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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIRAR (Sudan)

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

AGENDA ITEM 88: NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ACHIEVING FAR-REACHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (A/42/56-E/1987/7, A/42/57-E/1987/8, A/42/3; A/C.3/42/L.3; A/42/411)

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AGENDA ITEM 141: INTERREGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES (A/C.3/42/5)

1. Mr. RIPERT (Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation) said that during the 1960s and 1970s, the global economy had on the whole experienced relatively steady economic growth. During that period, his office had been concerned with ensuring that development policies encompassed the social dimension. Social programmes had been expanded in developed countries, and progress had been made in developing countries in attacking some basic problems such as literacy and health. At the international level, agreement had been reached on programmes to address the problems of specific groups - youth, women, the disabled, etc. The organizations of the United Nations system had played an active role in those efforts. However, owing to the environment of overall growth, inflation and heavy debt burdens, many countries had postponed or avoided hard political choices with respect to social priorities.

2. In the 1980s, the international community's under standing of the importance of social and humanitarian issues had taken on new dimensions, resulting in greater attention to the complex interrelationship between economic and social issues. It was widely recognized, for example, in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, that advancement in social conditions was not only desirable in itself but also contributed positively to economic growth.

3. However, beginning in 1900 the growth rate had slowed down in large parts of the world and, in many parts of the developing world, there were signs of economic decline. In most countries, Governments had been forced to cut public spending, and that had been directly reflected in an erosion of social welfare, an increase in poverty, and unemployment, a decline in quality of social services and, in particular, a reduction in protection for vulnerable groups. Countries had been forced to adopt adjustment programmes and, as shown in various studies, by UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation and others, those cuts had disproportionately affected social programmes, in particular, those involving social welfare for the most vulnerable groups. The net effect was not only a

(Mr. Ripert)

further increase in human suffering but also reduced prospects for development since humanity represented the most valuable element in the development process.

4. With respect to the prospects for the international economy, all indications were that, in the best of cases, the growth rate would continue at levels similar to those in recent years. That could have negative consequences for the economic and social development of developing countries. However, there were encouraging signs that countries had come to recognize the urgency of the problems and the need for co-operative action to resolve them. The question of co-ordination of economic policies had become a priority item at meetings held in the most industrialized countries, in the socialist countries and in the developing countries. Growth-oriented adjustment, which took into account the social aspects of development, had become an important topic in the financial and commercial worlds, among others, as reflected in the recent meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and in the consensus achieved at the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

5. Until those positive trends were translated into reality, Governments would continue to face difficult choices in the allocation of available resources to the various economic and social components of their national development strategies, as well as within the social sector itself. Many countries were exploring new ways to improve social service management, the implementation of user-related charges, and innovative ways of providing services, taking full advantage of community and individual efforts. As noted at the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, held in Vienna in September, another area of interest was how to draw on the resources of non-governmental organizations and of the private sector for the improvement of social conditions.

6. The United Nations had the responsibility to assist Governments facing difficulties in the field of social problems, because, in conformity with the Charter, a fundamental purpose of the Organization was to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples. Although priority-setting and social programming were the prerogatives of national Governments, the United Nations could and must contribute to that task by emphasizing the needs of specific groups, formulating general codes of conduct and legislative plans, serving as a forum for the exchange of experiences and providing technical assistance. Those activities of the United Nations were stimulating an increasing interest. The conferences, years and decades organized by the United Nations, without being too burdensome, had facilitated social progress and promoted the exchange of experiences. The United Nations, and the Third Committee in particular, could take satisfaction from their work in that field, but it was clear that much still had to be done.

7. The Secretary-General had decided that the social programmes of the United Nations would be concentrated in Vienna under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Anatee. That reorganization should in no way be interpreted as reflecting any diminution in the commitment to the interrelatedness of the economic and social dimensions of development; on the contrary, the goal was to create a co-ordination centre which would give new impetus to the activities in that field. The reorganization in no way excluded co-operation between the Centre

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for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, which had recently collaborated in the preparation of the excellent documentation for the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, held in Vienna. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would also facilitate co-operation with other bodies of the United Nations.

8. Another aspect of the restructuring currently under way in the United Nations was the establishment of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. In that regard, it was important for Third Committee members to give their views on the various issues under consideration. Delegations might wish to consider the comments which had been made by some of the subsidiary bodies of the Council which reported to the Committee: the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control. It was also important to delineate the respective responsibilities of the Third Committee and the Council, in order to avoid overlapping of efforts and increase the effectiveness of both bodies.

9. Although the report of the Group of 18 had been initiated in the context of budgetary constraints, the basic purpose of the current restructuring exercise was to better equip the United Nations to deal with problems that would face mankind in the years ahead. The Committee would have the opportunity to review such issues during the discussion of the Secretary-General's note regarding prospects on the work of the United Nations in the 1990s, which the President of the General Assembly, at the request of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, would submit to the Third Committee. Committee members' observations on that note would constitute an important contribution to the formulation of the next medium-term plan.

