

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

later: Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (A/46/3 (chap. VI, sect. B), A/46/56-E/1991/6 and Corr.1, A/46/137-E/1991/40, A/46/281-E/1991/112, A/46/315, 360, 361, 362 and Corr.1, 414 and 501/Rev.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, on 2 October, the Committee had agreed to consider agenda item 94 (b) entitled "Crime prevention and criminal justice" on 9 and 10 December 1991 because the ministerial meeting on the creation of an effective United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme was to be held in Paris from 21 to 23 November. After listing the documents before the Committee under agenda item 94 (a), he called on the first speaker.

2. Mr. SOKALSKI (Director, Social Development Division, and Coordinator for the International Year of the Family) said that, in looking at the work accomplished by the United Nations in the social field since the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, he was struck by a number of considerations. First, the profound changes that had taken place in different parts of the world had created a greater awareness of the importance of the social aspects of development. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations had said in his address to the European Parliament earlier that year, democracy must be backed by a minimum level of well-being in order to make sure that it was not equated with poverty. However, the world was still far away from the reality of such a democracy. He recalled the many problems confronting the international community. The challenge to Governments was clear: to ensure that social policy became a permanent and integral part of national planning. That task was all the more urgent because recent political developments had outpaced developments in the social sphere, making the neglect of social factors all the more manifest. The shift to a market economy had forced Governments to reassess their role as promoters of social policy.

3. At the international level, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council that dealt with social development issues had been quick to recognize not only the new challenges but also the extraordinary opportunities of the times. The thirty-second session of the Commission for Social Development had been a notable example in that respect. For the first time, discussions had been entirely devoid of acrimony. The Commission had formulated a number of important suggestions, including a decision intended to strengthen the role of the Secretariat in promoting international cooperation in social development. The decision requested the Secretary-General to identify the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs as the focal point of social policy research and advisory services for countries undergoing economic and social policy adjustment. That decision, which the Economic and Social Council had approved, would give the United Nations Office at Vienna the status it deserved, particularly in the context of General Assembly resolution 45/248.

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4. Reform measures had also been proposed in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. In response to the recommendations of the Seventh and the Eighth United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, an intergovernmental working group had met at Vienna from 5 to 9 August 1991 in order to develop the framework for an effective international programme on crime prevention and criminal justice. The recommendations of the working group would be discussed at a ministerial meeting to be held in Paris from 21 to 23 November, whose conclusions would be considered by the Committee in December 1991.

5. In recent years, efforts had been made to restructure the work of the United Nations. Although opinions differed on the practical modalities of such reform, it was generally agreed to be necessary. However, one could not help but be struck by the superficial treatment accorded to social sector issues. In general, there was a tendency to confuse the word "social" with the word "humanitarian", or with the notion of human rights. In short, the entire United Nations social sector was in need of a serious reform; previous efforts had failed because they had been based on a selective approach and had not been sufficiently comprehensive.

6. Over the past few years, senior officials of the United Nations Office at Vienna had attempted to draw attention to the precarious resource situation of the Secretariat's social programmes. For example, units responsible for the implementation of programmes in such important spheres as ageing and disability had only three posts each, financed from the regular budget. In addition, it was unacceptable for the Secretariat to be unable to respond to requests from developing countries for advisory services because it did not have sufficient funds to cover travel expenses. Lastly, it was unrealistic to expect the Secretariat to be able to respond to all the requests of the legislative bodies on a zero-growth budget.

7. Despite those difficulties, the Social Development Division had been able to prepare eight reports for consideration by the Committee at the current session. The first of those reports (A/46/414) concerned the Implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes. The Social Development Division had had great difficulty in obtaining feedback from countries on the implementation of those Guiding Principles, one reason being that many Governments were unaware of their existence. More importantly, those Guiding Principles supposed the launching of very comprehensive programmes covering all aspects of social welfare. As a result, they called for considerable financial outlays that many Governments were unable to make. Recently, however, signs of progress had been noted, particularly at the regional level. Two weeks previously, the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development had been held at Manila. The Conference, which had been organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and hosted by the Government of the Philippines, had considered a wide range of social issues covered by the Guiding Principles. The Conference had adopted the Manila

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Declaration, which set forth a regional social development strategy to the year 2000 and beyond. In 1992, a similar meeting would be held in Europe. Contacts had already been made with some Latin American countries with a view to holding a regional conference on the implementation of the Guiding Principles in that region.

8. A review of the progress made towards the implementation of those Principles, had led the Secretary-General to formulate recommendations aimed at capacity-building and strengthening technical cooperation. He drew the Committee's attention to the suggestion concerning the establishment of a mechanism for system-wide coordination aimed at harmonizing efforts in the social field, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 42/125.

