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SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 30 April 1985, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. KORDS (German Democratic Republic)

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by States parties to the Covenant concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9
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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1988 (LX)
BY STATE PARTIES TO THE COVENANT CONCERNING RIGHTS COVERED BY ARTICLES 6 TO 9
(continued)

Report of Romania (E/1984/7/Add.17) (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Tanasa and Mr. Grecu (Romania) took places at the table.
2. Mr. TANASA (Romania), speaking on the general points raised during the Working Group's consideration of his country's report, said that the advancement of women was a continual process and a central policy objective of his Government. For a long time, particularly over the previous 10 to 15 years, that objective had been an integral part of all programmes. Although tremendous results had been achieved, they had not as yet matched expectations. There were now 3 million working women in his country, accounting for 40 per cent of the labour force, as opposed to 1 million in 1965. The proportion of women in industry had risen from 26.5 per cent in 1965 to 41.5 per cent in 1984. There was a large proportion of women not only in such traditional industries as garments and textiles but also in the new sectors developed as part of the trend towards modernizing Romanian industry. Forty-two per cent of scientific workers were women, as compared to 32 per cent in 1965, and women accounted for the majority of those employed in education, culture and the arts, health care and agriculture. Their growing role in management could be seen from the fact that some 2,300 women were directors or held other executive posts in production units. The Party and the Government had decided to ensure an increase in the representation of women at all levels of political life. Following the most recent election, 125 of the 369 parliamentary seats were occupied by women.
3. As a general rule, the retirement age was 57 years for women and 62 for men. However, both men and women could retire two years earlier or, if they so chose and the enterprise concerned agreed, could continue working. In some industries where the work was particularly arduous, the retirement age was lower. The difference in the retirement age for men and women reflected the additional obligations of women in their triple capacity as workers, mothers and wives.
4. The earliest age at which young people could begin work was 16 years, if they were no longer at school. Workers under the age of 18 were accorded special treatment and were not permitted to work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions, could not work overtime and were granted longer holidays and rest periods. Youth organizations included the Union of Communist Youth, the Union of Communist Students Associations, the various youth associations for specific activities, the young pioneers, and other social and cultural groups. Under the Constitution, young people over the age of 18 were entitled to vote in all elections, while those over the age of 21 could be elected to the local authorities and those over 23 to the national parliament. The Union of Communist Youth was represented in the

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Government and, in enterprises, the youth representative was one of the vice-presidents of the workers' council.

5. Trade unions in Romania protected the basic interests of working people without distinction as to nationality, race, sex or religion. From the earliest days of trade unionism in Romania, the trade unions had been united in one single organization. Therefore, the unity of Romanian workers was not a new phenomenon. He would refer the Working Group to the replies given by the representative of Romania when the initial report had been considered and also to the detailed information provided to other bodies, including the International Labour Organisation. The trade unions had 7.5 million members, representing 99 per cent of all wage-earners. They were organized according to the various branches of the economy and occupational categories. In order to secure better conditions for workers, the trade unions played an important role in the new economic mechanism, which would result in a more significant increase in material incentives and a closer correlation between remuneration and the fulfilment of production tasks. Trade unions in Romania were fully independent as regards the manner in which their fundamental interests were protected and promoted in accordance with the political, economic and social system in the country. With the elimination of exploitation of man by man and the establishment of socialist ownership, the working class had become a class of owners, producers and users. Therefore, the trade unions had become organizations representing the owners of all the material and spiritual assets of the country and endeavoured to have the working class participate in and organize all production units. The general assemblies mentioned in paragraph 139 of the report were responsible for approving collective agreements, the allocation of social activity funds, working norms and the programme of the enterprise concerned. There were no specific provisions in the Romanian legislation concerning the right to strike; the machinery that had been established to deal with collective or individual labour problems had proved extremely effective.

6. In Romania, the right to work was a constitutional principle and was seen as the expression of a fundamental right that benefited all members of society. At the same time, work was a basic duty of all members of society. Just as individuals could ask the State to secure work, they themselves must engage in socially useful work as the sole source of national wealth, personal income and general prosperity.