10. Since 1986, the serious financial constraints facing the Organization had forced the imposition of emergency measures, such as the hiring freeze, the postponement of meetings, the reduction of travel allowances, etc. which had undoubtedly had a negative impact on the implementation of the programmes entrusted to the Third Committee. In future, the Secretariat would need to continue its efforts to make the best possible use of available resources. The support and co-operation of the Committee in clearly defining programmes and activities of genuine priority would therefore be essential.

11. Miss ANSTEE (Director-General of the United Nations Office 'at Vienna) said that, in the six months since the Secretary-General had decided to establish in Vienna a nucleus for social policy and social development, it had been necessary to devote a great deal of time and energy to the difficult problem of stretching scarce resources to the utmost and of reducing already low staff levels, as required by General Assembly resolution 41/213. Despite those difficulties, however, significant advances had been made during that period.

(Miss Anatee)

12. The Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, which was the first ministerial-level meeting on social issues since 1968, was organized in record time and on a shoe-string budget. That meeting had debated, in a business-like atmosphere, a wide range of issues of serious import to all humanity and adopted a set of guiding principles for social welfare policies and programmes which would be useful for the Member States and for the Secretariat. She hoped that those principles would be adopted by the General Assembly.

13. A Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action of the Decade on Disabled Persons was held in Stockholm in August 1987. It had been the first meeting in the history of the United Nations in which the majority of the participating experts were persons with disabilities, and in which sign language interpretation, documentation in Braille and audio cassettes had been used. The United Nations Office at Vienna must analyse and implement the recommendations of that meeting, the unanimous conclusion of which was that everything possible must be done to revitalize the United Nations Decade on Disabled Persons. That effort should include consideration of new ways of obtaining funding.

14. A highly successful Seminar on National Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women had just been completed in Vienna, and would provide valuable inputs for the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women as well as other areas of work.

15. In all sectors for which the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) was responsible, activities had been vigorously pursued, as reflected in the numerous reports before the Committee.

16. Social issues were coming to the fore and there was increasing recognition that they constituted common concerns for all countries and all peoples, developed and developing alike. Several elements should be mentioned in that respect. There was a widening search for new directions in development in the face of continuing economic crisis. Despite certain signs of recovery in the global economy, there had been decline rather than growth for most developing countries, especially in Africa and Latin America. There had been budget cuts in social services and child mortality rates were increasing, while nutritional and educational levels were deteriorating. The reaffirmation that social objectives must receive priority attention contrasted with uncertainties about how to translate ideas into practical reality. There was general recognition of the need to reappraise the capacity of the public sector in order to solve some of the most pressing problems. Moreover, there was the process of self-examination within the United Nations of its mission, its capacities and its future. The Charter had established the objective of social progress as one of the four basic pillars of the Organization. That ideal must be translated into measures to be undertaken in the next decade and the next century.

17. Social progress could be achieved. Enough common ground had already been found to allow social problems, as arena of universal concern, to be placed at the forefront of efforts to bring about renewal of the United Nations. The

(Miss Anatee)

international community had concluded a remarkable effort of international policy formulation in the Decade for the Advancement of Women. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were especially notable for having successfully defined the problem, diagnosed the causes and consequences and set objectives for a solution at the global, regional and national levels.

18. Any notion that social problems were not amenable to international analysis and action had been disproved by the successes of international conferences and events in the past 10 years. Social problems were increasing in complexity and interdependence. Consequently, no country, however rich, could claim to have achieved social development. But any country, however poor, could achieve social progress. Awareness of those facts had contributed to the increasing frequency with which nations, otherwise divided, could agree on social issues. Hence, there were new responsibilities on an international level in three areas: the implementation of existing social policy, the formulation of new policies and the problem of resources.

19. The implementation of agreed international social policy must have the highest priority. Thus the Nairobi objective of equality for women by the year 2000 required concentrated effort over an extended period and commensurate improvements in international and national mechanisms. At the mid-point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, difficulties were emerging which required a renewal of effort. As to aging, much more needed to be done before it would be possible to deal successfully with a social and economic problem which in time would inexorably affect all countries. The adoption of measures in the areas of education, research and training, and also international exchanges, must be encouraged. Following the success of the International Youth Year, it must be ensured that efforts to develop integrated planning in that sector were maintained on a long-term basis. Finally, vigorous measures must be taken to implement the resolutions of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, while making preparations for the Eighth Congress. The performance of all those tasks in varied fields was facilitated by the organizational arrangements centred in Vienna. It was now necessary to marshal the human and financial resources that were required to maintain the momentum and direction of the programmes.

20. The formulation of new international social policies must take into account the reality that it was not possible to solve the problems of one segment of the population in isolation from the problems of society as a whole. Specific social policy issues, in turn, needed to be addressed in the light of the relationships between economic, political and social factors and, at the same time, a more precise diagnosis must be offered. Goals must be determined and the forces of Government and the community must be used to attain them.

