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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso)

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

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

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

1. Mr. SALAZAR-SANCISI (Ecuador), commenting on agenda item 90, quoted a sentence from the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation, as follows: "In the 1980s, the improvement of world social conditions has been slowed down or reversed in a large number of countries, especially in Latin America and Africa". He noted, in that connection, that in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, there were now 165 million people living in poverty, of whom 65 million lacked the means to obtain adequate nutrition. The figures reflected the fact that in 1989, in absolute figures, the number of people living in poverty had risen by 50 per cent compared with 1960 and, what was even more disturbing, by 25 per cent compared with a mere five years ago. What was more shocking, 40 per cent of households were not consuming the minimum caloric intake, 44 per cent of working people were unemployed and 68 per cent had inadequate housing.

2. The economic problems of all developing countries were well known: decline in primary commodity prices, deterioration in the terms of trade, increase in the external debt. The debt problem was especially worrisome because the Latin American and Caribbean countries had become net exporters of capital since 1982 and that flight of capital prevented them from building more just and stable societies.

3. As Mr. Rodrigo Borja, President of Ecuador, had pointed out, the external debt was not the only Latin American debt; it also had a social indebtedness to its

(Mr. Salazar-Sancisi, Ecuador)

people. Indeed, the efforts to service the external debt had considerably increased that social indebtedness. The international community should therefore adopt mechanisms enabling the Latin American countries to repay that social debt. It should take a political decision to endow those countries with the necessary financial resources to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of their populations.

4. For its part, Ecuador had worked out a new strategy based on social participation and political consensus. Ecuador's Development Plan was aimed at development rather than growth inasmuch as development was a qualitative concept encompassing the ideas of growth, equitable income distribution and quality of life. It was the result not of speculation by private economic forces, but of deliberate action taken by the State to ensure a fair distribution of the benefits of progress.

5. If the Latin American countries continued to experience the kind of growth they had known thus far, the twenty-first century would find them reduced to a society in which over half the population lived in such misery as to provoke a social explosion with unforeseeable consequences. Consequently it was imperative to institute fundamental structural reform and give serious study to the effects of various economic options which would be an integral part of the Third International Development Strategy. Mechanisms had to be set up for financing priority projects, reducing credit costs and releasing a substantial portion of the resources now committed to service the external debt in order to pay the social debt. Accordingly, economic development programmes must be socially oriented.

6. That was not the course which had been followed, and accounted for the tragic situation of the third world countries. It was not a matter of charity; it was not a matter of subordinating social policy to economic policy. What was needed was political will manifested on the international level in the form of decisions based on equity, effectiveness and solidarity that could be converted into concerted action which fully met the needs of today's economic and social situation and, in particular, could cope with the problem of poverty. Social policy should not simply be a welfare policy. Social expenditure must benefit the poorest sectors of the population; it must appeal to people's initiative and creativity, so often mishandled by bureaucrats and technocrats; it must allocate sufficient and durable financial resources; and lastly, it must not allow prejudice to colour reality. Only in those conditions could the peoples of Latin America live in dignity.

7. Mrs. CASTAÑO (Colombia), speaking on agenda item 90 (b), recalled that Colombia was one of the oldest democracies on the American continent. It had been organizing elections for President and parliament for the past 170 years and, since the adoption of the 1886 Constitution, it had been electing a President for a four-year term and deputies to the departmental legislatures and municipal councils every two years.

(Mrs. Castano, Colombia)

8. Colombia had enacted constitutional reforms and in 1988, for the first time, the mayors of municipalities had been elected by direct suffrage. Since then, the municipality played an important part in Colombian democratic life. It elected its mayor and city council directly; petitions signed by 10,000 citizens could generate legislative bills for consideration by the Congress. It could also decide, by referendum, the major issues of national interest, including constitutional reforms.

9. Obviously, a major effort had been required to educate voters and elected officials so that they would be prepared for that experience in popular participation. The aim was to generate a trend towards decentralization in Colombia so that important decisions affecting each region or each municipality were taken locally and no longer by the central authority. An attempt had also been made to set up mechanisms for participation through associations of users (especially peasants) and agreements between communities and local authorities concerning, for example, the execution of public works. Moreover, administrative decisions had been taken to provide municipalities with the resources they needed for genuine self-management, which they had been unable to do before.

10. By launching that experiment, Colombia had committed itself to a movement that aimed at the full realization of all human rights, particularly, the right to elect and control and, thereby, to participate in the country's development.

11. Speaking on agenda item 93, Miss MORTENSEN (Denmark) said she was pleased to speak in the Third Committee as a young member of the Danish delegation to present the views of her young compatriots on issues of particular interest to them. One of the chief objectives of the Danish Youth Council was to see that the idea of democracy was passed from one generation to the next. Accordingly, since its inception in 1940, it had been insisting that young people be given the possibility of influencing decisions affecting them. Politicians responsible for resolving the multitude of problems besetting the world should listen to the young people because they were the ones who would have to suffer the consequences of decisions taken today.