9. As the preparatory body for the International Year of the Family, the Commission for Social Development had reported on preparations for the Year in document A/46/362. The preparatory process was well under way. Over 40 countries had designated national focal points to liaise with the secretariat of the Year. Close to 30 countries had taken steps in that direction. Lastly, 15 countries - Belarus, Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, Greece, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Finland, Turkey, the Philippines, Poland and the USSR - had established such centres at the highest level. Almost 40 countries had made considerable progress on implementing their national programmes for the International Year of the Family.

10. At the international level, 23 United Nations organizations and agencies and 13 other intergovernmental organizations had designated focal points for the International Year. The first inter-agency meeting, which had been held in March 1991, had made it possible to develop a system-wide coordinated approach to the International Year of the Family. As the coordinator for the International Year, he had had particularly valuable discussions with the Council of Europe, the Commission of the European Communities and the Nordic Council of Ministers. He had also recently addressed the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Family Affairs at Lucerne, Switzerland, where he had spoken with a number of government delegations.

11. Notwithstanding those positive results, achieved with limited resources and in a short period of time, the review of the preparatory process had also clearly demonstrated the need for intensified efforts at all levels. The response to the General Assembly's request for contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family had been extremely modest. Financial support was crucial, in particular to support activities in developing countries.

12. The following year would mark the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Its most notable achievement had been to make the world

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community more sensitive to disability issues. A long-term strategy was now under preparation, with a view to integrating disabled persons fully into society as equal partners, towards the goal of "a society for all by the year 2010".

13. The report of the Secretary-General on disability issues (A/46/366) reflected that effort to ensure equal opportunity for and full participation of persons with disabilities in society. Technological advances in that regard had never been as promising as they were right then. The following year would be crucial to United Nations efforts to map a strategy for the development of ability and independence.

14. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly had endorsed an action programme on ageing for 1992 and beyond. The current United Nations programme in that area focused on three topics: an International Day for the Elderly, observed 1 October, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, and the Decade 1992-2001. Among the many activities planned, he mentioned the interregional symposium scheduled for the first half of 1992 in Japan, which would provide an opportunity to set goals for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. He sincerely hoped that the General Assembly would provide concrete guidance on priorities and strategies for the next two decades.

15. As part of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, the international community was preparing to establish a world programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond. Global target-setting would be the key element in its preparation. At the end of 1991, a small expert group meeting would be held in Vienna to elaborate a first draft of a programme of action. It was extremely important, however, that the work in the Secretariat should be accompanied by action at the national, regional and global levels, particularly by the establishment of data banks to assist Governments in designing viable youth policies.

16. Turning to crime prevention and criminal justice, he noted that the Committee already had before it two reports on that item and that the third, the note of the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Ministerial Meeting on the Creation of an Effective United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, would be submitted to the Committee once the Ministerial Meeting was over. The report contained in document A/46/363 outlined the initial steps taken by the Secretary-General to give effect to the resolutions recommended by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in conjunction with the 1992-1997 medium-term plan for the period and the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993. The other report before the Committee dealt with the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of

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Offenders. It outlined the historical background of the Institute, emphasized the Institute's funding problems, and urged that the Institute be considered as a special case.

17. Mr. USWATTE-ARATCHI (Department of International Economic and Social Affairs), referring to the interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation (A/46/56 and Corr.1), recalled that the Economic and Social Council had requested, among other things, that high priority should be given to an analysis of the main indicators of social progress and standards of living. Such assessment had been lacking in the 1985 and 1989 reports, although the draft framework for the 1993 report on the world social situation as outlined in document A/46/56 included such analysis. However, subsequent to the request of the Council, several United Nations publications had appeared which provided the requested indicators, including the Human Development Report 1991, containing important statistical information on social conditions and standards of living, the annual World Development Report of the World Bank and the Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. Therefore, several sources of information on social indicators and standards of living existed. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation should be drafted in time for its consideration by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-third session in February 1993.

18. Work undertaken within the United Nations system to improve quantitative and qualitative indicators on the social situation and standards of living, the subject of document A/46/137, could be divided into four categories. First was the work of the United Nations Statistical Office, which was attempting to develop a system of national accounts, which was being constantly improved. The second set of activities comprised technical assistance to developing countries to generate statistical and other information as close as possible to the previously mentioned system of indicators. A third group of tasks consisted in establishing composite indices combining a widening series of social conditions and standards of living. That was a complex undertaking, as shown in the latest Human Development Report, which had widened the concept to include criteria such as enjoyment of human rights and nature of forms of government. It was not surprising that such an approach to social indicators was controversial, since the concepts on which it was based were still evolving. Fourth, the United Nations system gave wide dissemination to data collected, both through publications and in computer-readable form.