7. Romania had given priority to the physically and mentally handicapped and made large contributions to the organization and operation of special day-care centres for handicapped children aged 3 to 7, special educational centres, schools and colleges, and homes for those aged over 16. Skilled handicapped workers were given jobs and accorded equal treatment with other workers. Integration in society was a priority. There were also a number of associations for people with various handicaps.

8. Mr. GRECU (Romania), speaking on specific points raised during the consideration of the report, said that the figure for employed persons in paragraph 7 was higher than that for the number of workers in paragraph 9 because

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it included technical and administrative staff. As the right to work was guaranteed in the Romanian Constitution and other relevant legislation, questions relating to unemployment in Romania were pointless. The two main branches of the economy were agriculture and industry, the main concern of the latter being to develop energy and raw materials. Other industries included engineering, chemicals, electronics, and data processing.

9. As vacant posts were generally filled with graduates from training establishments or through on-the-job training, the role of the employment exchanges mentioned in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report was largely auxiliary and varied in importance depending on the actual situation in different branches of industry. Strictly speaking, there were no foreign workers in Romania, although there were a small number of technicians engaged in specialized technical assistance programmes under bilateral co-operation agreements.

10. In 1983, social and cultural expenditure had accounted for almost 35 per cent of the State budget. Of that figure, 35.5 per cent had been allocated to social security and 20 per cent to family allowances and pensions.

11. The Romanian law on education ensured that all students obtained a job upon graduation. Efforts were made to co-ordinate the number of graduates with the real needs of the country. There were no major difficulties, and the system was constantly evolving in line with the economic development of Romania and demographic changes. The highest academic qualification in Romania was the doctorate, which was recognized in countries with which Romania had concluded equivalency agreements. In order to dispel the confusion surrounding paragraph 34 of the report, he said that the young people referred to in that paragraph were not foreigners but members of non-Romanian national groups living in Romania. There were also some 20,000 foreign students studying in Romania.

12. In general, administrative workers were paid once a month, while those in industry or manufacturing were paid twice. In addition to the basic salary, workers might receive annual bonuses, bonuses for work in difficult conditions, and bonuses for achieving output or export targets or for innovations. No one was entitled to a salary without working and, since the salary was based on the quantity and quality of work, there were no minimum or maximum levels of pay for a given job. Workers were promoted after the practical test or examination referred to in paragraph 11.2. Before being able to take that test, they had to prove that they had the necessary skills and qualifications. Payment in agriculture was based on the same principles as pay in other branches of the economy. Agricultural workers were paid either in kind or in cash, the level of remuneration depending on results. Members of co-operatives might also work on their own plots of land, to which they were entitled. There were also some private agricultural holdings in areas where there were no co-operatives. In some sectors of agriculture, remuneration was very close to that in construction and other similar industries. The working week for agricultural workers was not regulated in the same way as that for industrial workers, since agricultural work was so closely tied to weather conditions. There were times when agricultural workers might work 12 to 14 hours a

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day, while at other times of the year they would work less than their counterparts in industry.

13. Wages in Romania were not subject to tax, and there was virtually no inflation. The interest rate on savings varied from 3 to 5 per cent depending on the type of deposit. In 1984, the average monthly pay for workers had been 2,925 lei, which was more than enough to cover the necessities of life. Pensions in Romania were based on the worker's salary before retirement, his length of service and the nature of his work. In addition, he might receive a supplementary pension so that, in some cases, pensions might be almost the same as the pre-retirement wage. The mutual aid funds mentioned in paragraph 159 were strictly voluntary, and participation was open to all pensioners. If a pensioner was employed temporarily, he was entitled to receive both his pension and his wage as long as the total did not exceed his pre-retirement wage.

14. In conclusion, he said that the report before the Working Group had involved a lot of work on the part of his Government and various institutions in Romania. Many people, who had other work to do, had helped to compile it. His delegation felt that a longer reporting period would not affect the objectives of the reporting system, since a country's basic legislation was unlikely to change substantially in two years, and would also be in the interests of the United Nations and the most rational use of its financial and personnel resources.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.