12. The issue of probably the greatest concern to youth all over the world was that of the protection of the environment. Scientists had clearly demonstrated the threats to the environment posed by the depletion of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect and other forms of environmental degradation, such as deforestation and desertification. Everybody must be aware that it was a collective problem and not try to push it onto his neighbour. Those countries which tried to solve their own problems by exporting them should be condemned. The whole world was faced with the common responsibility of mankind. It was absolutely crucial, for development and for the survival of mankind, to counter the threats that weighed on the environment. Danish youth was looking forward to a big international youth gathering to be held at Bergen, Norway, in 1990, within the framework of the Brundtland report.

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(Miss Mortensen - Denmark)

13. The industrialized countries should follow the United Nations objective of contributing 1 per cent of their gross national product in development aid to the third world. At the same time, it was important to have a definition of the term "development aid". In the view of Danish youth, development aid should not include weapon deliveries or compensation purchase agreements for the benefit of the donor's industries. The debt crisis was one of the most serious problems facing developing countries today. The establishment of a more equitable world order should ensure a future stable development within the framework of agreements based on mutual respect and cultural understanding.

14. The North-South relation should be a true dialogue. The co-operation established in 1986 between the Nordic Governments and the Governments of the front-line States of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference was an example of such a dialogue. That governmental co-operation had been followed by a youth declaration on cultural co-operation, which had enabled those young people to proceed to cultural exchanges within the framework of visits, seminars and conferences. The co-operation with the States members of the Conference also consisted in support for activities against apartheid in South Africa. For Danish youth, it was incomprehensible that the South African régime should continue flagrantly to violate fundamental human rights. Apartheid must be abolished. The international community should continue to put pressure - by economic sanctions inter alia - on the South African Government for the attainment of that objective. The Danish Youth Council, which maintained close relations with the South African Youth Congress, was seriously concerned by the fact that the young leaders of that organization were always persecuted. One of them, Patrick Flusk, had just been condemned for his activities and for expressing his opinions.

15. Danish youth welcomed the progress made towards the granting of independence to Namibia and intended to co-operate with Namibian youth organizations. It launched an appeal to all countries and organizations to assist Namibia. Thousands of young people, who formed the basis for a free, democratic Namibia, needed an education. The Nordic Namibia Action organization provided assistance in that field. Young Danes were pleased to note the important role that the United Nations played in the process towards an independent Namibia and saw in it the proof that the Organization was capable of fulfilling one of its principal functions.

16. All Member States should promote human rights. Unfortunately, human rights were every day being grossly violated in many countries of the world. Danish youth vigorously condemned those violations. It believed that freedom of expression and association was particularly important because it meant the right to exert an influence on society. In that regard and on behalf of Danish youth, she unreservedly condemned the massacre of young Chinese students perpetrated by the Chinese authorities while the students were peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. The vigorous reactions of the international community to those events should be a lesson to all those who resorted to armed force against citizens expressing their opinions.

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(Miss Mortensen, Denmark)

17. Danish youth welcomed the fact that the General Assembly would adopt in 1989 a convention on the rights of the child. One of the fundamental objectives of the draft convention should be to ensure that children and young people could not be involved in armed conflicts and thereby run the risk of being maimed or killed. It gave rise to concern in that regard that the present wording of article 33, paragraph 2, guaranteed children less protection in armed conflicts than the existing provisions of international humanitarian law. She hoped that the General Assembly would reach a consensus on the need to raise the age limit provided for in article 38, paragraph 2, from 15 years to 18. For Danish youth, that convention was a very important step towards the protection of all children against injustice and exploitation. They hoped that all Member States would soon become parties to it.

18. Danish youth hoped that young people throughout the world would be able to meet for a free exchange of ideas on questions of concern to them. It was only through understanding that the risk of war could be eliminated, together with the need to amass weapons. In that regard, the United Nations could be a platform for the youth of the world, where it could meet and consider common problems. That might have a positive influence on international debate, for young people were often open-minded, unbiased and not affected by diplomatic considerations.

19. She hoped that more Member States would include representatives of their youth organizations in their delegations to the sessions of the General Assembly. The 1990s should be a decade of action characterized by the participation of youth in decision-making and in the implementation of the decisions.

20. Mr. ZAWACKI (Poland) said that, without extensive international co-operation, it was impossible to resolve most of the social problems of the contemporary world. While the United Nations was not the only forum for the discussion of social issues, it was undoubtedly one of the most important and most diversified politically. In that context, the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation (ST/ESA/213) was a true mine of information that showed that many social problems were of international significance and lay at the centre of Governments' concerns. Those problems could not be resolved by States acting in isolation but by common efforts of the international community.

21. The report indicated that, in spite of the norms set by the various international instruments adopted under United Nations auspices, the social situation currently prevailing in the world was unacceptable. That was particularly true in areas such as health, employment, social security, housing, education and many other aspects of daily life.

22. In his delegation's view, the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade should be more concerned with social objectives. Social questions had an inappropriately weak position in the United Nations system. In recent years, many social questions - employment, youth, the elderly and the disabled, drug abuse and crime - had become universal problems transcending national frontiers. As the United Nations was having greater impact on international political affairs, people understandably expected it to play a

(Mr. Zawacki, Poland)

larger role in social development. His delegation supported the decision to make the United Nations Office at Vienna the nucleus of all United Nations work in social policy.