19. Mr. ISAKSSON (Director, UNESCO Liaison Office with the United Nations) drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the results of the International Literacy Year (A/46/281). 1990 had been not only a year of mobilization for the cause of literacy and education, but also the first year in the UNESCO 10-year Plan of Action. The purpose of the International Literacy Year was to raise awareness and rally the international community to

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the cause of literacy. The report had been based on responses to a questionnaire received from 59 Member States. The results of that survey, discussed in detail in paragraph 13 of the report, showed that the Member States responding considered the Year to have been a success. Forty-seven per cent rated it as "very successful", 53 per cent as "fairly successful". Twenty per cent of respondents considered that the Year had achieved "excellent" results in increasing governmental action in favour of literacy; another 43 per cent had rated the results in that area as "good" and 25 per cent as "fair". Concerning increased public awareness of the problem of illiteracy and the importance of education, 19 per cent rated the results as "excellent", 60 per cent as "good", 19 per cent "fair". In order to have a more objective measure of the progress achieved, the number of articles on literacy and illiteracy appearing in 130 major national and regional newspapers published in 1990 had been compared to the number published in 1988. (International Year activities had begun in spring 1989.) It had been noted that seven times more articles on literacy appeared in those newspapers at the end of the period under consideration. A substantial majority of responses concerning the four other main objectives of the Year had indicated ratings of "excellent" or "good".

20. As lead organization for International Literacy Year, UNESCO had done its utmost to meet the obligation and responsibility entrusted to it by the General Assembly. Mr. Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, had stressed many times, however, that the Year owed its success to an enormous collective effort. Nearly 120 Member States had established national committees or structures, the NGOs had been fully mobilized and highly effective, and the mass media had offered constant and indispensable support.

21. He warmly thanked all those who had made financial, material and personnel contributions to the UNESCO International Literacy Year secretariat or who had contributed to International Literacy Year activities in developing countries. He also thanked the National Commissions for UNESCO, which had played a key role in many States in mobilizing the necessary support. Lastly, he paid a tribute to the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, and particularly to the Secretary-General, for their collaboration.

22. The major event of International Literacy Year had unquestionably been the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990 under the joint sponsorship of the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF, along with, *inter alia*, the United Nations Population Fund, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the World Health Organization. That event had marked the launching of an international movement to achieve education for all. The movement reflected the central message of International Literacy Year, namely that education was the responsibility of all and was the key to the world's future.

23. The General Assembly had played a vital role in promoting literacy and basic education. It had proclaimed International Literacy Year in response to

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an appeal from the UNESCO General Conference in 1985. UNESCO hoped that the General Assembly would continue its close monitoring of the progress of literacy and basic education and that it would take the necessary measures to support the international movement launched by the Year and by the World Conference. The Education Commission of the UNESCO General Conference was considering a draft resolution which requested the General Assembly to conduct, at its fiftieth session, in 1995, a mid-decade review of the progress made and problems encountered in the struggle to eliminate illiteracy. Many programmes and policies had been launched or were being planned, and it would be useful, in 1995, to renew the commitments made and to make the necessary corrections so that the second half of the decade might witness unprecedented progress in that area. Lastly, UNESCO hoped that the United Nations system would participate as dynamically in the follow-up activities as it had in the Year and the World Conference themselves.

24. Mr. HOEGH (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons) said he regretted that arrangements had not been made to allow the hearing-impaired to follow the debate; he hoped that that need would be met the following year.

25. One year before the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, much remained to be done to improve the situation of the disabled.

26. Efforts to increase awareness of the needs of the disabled and of the many problems they encountered had been fairly successful, but the potential contribution of the disabled to society had not yet been fully recognized. Yet such persons could be active contributors to the socio-economic growth of their countries. In that regard, all Governments should make better use of the Tallinn Guidelines, contained in the report of the International Meeting on Human Resources in the Field of Disability.

27. He was pleased to note that many Governments had enacted legislation to provide for services, programmes and special integration measures for disabled persons. It was important, however, to ensure that the needs and problems of the disabled were systematically taken into account in all areas, including health, social affairs, education, employment and transportation. That was the only way to achieve the goal which the General Assembly had set for disabled persons the previous year: "a society for all by the year 2010".

28. Equal opportunity for all required equal access to education, which was impossible if disabled students did not have the benefit of appropriate facilities, particularly adaptive devices. The same considerations applied to employment. Governments must give more serious consideration to the practical aspects of integrating disabled persons. No country could afford to overlook the human resources represented by disabled citizens. He welcomed the Swedish initiative of elaborating standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, and urged all member States to follow that example. All Governments should support disabled persons' organizations and should work

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with them to develop an integrated, multi-year plan of action to address the needs and concerns of the disabled in all areas of social and cultural life.

