantly to the integration of the disabled into society. To that end, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were acting as valuable catalysts by drawing attention to activities in which disabled persons were participating directly, activities which could be adapted nationwide.

29. One of the most positive results of the valuable United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had been the elaboration of guidelines, model agreements and declarations for the guidance of Member States. In that connection, she wished to mention the final declaration of the European and North American Conference on Urban Security and Crime in Urban Areas, held in Montreal from 10 to 15 October 1989. That declaration, which had been signed by the mayors of several cities, would be presented at the Eighth Congress.

30. The hope was that at the Congress the Member States could approach the issue of terrorism from a legal rather than political standpoint. Since the international community had not yet arrived at a universally accepted definition of "international terrorism", the Eighth Congress should concentrate on the adoption of measures to prevent and combat criminal acts, regardless of their political motivation. It was also important to give adequate consideration to sub-items concerning the protection of minors and to adopt new norms and principles aimed at the protection of the rights and interests of youth and the prevention of juvenile crime.

31. In view of the size of the prison population and the high rate of criminal recidivism, Canada attached particular importance to studies designed to establish alternatives to prison sentences. The Eighth Congress should also begin consideration of the use of informatics in crime prevention and criminal justice with its advantages and problems. From 27 November to 1 December 1989, Ottawa would be host to a meeting of experts responsible for setting up working groups concerned with the use of informatics in the administration of criminal justice. Documents prepared by experts at these meetings would be considered at the Congress and would serve as a basis for resolutions relating to that question.

32. Mr. KRENKEL (Austria) said it was the hope of his delegation that at its eleventh session in February 1990, the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control would adopt all the recommendations of the interregional preparatory meetings of the Eighth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, so that the Congress could finally consider and adopt the draft instruments that had been

(Mr. Krenkel, Austria)

elaborated. The finalization of model treaties covering extradition, mutual assistance and an exchange of information on methods used in the administration of justice would facilitate international co-operation in combating international crime.

33. Organized crime had become a very sophisticated activity; in many cases, the criminals had better weapons, transport and other equipment than even the police and other official organizations. Economic crime had also reached unprecedented proportions. The only way to combat that type of crime was to adopt correspondingly drastic measures at the national and international levels.

34. Austria was particularly interested in the observance of human rights in the administration of justice. A first step towards ensuring observance of human rights would be to set up focal points within the Centre for Human Rights and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch to monitor what was happening in the field. International co-operation in the area in question could also be intensified, and particular emphasis should be placed on technical co-operation activities within the advisory services programme.

35. With regard to the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, the Guiding Principles adopted in 1987 should be implemented to a greater extent in the formulation of national and regional social policies. Moreover, the resources of the Division for Social Development should be strengthened so that the Division could provide more support for developing countries' activities relating to implementation of the Guiding Principles and to translating the Principles into concrete action. Regional meetings should be held as soon as possible to consider the practical implementation of the Principles in the context of national policies and programmes.

36. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland) said that in 1986 his country had proposed that the United Nations should proclaim an international family year. Poland had been, and continued to be, convinced that the family was the fundamental social institution where children were taught to respect human rights and where the fundamental values and principles safeguarded by the United Nations were assimilated. An international family year should take account of the essential uniformity of the role played by the family, as well as of the various forms of family life that existed in different societies. Many factors were now changing family life: from advances in the fields of biology and medicine to changes in the relationship between men and women and pressures arising from technological progress and the conflict between human values and the profit motive. The development process gave rise to changes in family roles and functions that might, on the one hand, be associated with the breakdown of the family or, on the other hand, promote the family's ability to adapt to new circumstances. In the developing countries, particularly in Africa, not only were families confronted with such dilemmas but it was very difficult, and sometimes impossible, for family members to meet their basic needs and in some cases even to survive.

37. Governments must be aware that family policy provided a framework for solving all social problems. It was necessary to seek new ideas and new approaches to

(Mr. Zawacki, Poland)

enhance understanding of the changes that the family was undergoing. Most Governments had therefore been in favour of holding an international family year; there appeared to be a consensus on three principal points: that family issues warranted special attention in view of their importance; that the family warranted international attention; and that an international year would be an appropriate way of achieving that objective. Particular attention should be devoted to women, since their status within the family must be improved and they must be given greater opportunities to pursue roles outside the family.

38. In view of the wide range of forms the family took, the activities to be conducted during the international year should begin at the community level and move, after three or four years, to the national, regional and international level. It was a question of setting in motion a process that began with the family and, after activities had been carried out at various different levels, ultimately reverted to the level of the family. Poland fully endorsed the recommendations, objectives, issues to be addressed and organizational arrangements proposed in document A/44/407, and supported in particular the proposal that 1994 should be proclaimed "International Family Year", with the theme "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world". It also agreed that the activities for the international year should be primarily focused at the local and national levels.

39. Mr. POLISHTCHOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), referring to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (ST/ESA/213), said that the marked deterioration in the economic situation and the growing concern at social conditions, both in prosperous countries and in poor countries, meant that it was necessary to make new assessments and to develop new ideas with a view to solving the problems in question within the framework of the new political concepts now influencing international relations. Social development, which was lagging behind technical progress somewhat, was now receiving the same attention as military and ecological problems.

40. The report on the world social situation should place greater emphasis on international co-operation in solving social problems; such co-operation should take place regardless of differences in political systems and the size of States, and should involve both public bodies and the private sector. The aim was to achieve pragmatic co-operation and thus to ensure that everyone enjoyed fundamental freedoms and social justice.

41. With regard to the thirty-first session of the Commission for Social Development and the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, he supported the idea of drawing up a charter or document setting forth the social values of mankind on the basis of the experience gained by both capitalist and socialist countries and both developing and developed countries. The Ukrainian SSR also supported the proposal to hold a special session of the Economic and Social Council devoted to social questions, and believed that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should be entrusted both with co-ordinating United Nations activities in the social field and with preparing the relevant reports, particularly the report on the world social situation. The current year

(Mr. Polishtchouk, Ukrainian, SSR)

was the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, a document that had been, and continued to be, of great importance as a guide for States and for both governmental and non-governmental organisations in the action they took.

42. With regard to the social situation in the Ukrainian SSR, far-reaching social and economic reform was taking place in the country with a view to compensating for a number of technocratic deviations that had occurred in the 1970s and the early 1980s. In 1985 his Government had started to implement perestroika, which called for a social reorientation of economic development in order to raise the standard of living, increase the role played by consumption and guarantee full development of the potential of the individual. At the same time, glasnost had required radical democratization of society. That new policy, which was already yielding the desired results - for example, in the areas of health and housing - represented a genuine intellectual and moral revival for the Ukrainian SSR.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.