23. The 1989 Report was more comprehensive and more useful than previous reports. The issues were presented in a more detailed way, and that made the publication as a whole more interesting. Some critical remarks expressed during the 1982 and 1985 debates had been taken into account by the authors. In the opinion of his delegation, it was a good idea to base the report on an analysis of changes in society's structures, instead of focusing on economic or technological trends, as in the 1985 Report. His delegation also appreciated the inclusion of certain problems connected with living conditions within societies, as well as the fact that great social ills such as poverty, homelessness and hunger had been well defined. For the first time, the report dealt with the situation of migrants and refugees.

24. All the same, some important problems had been disregarded. For example, chapter X did not include sufficient information about the important trends in the social and economic situation and structures of the socialist countries.

25. At a time when the United Nations was celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, one could not escape the impression that the objectives of the Declaration were far from being achieved. Furthermore, in some areas there had been considerable regression. More had to be done to implement the Declaration at the international and national levels. The best way to celebrate the twentieth anniversary would be to take it into account in the formulation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. International and non-governmental organizations concerned with development should continue their efforts to utilize the provisions of the Declaration in the formulation of strategies and programmes aimed at social progress.

26. Ms. CARMENATE (Cuba), referring to the world social situation, said it was regrettable that social achievements were being seriously jeopardized by the current economic crisis. The 1989 Report on the World Social Situation concluded that although food production had been raised to a level sufficient to feed all people on earth, 10 to 15 per cent of the world's population still suffered from undernourishment. The report highlighted the contradictions between incentives to produce and capacity to acquire food, and concluded that food production and distribution policies needed a thorough re-examination.

27. Her delegation endorsed the statement by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation regarding the need for greater interaction between social and economic policies, and for closer co-operation between the Third Committee and the Second Committee on such questions.

(Ms. Carmenate, Cuba)

28. As the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/44/116) pointed out, the objectives set forth in the Declaration - elimination of unemployment, hunger, malnutrition, poverty and illiteracy; guaranteed access to culture, health care, and free education at the elementary level; promotion of human rights and social justice - were far from being realized for a large proportion of the world's population.

29. Cuba had adopted measures which, despite the current economic crisis, gave the Cuban population all the benefits referred to in the Declaration. The nation's budget for housing, public services, education and health had increased. Cuba currently had one doctor for every 366 inhabitants (as against 441 previously). In 1988 the birth rate had been 18.1 per 1,000, and the infant mortality rate 11.9 per 1,000 live births. Life expectancy in Cuba was 74.6 years.

30. The co-operative movement had grown, particularly in the agricultural sector. That had permitted the introduction of sophisticated methods in the agricultural and livestock sector, together with improved organization of production activities. It had also resulted in better living conditions for the inhabitants of rural and remote areas. She stressed, in that regard, the active participation of Cuban women in agricultural co-operatives.

31. Various governmental and non-governmental organizations co-operated in implementing youth programmes. Priority was given to general education on the same basis as technical and vocational training. The latter was tailored to the country's needs so as to ensure that every Cuban youth was in a position to choose a job that matched his or her vocational skills or technical training.

32. With respect to health, she said that the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education were conducting joint projects and using extension and guidance programmes in an effort to prevent such problems as teen-age pregnancy and the spread of communicable diseases. Young people were encouraged to take part in sports and cultural activities from a very early age.

33. Several public agencies were dealing with the question of aging. In Cuba, all elderly persons were covered by the social security system, and their health was systematically monitored by family doctors. There were clubs where senior citizens met for physical exercise and recreational activities.

34. Turning to agenda item 101, she stressed the importance which Cuba accorded to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. As a result of collaboration between various governmental and non-governmental organizations, the disabled had been integrated into society. The establishment of craft workshops for the disabled had met with a favourable reception. Schools had been opened and classes organized for persons with visual or hearing impairments, as well as for the mentally retarded. The disabled were encouraged to take part in sports and cultural activities. There were special schools for children with certain impairments, the aim being to ease

(Ms. Carmenate, Cuba)

their integration into society at a later stage. Cuba attached great importance to preventive programmes, both for children and for adults. The competent government agencies, such as the Ministry of Health and the Labour and Social Security Committee, played a key role in that area.

35. Turning to agenda item 102, relating to crime prevention and criminal justice, she noted that her Government would be hosting the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. That reflected the importance which Cuba accorded to that topic. It was inviting all States Members of the United Nations, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to participate in the Congress, which would be held at Havana from 27 August to 7 September 1990. All the necessary arrangements were being made to ensure that the event went smoothly. Her delegation was grateful to the United Nations Office at Vienna for its assistance to the Government in that matter.

36. Mrs. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that, at the Ninth Summit Conference in Belgrade, the non-aligned countries had expressed grave concern over the dramatic deterioration in the economic and social situation in most developing countries and had stressed the need to accelerate development both in the interests of those countries and in that of the world. In her view, the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation was more inclusive than that for 1985. It was important to present the problems of individual regions separately as had been done in the case of Africa. It was also indispensable to include the major problems which had dominated the period covered by the Report. Her delegation also attached great importance to popular participation as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights. Such participation should be integral, in other words it should be realized in all fields of life, whether economic, political, social or cultural.