29. Currently, everyone recognized the importance of telecommunications and the vital role they played in daily life. Many forgot, however, that millions of people did not have access to telecommunications because of their disabilities. Communications ministries must address those problems. The recent event at Geneva "Telecom '91", had shown what needed to be done in that regard. Immediate attention must be given to making appropriate prosthetic devices available to disabled persons at affordable prices. Millions of disabled persons were unable to integrate themselves into community life for lack of such devices. He recommended that countries which had not yet done so should immediately become parties to the Protocol to the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials, adopted by UNESCO at Florence in 1950, at the fifth session of its General Conference.

30. He was pleased that millions of disabled persons had been able to integrate themselves into their communities, to become more self-reliant and to contribute more actively to society as a result of the training they had received and the opportunities they had enjoyed through their involvement in projects developed by disabled persons' organizations. Unfortunately, many of those relatively low-cost projects, which could lead to great progress at the local level, were not implemented for lack of funding. He appealed to all Governments to support the initiatives of the disabled community at the national level and to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

31. One effective way of fostering understanding of the potential of disabled persons was to organize national awareness days or weeks. One such programme had been successfully developed by Canada and adopted by other countries. Public awareness of the situation of disabled persons would greatly speed up the integration process

32. The progress made to date was largely a result of the work of national disabled persons' organizations. Such organizations understood the problems best and often knew of effective and economical solutions. However, those organizations required funding, and Governments had a duty to help them. The disabled community itself had done its utmost to raise funds. Recently, for example, the Norwegian organization New Life had raised more than \$15 million in a single day. That example could be followed in other industrialized countries.

33. Disabled persons could do much for themselves, as long as they were kept informed. Governments must therefore ensure that information was provided in a manner which was accessible to all sectors of society, including the hearing-impaired and the blind. Modern technology made such action possible.

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34. At the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Third Committee had adopted a recommendation to proceed from awareness-raising to action. In 1982, the General Assembly had adopted a World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, which had been developed by the disabled themselves. He strongly urged all Governments to review the extent to which the Programme of Action had been implemented or neglected, and to take appropriate steps. Disabled persons not only deserved, but had the right, to enjoy the same benefits as other members of society. Governments were responsible for translating that principle into reality.

35. He sincerely thanked the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who, throughout his term, had demonstrated concern for the needs and problems of disabled persons. It was to be hoped that his successor would show the same commitment to that cause.

36. Mr. VAN SCHAİK (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community noted that living conditions for many people, especially in developing countries, had deteriorated since 1990 as a result of man-made or natural disasters. Continued international vigilance was needed in order to deal effectively with such disasters. In that connection, the Twelve had proposed an initiative aimed at strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance provided by the United Nations.

37. The past decade had seen far-reaching social and political changes, as repressive, authoritarian regimes had given way to more open political systems in many countries, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. That was proof of a growing awareness of the relationship between democracy, human rights and sustainable development, a phenomenon which was also evident in developing countries, inter alia, in Africa.

38. The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), held in September 1990, had again stressed the difficulties faced by LDCs and their need for a partnership with the donor community. The European Community had over many years forged strong ties of partnership with countries signatories to the Lomé Convention, two thirds of which were LDCs. LDCs also received special benefits under the European Community's generalized system of preferences. Aware of the common responsibility of donor and recipient countries to lessen the burden of the debt problem, the Twelve recognized that a still greater effort would be required from donors, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

39. Structural adjustment programmes had serious implications for the poorest strata of society. Accordingly, the Twelve attached great importance to the social, cultural and human dimensions of development cooperation. They emphasized partnership not only between Governments but also between Governments and non-governmental organizations, and also grass-roots activities. In view of the large numbers of women in the poorest strata of society and the complex responsibilities of women in raising new generations,

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policies must take their specific needs into account. With the Lomé Convention and the cooperation agreements concluded with Mediterranean, Asian and Latin American countries, the Twelve had given a clear indication of the priority they accorded to an appropriate framework for dynamic, balanced cooperation activities with the developing countries.

40. The Twelve fully supported the activities of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, including the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, as the focal point in that area. Of course, that required that the human and financial resources allocated to the Centre under the regular budget be made available to it during the medium-term planning period 1992-1997. The Centre should also contribute to the social dimension of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, without prejudice to other operational activities in that field to be implemented by the relevant programmes and specialized agencies. Lastly, the growing awareness of the social dimension of development could not but strengthen the role of the Commission for Social Development.

41. Mention should be made of Economic and Social Council decision 1991/230 requesting the Secretary-General to carry out consultations with all States Members of the Organization on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development. The Twelve were willing to contribute to those consultations and looked forward to the report which the Secretary-General would be submitting to the Council in 1992.