37. Concerning agenda item 92, her delegation wished to point out that the long-term programme of economic stabilization adopted by her country at the beginning of the 1980s in order to deal with a protracted economic crisis had included social protection measures designed to help those population strata that were unable to ensure basic family needs. The new economic policy measures adopted recently were aimed at solving the social problems of society as a whole.

38. Her delegation drew attention to document A/44/448 which contained data on the general census of the population of Albania. According to those data, 4,797 members of Yugoslav national minorities lived in that country, including 4,697 Macedonians and 100 Montenegrins, Serbs and Croats. On the basis of reliable historical, statistical and demographic data, her delegation estimated that between 60,000 and 80,000 Macedonians, 17,000 to 20,000 Montenegrins, 20,000 Serbs and 2,000 to 3,000 Muslim settlers from Bosnia lived in Albania, so that the overall number of members of Yugoslav national minorities living in Albania would be well over 100,000. Her delegation considered that the inaccuracy of the data provided by Albania represented an attempt by that country to distort the facts and to deny the rights, and even the very existence, of those minorities; that was a matter for serious concern.

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(Mrs. Nikolic, Yugoslavia)

39. With regard to agenda item 93, her delegation noted with interest the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving young people (A/44/387) which identified emerging youth issues and highlighted the problems of drug abuse, the environment and AIDS, which had seriously affected youth in recent times. Her delegation fully supported the recommendations in paragraph 16 of the report which were aimed at encouraging youth programmes and activities at all levels. Yugoslavia was in favour of the expansion of existing channels of communication between the United Nations and youth. The United Nations could certainly do more to bring young people together from all over the world. In that connection, the informal meetings at Geneva should be more open and more representative. The United Nations could also play a role in reducing unemployment among youth, particularly by improving the circulation of labour between regions. The Organization should also promote youth exchange programmes between Member States as they would be of value in terms of education and promoting greater tolerance.

40. Concerning agenda item 100, she emphasized the comprehensive nature of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/44/420). She fully supported the very pragmatic recommendations regarding the participation of the elderly. She also supported the process started during the meeting of the group of eminent persons, held in New York in September 1989, to explore international fund-raising strategies for aging. She stressed the importance of the establishment of training institutes and centres as advocated in the Secretary-General's report.

41. In connection with the report of the Secretary-General concerning disabled persons (A/44/406), her delegation fully supported the convening of an international meeting on national disability machinery in developing countries in 1990. The Yugoslav Board for the Decade of Disabled Persons promoted a number of activities for the disabled, including improved access to buildings, the reform of legal provisions regarding retirement and social security and of regulations related to public transportation, the provision of appliances and the protection of the living standards of disabled persons and their dependants.

42. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on crime prevention and criminal justice (A/44/400). It stressed the paramount role of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control which, at its eleventh session, would consider important draft instruments and recommendations to be submitted to the Eighth Congress.

43. Yugoslavia accorded primary attention to the problem of crime, in particular the relationship between various forms of crime and development. In that connection, her Government and the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute had co-financed a project on the issue which could be applied in other developing countries. In addition, a workshop on human rights in the light of crime prevention and criminal justice would be organized by the Institute for Crime Research and Social Studies.

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(Mrs. Nikolic, Yugoslavia)

44. Yugoslavia was making systematic efforts aimed at strengthening international co-operation in the field of criminal justice. It had concluded agreements with Austria and Denmark on the transfer of sentenced persons. Similar agreements with Czechoslovakia, Turkey and other countries were in the process of preparation or negotiation. Yugoslavia was also developing appropriate forms of co-operation within the framework of international legal assistance in criminal matters, in accordance with the United Nations draft model on the transfer procedure.

45. Miss SAELZLER (German Democratic Republic), speaking on agenda item 91, welcomed the fact that the twentieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development offered the opportunity for an exchange of views on the impact of science and technology on social development. The progress accomplished in those fields had created new social and humanitarian problems of dimensions that went beyond the national level and which called for regional and international co-operation if they were to be solved. While the development of science and technology was a driving force for social progress and, properly controlled, should make it possible to solve problems such as those relating to the environment, it was also fraught with danger, particularly in the fields of genetic engineering and biotechnology. It was essential not only to identify the social consequences of the development of science and technology but also to evaluate them so as to take into account the needs of the people without having to restrict the scope of scientific knowledge. Currently there was a growing awareness of the interdependence of scientific and social progress and the safeguarding of international peace. That awareness was increasingly reflected in international relations. Multilateral co-operation within the framework of the United Nations should seek to ensure a balanced relationship between technological progress and social development.

46. While the twelfth Report on the World Social Situation gave a clear picture of the current situation, it was regrettable that it did not focus greater attention on the relationship between the development of the world economy and the emergence of social problems, all the more so since the report furnished proof of the close interrelationship between economic stagnation and the deepening of the social crisis in many countries in Africa and Latin America.

47. Her delegation welcomed the fact that a separate chapter had been devoted to the relationship between social development, security and disarmament. It was convinced that the diversion of resources away from military activities would facilitate the promotion of social progress. It was for that reason that her delegation considered it was necessary to intensify disarmament and to promote and stabilize social development.

48. Welcoming the place accorded in the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation to international trends in issues relating to women and families, her Government supported the proclamation of an international year of the family and was ready to contribute to preparations for such an event.

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(Miss Saelsler, German  
Democratic Republic)

49. Her delegation proposed that future reports on the world social situation should provide a concrete definition of the term "social poverty" encompassing social and regional differences, so that funds could be allocated on the basis of need.

50. Furthermore, future reports would profit by relying not only on scientific publications but also on reports and information communicated by countries to the United Nations Secretariat. Lastly, she hoped that the activities already under way would continue on the basis of her delegation's draft resolution concerning social welfare, development, science and technology.

51. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that 20 years after the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, economic and social problems were still inextricably linked, with the former impeding efforts to resolve the latter. The 1989 Report on the World Social Situation was cause more for concern than for optimism, above all with respect to Africa and Latin America. Far from decreasing, certain problems - environmental degradation, drug abuse, crime, international terrorism, AIDS, migrants, refugees - were on the rise. In spite of the determined efforts of international organizations such as the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), multilateral economic co-operation had not reached the desired level. Far from being able to meet their financial needs, certain countries were in doubt as to their own survival and needed some relief from or even cancelling of their debt burden. The improvement of social conditions had fallen off in many countries and, given the decrease in revenues, the number of individuals living in extreme poverty could only increase. The Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission had decided to devote particular attention to those underprivileged populations, and the General Assembly should follow suit.

52. The relationship between peace, disarmament and development no longer needed to be demonstrated. The United Nations was finally taking on its proper role in the settlement of conflicts and the restoration of peace. Nevertheless, the improved relations between the two super-Powers did not appear to be having any effect on their arms sale policies. The third world countries, which were the principal buyers, had not significantly reduced their expenditures in that area in spite of their debt burden. That debt not only held back their economic development, but also entailed increased militarization and political unrest, added to poverty and hunger.

53. Against that complex background, the solution to socio-economic problems called for a marked improvement in international relations, disarmament which would benefit all countries, unrestricted international co-operation and the political will to put an end to non-military threats such as the flagrant violation of human rights, disease, mass poverty, environmental degradation, unemployment, drugs and crime. The entire national and international community, including women, youth, the elderly and the disabled, should be able to participate in such long-term efforts. Morocco supported all the activities undertaken by the United Nations

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(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

Office at Vienna in support of those groups and regretted that the financial resources allocated to social development were not commensurate with the needs.

54. Under the guidance of King Hassan II, her country was endeavouring to emerge from underdevelopment through substantial reforms and restructuring exercises accompanied by austerity and budgetary stabilization measures. After a critical economic situation in 1983, resulting principally from prolonged drought and the cap on oil prices, the Government had considerably reduced the amount of its outstanding debt owed to public and private enterprises. The budget deficit had been partly reduced, inflation was between 2 and 3 per cent and the national economy had experienced a growth rate as high as 10 per cent. The austerity measures had not prevented the country from making progress in other domains: inauguration of a system of hillside reservoirs within the framework of the national water resource development plan; decrease in the number of shanty-towns and unhealthy living quarters; vocational training and campaigns to eradicate illiteracy. Construction was expanding rapidly. Schools and universities were opening in every region under the decentralization policy. The educational system had been reformed to raise the educational level and to produce better-qualified teachers. The rural exodus had occasioned a strengthening of the co-operative movement, which was a fundamental factor in improving socio-economic conditions in rural areas. The Office of Co-operative Development and the National Institute for Agronomic Research were playing an important role in that effort. Local communities were benefiting from quantitative and qualitative changes introduced by the 1976 community Charter, and a development bank for local communities had been established in order to provide them with direct support.

55. In 1987, through a collective effort, 3 million children under the age of five years had been vaccinated against the most life-threatening diseases, and 3 million women of child-bearing age had been vaccinated against neo-natal tetanus. During a new campaign launched in 1989, 1 million children and hundreds of thousands of women had been vaccinated. In those efforts, her country had received valuable assistance from UNICEF, Rotary International and the Agency for International Development.

56. The attention paid to children must not overshadow the place occupied by the elderly in society. Morocco was attempting to ensure that elderly persons occupied the place habitually accorded to them by its social and family traditions.

57. The Moroccan authorities were also concerned with the needs of disabled persons. That was why, over the past six years, more than 2,000 educators had participated in training or advanced training activities. For the first time in Africa and in the Arab world, training workshops for educators of the physically disabled and mentally impaired had been organized at Tangiers by an American foundation, "Very Special Arts".