42. With the single European market due to become a reality, the Twelve had concentrated on the social dimension of their policies. One result had been the adoption in 1989 of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers on the basis of which an action programme had been formulated which emphasized, inter alia, social aspects in the fields of employment, improvement of living and working conditions, equal opportunities, youth, and elderly and disabled persons.

43. The integration of youth in society was essential for the future development of society. It involved the active participation, on an equal basis, of young men and women in political, economic, social and cultural life. Policies for youth had been on the agenda of the Commission for Social Development and the General Assembly for many years. The International Youth Year in 1985 had highlighted the importance of that question. However, follow-up activities to the Year needed to be strengthened, with emphasis on practical programmes in the fields of education, training, culture, sports and welfare. Programmes involving international and national youth organizations should be implemented, based on cooperation between youth in developed and developing countries. Channels of communication between the United Nations system and youth organizations world wide also needed to be improved. The tenth anniversary of the Year would be an occasion to refocus attention on youth issues and stimulate renewed action at all levels. In that connection,

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the Twelve welcomed the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General (A/46/360) for the preparation of a draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond. Youth issues would also be taken up by the open-ended ad hoc working group of the Commission for Social Development to be established at the Commission's thirty-third session.

44. European youth programmes were being developed to promote the mobility of young people: students and workers. Projects for the unemployed and less favoured groups of young people were being funded by the European Social Fund. In order to create better mutual understanding among youth in different parts of Europe, the European Community had set up an exchange programme for young people living in its member States.

45. As a result of improvements in medical care, elderly people accounted for an increasingly large share of the world's population. Such people could make a very useful and practical contribution to society. In the industrialized countries, population ageing created a need for additional resources and amenities. Policies were directed towards enabling elderly people to live independently as long as they could. Furthermore, measures must be taken to improve the working conditions of elderly workers and to combat age-stereotyping in the workplace and the labour market. The Twelve were paying increased attention to policies on ageing, with emphasis on full community participation by senior citizens. They had also formulated a plan of action on ageing for the period 1991-1993. In developing countries, improvements in medical care and health services were also increasing longevity, confronting the Governments of those countries with similar challenges.

46. In its resolution 37/51, the General Assembly had endorsed the International Plan of Action on Ageing. Despite its usefulness, however, the Plan had not been adequately implemented by all Member States. The tenth anniversary of the Plan, in 1992, offered an opportunity to review the progress made. The report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation on ageing (A/46/361) provided useful strategies for the coming years. The Economic and Social Council had recommended that the General Assembly devote four plenary meetings at its forty-seventh session to considering the follow-up to the Plan and celebrating its tenth anniversary. The Twelve hoped that special attention would be paid at the session to intergenerational solidarity and the integration of elderly people in society, which were also the themes of the European Year of the Elderly in 1993.

47. Although the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was drawing to a close, the question of equalizing opportunities for disabled persons remained highly topical. While it was true that the Decade had marked a turning-point in the international community's awareness of the situation of disabled persons, particularly in the developing countries, the needs of handicapped women and children continued to be substantial. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should play a catalytic role in that regard.

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48. The European Community welcomed resolution 32/2 of the Commission for Social Development concerning the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group to elaborate standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons (E/1991/26-E/CN.5/1991/9). It hoped that the working group would prepare concrete guidelines for Governments.

49. The main objective of national policies in that field should be the full integration of the disabled into the community and their active participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. Associations for disabled people had an important role to play, in both the industrialized and the developing countries. Governments should encourage such associations and cooperate with them.

50. The Twelve attached great importance to the various initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as States to follow up the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The European Community, for its part, had launched the Helios Programme, which sought to bring about the social and economic integration of disabled persons. The Community was willing to share its experience with Members of the United Nations, particularly with respect to access of handicapped persons to buildings and public transport and the construction of adequate housing - all factors which facilitated the integration and independence of such persons.

51. The European Community looked forward to the adequate preparation of the International Year of the Family. Family structures and the sharing of responsibilities by men and women were changing. That issue merited attention, taking duly into account the socio-cultural context of each country. The European Community would play an active role in the preparatory work for the Year; it called on the Secretary-General to ensure that due attention was paid to migrant families and to technical assistance to developing countries in formulating action programmes for the welfare of the poorest families in urban and rural areas.

52. Mr. Slaby (Czechoslovakia) took the Chair.

53. Mrs. ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) recalled that the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/46/1) stressed the importance of social issues to the mission of the United Nations. It was truly a mistake to assume that social issues ranked second after political issues, for unresolved social problems very quickly became political problems. It was with that in mind that her country endorsed the convening of a world summit for social development.