58. The enormous obstacles posed by the debt burden, the unjust and discriminatory character of the current international economic system, climatological hazards and scourges such as locust and grasshopper infestations could not shake the will and

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(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

determination of her Government to lead the country along the road to economic and social progress. Nor did those factors prevent Morocco from taking its proper role in expressing solidarity and providing assistance, in the spirit of brotherhood, to those countries of Africa which called on it for support. International solidarity was in fact essential in order to realize the objectives set forth 20 years ago in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development. Third world countries were not only affected by natural disasters, they were also victims of the nefarious designs of transnational corporations which, by dumping toxic products in them, compromised the health and survival of their populations. If the developing countries received assistance in resolving their problems, they could in return contribute to preservation of the world environment, which had become one of the major concerns of the developed countries.

59. Above all, developing countries needed security and peace, that peace which was the very symbol of Islam.

60. Mr. ALOTAIBI (Kuwait) said that his country had incorporated the objectives of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development in its economic and social development programmes, taking into account its resources and traditions. It had made available to its population all the basic services in the fields of education, health and housing. At the same time, in order to ensure that the current generation was not the only one to enjoy the benefits of prosperity, his country had promulgated, in 1977, a law establishing a reserve fund for future generations, to which the State annually contributed 10 per cent of its revenue.

61. Progress and development were the pre-eminent concern of the international community, and especially of the developing countries. The developed countries must step up and rationalize their scientific and technical assistance, with proper regard for the importance of the human factor in the development process. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank should reassess the unduly harsh conditions they were imposing on the developing countries, and the creditor countries should take into account the situation of the debtor countries, particularly the poorest of them, and the fact that they were unable to pay their debts.

62. Material support for the efforts of the developing countries to improve their economic and social circumstances was of particular importance as one of the ways in which the social progress and development proposed in the Declaration could be fostered. In that regard, attention should be drawn to the work of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. That institution, which initially had been intended for the benefit solely of the Arab countries and whose capital has been no more than 50 million Kuwaiti dinars in the 1960s, was currently providing assistance to a large number of developing countries. That trend had been paralleled by a forty-fold increase in the fund's capital. The purpose of the fund was to finance the planning, implementation and monitoring of health, industrial and trade infrastructure projects.

(Mr. Alotaibi, Kuwait)

63. In that connection, tribute should be paid to the young Kuwaiti volunteers for their increasingly active role in the voluntary organizations which were providing health services and assisting the victims of natural disasters and wars and impoverished people in many countries of Africa and Asia.

64. It was essential to create at the international level conditions favourable to social progress and development. In particular, peace and security must be established throughout the world in order to end the arms race, since the lack of resources available for social development was due to instability and tensions in international relations.

65. Ms. AL-ALAWI (Bahrain) said that, since independence, her country had implemented economic and social plans which focused on the individual citizen, and emphasized the interdependence and complementarity of the various sectors of society. In Bahrain social security was based on ancient traditions, and the family, which was regarded as the basis of society, was protected. Priority was given to young people, whose mental and physical capabilities enabled them to play an essential role. It was for that reason that her country attached great importance to all issues relating to young people, and endeavoured to promote their well-being and to provide them with the opportunity to participate in the life of society, with a view to preparing them for their responsibilities. The National Committee established for the International Youth Year continued to endeavour to ensure implementation of the relevant United Nations recommendations. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, in 1995, would provide an opportunity to ensure that world-wide activities on behalf of young people were accorded greater prominence in development programmes and activities. In that connection, her delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report (A/44/387), which called for the planning and implementation of youth-related policies for the year 2000 and beyond.

66. Her country was giving high priority to the question of aging, and was establishing institutions for the elderly and endeavouring, through the National Committee for Assistance to the Elderly, established in 1985, to provide the elderly with the services they needed. In addition, as a follow-up to United Nations decisions, her country had drawn up programmes aimed at integrating the question of aging in the country's major programmes. Bahrain supported the Secretary-General's recommendations, which were aimed at giving elderly people the opportunity to contribute to development by participating in the life of society, and it considered that the best way to achieve that end was to raise the general standard of living of the population, particularly in rural areas.

67. The attention her country paid to the disabled derived from the fundamental values of Muslim society. The country had prepared long-term plans on behalf of the disabled in accordance with the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: those plans were intended to provide disabled people with a comprehensive range of services to meet their specific needs. In addition, studies had been carried out with a view to meeting future requirements in that field. Finally, the National Committee for the Disabled, established on 19 May 1984, was participating in activities at national, regional and international levels within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

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68. Ms. COOMBS (New Zealand), speaking on agenda item 100, said that her country attached particular importance to the question of crime prevention and control. A New Zealander, Mr. Roger Clark, was currently a member of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, and her country welcomed the opportunity to uphold through him a principle to which it was deeply attached, namely the principle of a fair and just society. Such a society presupposed a credible system of justice, accessible to all its members of the society, which protected the rights of disadvantaged and minority groups, which punished humanely and which was politically independent and free from corruption.

69. The United Nations had greatly contributed to the introduction of such systems by establishing standards against which the conduct of States could be measured. Those standards related on the one hand to crime prevention and control, in particular through international co-operation and the enforcement of sentences, and on the other hand to the protection of human rights. Guided by the concern to protect the economic, social and cultural rights which constituted the basis of a decent society, the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control had drawn up draft guidelines for the prevention of juvenile delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines). With the same object in view, the Committee was currently preparing, in anticipation of the Eighth Congress, standard minimum rules for non-custodial measures, a model bilateral treaty on mutual assistance on criminal matters, draft basic principles on the use of firearms by law enforcement officers and draft basic principles on the role of lawyers. Those texts would provide a useful basis for the deliberations of the Eighth Congress, which was to be held in Havana. However, there was no point in adopting new instruments unless efforts were made to implement them. Her delegation saw it as an encouraging sign that particular attention was being paid by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control to the follow-up of the Organization's standards.

70. Her country welcomed the fact that the Economic and Social Council had requested the Secretary-General to prepare, for the Eighth Congress, a report on violence in the family, and in particular on the role of crisis intervention and protection, and the delivery of social and other services. Violence within the family was a phenomenon which showed the extent to which economic and social policies were linked. It also illustrated the tragic effects of drug and alcohol abuse, and the degree to which the victims of that type of violence - almost always women, children, elderly or disabled people - were deprived.

71. Her Government had established a central agency, the Family Violence Prevention Co-ordinating Committee, which was responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the various ministries involved. A campaign had been launched to make the public aware of the problem of domestic violence, and to encourage the families concerned to seek help.

72. In addition, taking as its basis the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, her Government had enacted legislation in 1987 with the aim of ensuring that such victims were properly treated, that they had access to services and information, and that their property was returned to them.

(Mr. Coombs, New Zealand)

73. In that connection, mention should be made of the victims of torture, for whom a voluntary fund had been established. Her country was contributing to the fund. In the longer term, New Zealand took the view that the efforts of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and control were of concern not merely to specialists in criminology: what was at stake were the human rights and the welfare of society that were the indispensable conditions for a fair and just world.

74. Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta) said that in his country great efforts were being made to improve the legal and social situation of less privileged groups. The European Conference which would take place in Malta from 1 to 5 November 1989 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Council of Europe and the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development reflected that concern. The Conference, which would focus on integrated social and family policy for the 1990s, had been organized by the Maltese Ministry for social policy and the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna. Its main aim would be to encourage an exchange of ideas and experience, and collaboration between European Governments and non-governmental organizations in respect of integrated social and family policy.

75. On the question of aging, he said that his country, as a new member of the Commission for Social Development, had actively participated in formulating the United Nations programme of activities in the field of aging for the year 1992 and beyond.

76. In Malta, where the elderly constituted an increasing proportion of the population, as they did in other European countries, the Government had established a Ministry responsible for providing services to the aged. The Ministry's approach to the problem of aging was that of the elderly themselves: it tried to keep them, as long as was humanly possible, in familiar surroundings. A home-help service had been established in order to relieve elderly people of the burden of domestic tasks they found difficult. Those amenities, for which the elderly made a token contribution from their pensions, were provided by suitably trained social-services staff.

77. Similarly, the Government was in the process of establishing hostels for the elderly in various places. The aim was to provide the elderly, and particularly those who were on their own, with the opportunity to live with other senior citizens in the region in which they had spent most of their lives. The hostels were generally located in the middle of the village in order to ensure the continuing participation of the elderly in the life of the community.

78. In addition to a residential complex fully equipped with hospital facilities, Malta had many old people's homes run by the Catholic Church. The Government was particularly concerned to ensure that staff were properly trained to look after the elderly, and it had recently initiated a series of courses specifically intended for such staff.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

79. The primary purpose of the International Institute on Aging, established in Malta pursuant to an agreement between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Government of Malta, was to further the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, particularly with regard to training, in order to meet the urgent needs of countries, and more specifically those of the developing countries. The Institute was designing innovative training programmes and techniques, and providing multidisciplinary instruction in the fields of gerontology and geriatrics for everyone who was currently concerned with the elderly or who intended to work in the field of aging. The Institute's principal activities related to training, research and data-collection, in addition to publications and technical co-operation. Programmes were carried out in close co-operation with United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions, and also with government institutions, non-governmental organizations and research centres. The Institute had a governing body which reported on a periodic basis to the Secretary-General of the United Nations with regard to its activities. The Institute had also established an interdisciplinary network of national, regional and international institutes and organizations from developed and developing countries, with a view to promoting the exchange of information on aging.

80. Among the Institute's activities in the year 1988-1989, mention should be made of the global survey of social services for the elderly in developing countries, the aim of which had been to estimate the needs of those countries with regard to training, a meeting concerning long-term training in social gerontology and geriatrics, held in February 1989, a meeting of specialists in social gerontology, held in May 1989, and the expert group meeting on short-term training in geriatrics, social gerontology, work, retirement and income security, due to be held in October 1989.

81. He appealed to Governments, the specialized agencies of the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations to provide technical and financial support to the Institute, to enable it to strengthen its role and expand its activities. As in the past, his delegation had actively participated, with other delegations, including those of Austria and the Dominican Republic, in preparing a draft resolution on the question of aging, and it hoped that the text would be adopted unanimously.