54. Similarly, it was unfortunate that the new phenomenon of the ageing of the world population, which was assuming vast proportions, currently received less attention than other issues, such as the greenhouse effect. As the report of the Secretary-General on the question (A/46/361) indicated, from

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1950 to 2025, the world's population of 60 years of age and over would have increased from 200 million to 1.2 billion, or from 8 to 14 per cent of the global population. The phenomenon would be even more dramatic in poor countries. In 1975, people over 60 years of age had accounted for 50 per cent of the population of the developing countries, a figure which would increase to 75 per cent in 2025. Moreover, between 1980 and 2020, the number of octogenarians would have doubled in the more developed regions and would have increased fivefold in the developing countries. That phenomenon would have major repercussions in many areas, including income, housing and health care. It would create a demand for social services that no country would be able to satisfy unless steps were taken immediately to deal with the situation. The first task was to acknowledge that older people could play an important role in society, as they had done before urbanization and modernization had undermined the family, focused attention on youth and devalued the traditions and wisdom gained from years of living. The United Nations already had taken steps to that end. It had organized the first International Day for the Elderly on 1 October, thus heralding a new level of awareness on the topic. Even more significant, the General Assembly currently was considering a draft set of United Nations Principles for Older Persons and would devote several plenary meetings to the question of ageing.

55. New resources must be mobilized on behalf of the elderly. However, economic growth was declining in the countries of the third world, where social security programmes were a luxury which remained out of reach. That explained the scant success of measures such as the International Plan of Action on Ageing, which suffered from chronic underfunding and viewed the elderly mainly as victims and as a burden to society. To deal effectively with the phenomenon of ageing, it was necessary to stop viewing the elderly as obstacles to development. The Secretary-General had adopted the correct approach in his report on international cooperation on ageing for 1992 and beyond by calling for new workable strategies which focused not on age but on the contribution which each person could make to society. That new concept of "productive" ageing viewed the elderly as repositories of a lifetime of knowledge and experience and a national resource which societies should use to their advantage. In some developing countries, the elderly already had begun to contribute to national development with the establishment, supported by modest investments, of small businesses ranging from child care to word processing. Such self-help projects increased the income of older people while enabling them to become agents of development of their countries.

56. The United Nations, for its part, should create new institutional mechanisms to encourage the independence of older people, a difficult task since there was no precedent in that area and ageing was a phenomenon that cut across all generations, all countries and all sectors of economic and political life. To achieve that goal, the United Nations had begun to create new forms of cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the private sector, seeking to obtain the maximum benefit with a minimum of resources. The Banyan Fund Association, which had been established very recently in Paris

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under the patronage of the United Nations, was an example of that new approach. The Fund raised capital from the private sector and other non-governmental organizations to finance projects enabling older people to become masters of their own fate and contribute to the development of their countries.

57. Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates) took the Chair.

58. Ms. LISSAU-JENSEN (Denmark), speaking as the representative of the Danish Youth Council and as a member of the Danish delegation to the United Nations, discussed questions relating to youth. Young people currently faced many problems, some of which concerned only their own countries, while others, such as unemployment, hunger, lack of services or the need to flee from their native land, were global in scope. A key factor, which was essential if those problems were to be solved, was participation. It was therefore gratifying to note the wave of democratization that had swept the world in recent years. However, democracy was more than demonstrations in the streets; it was also the work of building a society in which every individual had the right to freedom of expression. The importance of associations could not be overemphasized in that regard, for they provided a way for individuals and, in particular, young people, to forge an opinion and exert influence. Although individualism was gaining ground in some countries, in others, unfortunately, the right to form associations was denied. Democracy could be established on a solid foundation and could foster development only if that fundamental right was respected. Fortunately, a positive trend in that regard could be observed in many parts of the world, in particular, in Eastern Europe and Latin America. The organization to which she belonged sought to contribute to the establishment of democracy in various regions through the exchange of experience. In that connection, recent events had demonstrated the importance of the role of the United Nations in dealing with repressive regimes and as a mediator in world conflicts.

59. The Convention on the Rights of the Child had been adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, and it was essential for its provisions to be implemented in concrete terms. The protection of children's rights went hand in hand with development. To young people the future looked terrifying. In particular, it was difficult to see how the countries of the third world could solve their enormous debt problem. At the global level, the need to establish a genuine "partnership in development" should be a priority theme of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

60. Young people were particularly aware of the need to save the planet Earth. They also realized that that would require changes in the way people lived. Water and energy consumption in the developed countries must be reduced. Sustainable development was contingent upon help from the industrialized countries and measures to preserve the environment. She urged that non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations, should attend the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

(Ms. Lissau-Jensen, Denmark)

61. She noted with regret that, although resolutions on youth were adopted year after year by the General Assembly, only a few countries included young people in their delegations to that body. It was essential that young people should take part in decision-making in international forums.

62. Mrs. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) said that her country well understood the trials of the developing countries, which had until recently been victims of colonialism and were now trying to ensure a better life for their people in peace, freedom and dignity. As the Director of the Social Development Division had said, democracy must be backed by a minimum level of well-being. Unfortunately, for the developing countries the preceding decade had been one of stagnation in the development of human and material resources. In Africa, where 29 countries had joined the ranks of the least developed, the situation was particularly serious. By the year 2000, sub-Saharan Africa would have the largest number of people at poverty level in the world. Social instability combined with the economic crisis threatened the very foundations of the emerging democracies. Efforts made thus far to reverse that trend - technical assistance programmes, development decades, the international development strategies, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, North-South negotiations and, more recently, human resource development programmes - had failed to produce results. The developing countries still suffered from deteriorating terms of trade and barriers which denied their commodities access to developed-country markets. In addition, the debt burden had forced many developing countries to become net exporters of capital, and the international trading system was unfavourable to them. For all those reasons, the social situation in the developing countries had deteriorated to such an extent that it was difficult to see what the international community could do to remedy it. In addition to a change of strategy, what was required was a new political will to go beyond declarations of intent and undertake practical action in the areas of education, training, job creation and the identification of needs of special groups in individual societies and ways of meeting them. A world summit for social development would provide an opportunity to demonstrate the new political will. She hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the decision of the Commission for Social Development to make the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs the focal point for social policy research and advisory services for countries undergoing economic and social policy adjustment.

63. Cameroon supported the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future (A/46/414) which emphasized the role of the family and the community, and endorsed the decision to create an inter-agency task force to promote system-wide harmonization and collaboration, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/125. She also welcomed the work that had been done on establishing a global information network for the collection, dissemination and exchange of information, on the implementation of the Guiding Principles.

(Mrs. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

64. With regard to the International Year of the Family, which would be observed in 1994, Cameroon was one of 15 countries that had set up national coordination committees for the Year at the highest political level. A coordinated approach which involved non-governmental organizations was needed in order to draw up national, regional and international programmes. She welcomed the negotiations being conducted with interested Governments on the secondment of national staff for the preparation of the International Year of the Family and called upon member States to contribute generously to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the International Year of the Family.

65. On the subject of the disabled, she noted current efforts to take action-oriented approaches to equalizing opportunities and fully integrating the disabled in all aspects of social life by the year 2000. She looked forward to the work of the expert group charged with elaborating a legal instrument and establishing an institutional framework in that area. UNESCO was to be commended for sponsoring the development of educational programmes on disabled children, as was UNICEF, which was giving priority to the early detection and prevention of childhood impairment.

66. She concluded by emphasizing once again the need to improve living conditions by democratizing national, regional and international institutions, by undertaking social and economic reforms while moving towards a market economy, by adopting unilateral or multilateral measures for disarmament and by promoting regional integration. It would take \$20 billion to implement the provisions of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children in New York; as that was virtually the equivalent of the world's military expenditure in 10 days, the importance of the "peace dividend" was evident. Clearly, then the only way to improve living standards for all mankind by the year 2000 was by reorienting world priorities towards social development.

67. Mrs. ZIKRY (Egypt) thanked the Secretary-General for his interim report on the world social situation (A/46/56). She noted, however, that it did not take adequately into account the deteriorating economic and social conditions of the developing countries, or reflect the concerns of those countries. Social indicators must be improved and developed further and suggestions made for viable solutions. The organizations of the United Nations system must endeavour to study in greater depth the social situation of the developing countries, which were obliged to adopt structural adjustment policies that had forced many of them to reduce their social services expenditure, to the detriment of programmes. The effects of those adjustment policies were disastrous, particularly for the vulnerable groups of society. The social cost of such policies must be contained; moreover, international economic relations must be reviewed in the light of the principle of "shared responsibility", as suggested by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

(Mrs. Zikry, Egypt)

68. The responsibility of the international community to support the developing countries' efforts to solve their grave economic and social problems had been emphasized in many international forums. Intensive cooperation was called for between United Nations bodies, donors and international financial institutions to provide additional financial and technical resources to help the countries of the third world face their debt problems.

69. While significant political changes were taking place on the international scene, social and economic problems continued to worsen; the major challenges of the 1990s remained the eradication of poverty and hunger, a more equitable distribution of income and the development of human resources.

70. The Egyptian Government was endeavouring, in its negotiations with international financial institutions, to pursue an adjustment strategy that was at once efficient and humane. While the integration of all human resources was a common goal of all countries, it was an imperative for the developing countries, where 50 per cent of the population was under 20 years of age and women were still not fully integrated in the development process. Aware of that fact, Egypt was paying due attention to the development of all sectors of its population, and especially youth. At the national level, significant measures had been taken in a number of national projects to ensure the full participation of youth in building up society. Periodic seminars were held to raise public awareness of the dangers facing young people in the modern world, such as drug abuse, disease, AIDS and the deterioration of the environment. Strong emphasis was also placed on sport, as well as on dialogue and discussion between specialists and young people on social and economic issues of global concern.