82. Mr. CABRAL (Guinea-Bissau) congratulated the Secretary-General on his twelfth report on the world social situation, but noted that the report would have been better if it had dwelt more on the sociological and socio-political aspects. The requirements were twofold: on the one hand, an effort to deepen the analysis and knowledge of social realities, particularly in the developing countries, as a prerequisite for an objective evaluation of the problems to be solved or the challenges to be met; on the other, greater co-operation among Member States in respect of the information to be provided on the social situation at the national level.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

83. The report demonstrated the decisive influence of economic factors on the evolution of social life, particularly in the developing countries, where obstacles to the development effort - deteriorating terms of trade, indebtedness and declining financial flows from outside - were increasingly making themselves felt. The effort was actually blocked by the slowing down of domestic investment, the rapid decline in national income and the decrease in funds for the social sector, the consequences of which were reflected in the fact that there was a growing segment of the population living in poverty in those countries where average per capita income was less than 3 per cent of what it was in the developed countries. Such a situation was bound to be accompanied by a widening of the gap between the poor and the rich countries. While half of the world's population possessed 4.5 per cent of world GNP, 9 per cent possessed 43 per cent, or 10 times more.

84. In addition, population growth in the underdeveloped regions was an omen of the difficulties that would inevitably face the social and economic development efforts of the countries of those regions, unless vigorous steps were taken in the near future. Even as needs were increasing, the resources to meet them were diminishing.

85. In such a context, the systematic inclusion of social goals and objectives in adjustment programmes, together with mechanisms for evaluation and follow-up, was an indispensable condition for their success. Where development was concerned, economic performance alone was seldom a true measure of progress achieved. In Guinea-Bissau, a special programme entitled "Programme of social and infrastructural action" had been instituted to cope with the constraints imposed on social development by the implementation of the structural adjustment programme.

86. Concrete and active solidarity was necessary, in keeping with the spirit of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the twentieth anniversary of which was being celebrated in 1989. In that connection, his delegation shared the concerns expressed in their respective reports by Miss Margaret Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, and Mr. Henryk Sokalsky, Director of that Office's Social Development Division, in the face of the tendency - unfortunately a widespread tendency - to give priority to political and economic considerations over and above social and humanitarian concerns.

87. At a time when the question of the human condition was being posed with a new sense of urgency, it was essential for special attention to be given to the position of the most vulnerable groups of the population, in particular the elderly, children, women and young people.

88. In the case of the latter, although the results obtained encouraged perseverance in the initiatives taken within the framework of International Youth Year, it would nevertheless be necessary in future to emphasize the difficulties that remained in certain areas, such as the operational definition of the notion of youth, the compilation of statistics or the processing of indicators on the situation of young people, as well as the financial constraints that existed both

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

at the national level and among United Nations bodies. Those matters would have to be given their due importance, in view of the rapid rate of population growth, which would bring the number of young people throughout the world to more than 1.2 billion by the year 2000, thus aggravating the already critical situation in the education and training, employment, health and housing sectors. Young people, who were particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking and such diseases as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), must receive increasing attention.

89. His delegation wished to thank the United Nations Youth Fund for financing the Guinea-Bissau project "Support to Youth Association" which was a response to the country's search for ways of training young people and bringing them into the development process. His delegation wished to congratulate UNESCO on the pertinent initiatives it had taken during the biennium 1988-1989 as part of its activities on behalf of youth, initiatives which had met Member States' expectations.

90. In conclusion, his delegation expressed the hope that social questions would be given an appropriate place and treatment in the framework of the international development strategy for the next decade.

91. Mr. USWATTE-ARATCHI (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs) responded to questions asked by the Romanian, Malaysian and Yugoslav delegations in connection with the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation. The Romanian delegation had expressed surprise at not seeing many questions normally regarded as matters of social development dealt with in the report. The Yugoslav delegation had taken the view that it would be more useful to present the analysis of the social situation by regions. The Malaysian delegation had asked whether there was any machinery whereby the Secretariat, the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council and the Third Committee could decide on the form and content of the report before it was drawn up.

92. The question of the content and design of the 1989 Report had been raised for the first time by the Economic and Social Council in 1985, in its resolution 1985/21. In response to that resolution, the Secretariat had submitted the broad outlines of the 1989 Report to the Commission for Social Development at its February 1987 session. It was on the basis of the decisions taken at that time by the Commission for Social Development that the text had been prepared. In view of the resources available, it was not supposed to exceed 100 pages, and the Secretariat had therefore been obliged to restrict itself to the questions that had been presented to the Commission for Social Development and approved by it. The content of the report had thus been the subject of a decision by the Commission, and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, with which the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had simply complied.

93. In the case of the report for 1993, it would be extremely desirable for the Commission for Social Development, at its next session, and subsequently the Economic and Social Council and the Third Committee, to give the Secretariat instructions on the nature of the report they would like to see in 1993, so that the omissions noted in the 1989 Report would not reoccur in the report for 1993.

(Mr. Uswatte-Aratchi)

94. As the members of the Third Committee had already been informed, the Department was preparing an addendum to the 1989 Report which would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its forthcoming spring session. That would make it possible to make good some of the omissions in the current report. On the other hand, if agreement could be reached in time on the nature of the report to be submitted in 1993, the Secretariat would spare no effort to provide delegations with a document that responded to the wishes that had been expressed at the current session.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.