71. At the international level, Egypt had always supported the youth-related initiatives of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Evidence of that support was provided by Egypt's sponsorship each year of the resolution on policies and programmes involving youth. With reference to the Secretary-General's report on that subject (A/46/360), her delegation believed that the world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond should be concerned with the same themes as the International Youth Year, namely participation, development and peace. It agreed that the programme's aim should be to provide practical and long-term guidelines at the national and regional levels. The United Nations Decade for Youth should also be more action-oriented. Support should be given to the recommendation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) that refugee youth should be included as a priority issue in the draft world youth programme.

72. Egypt's commitment to young people applied equally to other sections of society, in particular the aged. Accordingly, Egypt had supported the activities proposed under the action programme on ageing for 1992 and beyond and had endeavoured to take the increasing number of elderly people into

(Mrs. Zikry, Egypt)

account in its policies. Egypt also had a strong interest in family issues, since it was through the family that moral values were perpetuated. It would therefore make every effort to prepare for and observe the International Year of the Family in 1994.

73. The idea of convening a world summit on social development was an unprecedented initiative which would provide an occasion for an exchange of views and the development of a joint position on social issues. Her delegation hoped that the changing international climate would be conducive to concerted efforts to improve the situation in that area.

74. Mr. KRENKEL (Austria), supported by Mrs. BOUKADJUM (Algeria) and Mr. ZHANG Jun (China) said that he had submitted a question in writing concerning Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/16 and the implications of that resolution for the work of the Third Committee. He asked whether the representative of the Secretary-General was in a position to give a reply.

75. Ms. KAMAL (Secretary of the Committee) said that the question had been referred to the competent service for a reply.

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)
(A/C.3/46/L.8, A/C.3/46/L.9, A/C.3/46/L.11*)

76. Mr. STRUGAR (Yugoslavia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.8 on behalf of its sponsors, who had been joined by Canada and New Zealand. The work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination merited special attention; the Committee had made a significant contribution to the activities carried out by the United Nations in the context of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. The Committee's financial situation was, however, critical, owing to the failure of certain States parties to comply with their financial obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. For the sixth consecutive year no lasting solution had been found to the problem. The States parties had therefore been asked to pay their outstanding contributions before 1 February 1992 and to explore, as a matter of priority, ways of establishing a more secure basis for the future financing of all the Committee's costs. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

77. Mrs. GEBRE-EGZIABHER (Ethiopia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.9 on behalf of the Group of African States. The draft dealt in a detailed manner with the activities of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Resolutions on the same topic had been adopted by consensus in previous years, and she hoped that that would be the case in 1991.

78. Miss FUNDAFUNDA (Zambia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.11*, and announced that Angola, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda and Viet Nam had also become sponsors. She read out the key operative paragraphs

(Miss Fundafunda, Zambia)

of the resolution and said that the sponsors hoped it would receive broad support from the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 93: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)
(A/C.3/46/L.10, A/C.3/46/L.12, A/C.3/46/L.13)

79. Mrs. GEBRE-EGZIABHER (Ethiopia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.10 on behalf of the Group of African States. The draft focused on the total eradication of apartheid in South Africa and on the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable right to self-determination. In preparing the draft, the Group of African States had taken the developments in southern Africa and the Middle East into account. In addition, some delegations had put forward suggestions on which consultations were being held. In view of those consultations and the events of the past year, the sponsors hoped that the draft would receive broad support from the members of the Committee.

80. Mr. HUSSAIN (Pakistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.12, whose sponsors had been joined by Guatemala and Kuwait. The text was almost identical to that of resolution 45/131, adopted without a vote by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Third Committee, which had approved the text by consensus. A few minor changes had been made to take account of the most recent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. The sponsors hoped that, as in previous years, the draft would be adopted without a vote.

81. Mr. GALANDACHI (Nigeria) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.13 and announced that Angola, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe had become sponsors. Noting that changes were taking place in South Africa, in particular the repeal of the acts instituting apartheid, the dialogue between the representatives of the black majority and the Government and the signing of a peace agreement aimed at stemming the violence between rival factions, he pointed out that mercenaries had been involved in almost all the disturbances. The report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1991/14) was very informative in that regard. The use of mercenaries threatened to derail the peace process and undermine the considerable progress achieved in the struggle against apartheid. The sponsors of the resolution were equally disturbed by the continued use of mercenaries in other regions of the world, in particular against peoples fighting for their self-determination. Recourse to mercenaries could not be tolerated under any circumstances.

82. After outlining the thrust of the draft resolution, he explained that amendments had been made to the original text which would appear in the revised text. He expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.