21. The objectives of the next medium-term plan and the goals for the 1990s must be reflected in various ways in the policies of the United Nations. The capacity of the Organization to deal with social policy in relation to economic and political factors must be further enhanced. There must also be an improvement in the ability of the United Nations to oversee global trends in order to identify social problems requiring solution and monitor and appraise progress towards

(Miss Anstee)

implementing social policy, including an upgrading of the quality and role of major social diagnostic reports. The United Nations approach to social questions must be placed on an equal footing with its work on economic questions and an integration of the two areas must be achieved at the policy-making level. New ways needed to be identified of facilitating co-operation with Member States in social policy formulation and social planning. The Organization's capacity to support national action in developmental social welfare administration must be improved.

22. That agenda, which was ambitious and at the same time of enormous importance, required resources for its implementation. Over the past year a number of new and more complex tasks had been accepted and absorbed within existing resources. That procedure had been followed to the outer limit of what could be achieved. Consequently, there remained two possible courses: that of defining priorities more clearly so as to reduce the work-load by dispensing with superfluous requirements or those less likely to lead to practical results, and that of seeking additional resources. Both courses presented difficulties.

23. The idea of establishing priorities had been raised in the Commission for Social Development and also during the Interregional Consultation and had been well received, although no firm conclusion had been reached. If there were to be a valid social agenda for the next few years, it was imperative to adjust the objectives to the means available. In the absence of guidance from Member States as to where cuts could be made, a form of triage would have to be effected which would be unfortunate from every point of view.

24. The acquisition of additional resources also gave rise to serious difficulties. In theory it was possible to transfer resources within the regular budget to areas deemed to be of higher priority, but it was then necessary to make value judgements between different programmes.

25. The only viable solution at the current time, therefore, was to intensify the search for funding from outside the regular budget. Some Governments and non-governmental organizations had made encouraging contributions, as in the case of Sweden in relation to the Decade of Disabled Persons. The trust funds provided very worthwhile seed money and it was to be hoped that contributions to those funds, whose level had decreased every year, would be increased at the next Pledging Conference. It was very important that the trust funds should remain in Vienna, where their administration had been simplified so as to improve their practical utility.

26. The work carried out at the United Nations Office at Vienna was being boosted in the current year by circumstances which gave cause for optimism. There was now a clear sense of purpose which would make it possible to focus work on the problems of the day and on the problems which were likely to arise in the near future.

27. Mr. SORALSKI (Director, Social Development Division) said that the eight reports and notes of the Secretary-General on the items before the Committee had been prepared at a time of financial and personnel constraints and during a period of reform and reorganization within the Secretariat. It was hoped that the

(Mr. Sokalski)

reorganization would lead to greater effectiveness and more tangible assistance to Governments. The United Nations Office at Vienna was consolidating its modest resources around three clusters of activities: policy-oriented research, monitoring of the implementation of international plans of action and advisory services and technical co-operation activities.

28. The reports had been based as far as possible on the replies of Member States to requests for information sent out in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In a number of cases the task had proved quite complicated as Governments had sent their comments late or had failed to send the information requested by the Secretary-General.

29. Two reports had been provided under item 88 which had been considered in the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council. The first document, on the co-operative movement (A/42/56), offered a Comprehensive view of the activities and concerns of co-operatives in both developing and developed countries and noted that co-operative organizations were becoming increasingly mindful of the need to integrate women and specific social groups in their activities. The second report (A/42/57), prepared on the basis of replies by Governments, summarized national experience achieved in introducing far-reaching social and economic change for the purpose of social progress.

30. The report of the Secretary-General on the question of aging (A/42/567) summarized the progress made and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging. Although there was evidence of growing global awareness of the needs of the elderly, various constraints had affected the implementation of the Plan of Action, including a lack of financial resources, trained staff at the national level, and funding for the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging, and insufficient linkages between the United Nations system and the non-governmental organizations concerned.

31. The report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving young people (A/42/595) revealed that the follow-up to International Youth Year had given rise to the adoption of numerous measures at all levels. The report also highlighted some of the problems which must be dealt with without delay, and made specific suggestions to ensure continued advocacy of youth programmes within the United Nations area of activity.

32. The Secretary-General was submitting two reports to the General Assembly concerning programmes on disabled persons. One of them (A/42/551) provided information on the activities of national committees, bilateral assistance relating to projects on the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities and activities of the Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The report indicated that disability-related issues had been successfully brought to the attention of Governments and the public at large, mainly through the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The other report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/42/561) was submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 37/53 and 39/26, in which the Secretary-General was requested to convene a meeting of experts to review the



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implementation of the World Programme of Action. A Global Meeting of Experts had been held at Stockholm in August 1987 and had been extremely useful. The meeting had been attended by 25 prominent experts who had formulated a set of important recommendations designed to assist Member States at the current session in evaluating the implementation of the World Programme of Action. At the meeting it had been recognized that the World Programme of Action remained a valuable guide for international action on the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. The problems which had impeded the implementation of the World Programme of Action had been reviewed, and priorities had been identified for the rest of the Decade.

33. The review of the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice had resulted in according the programmes carried out in that field the significance they deserved. Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/53 on the matter reflected Member States' renewed commitment to offer a timely and adequate response to the emerging needs and priorities of the international community in the field. The Council's first regular session of 1987 had witnessed the approval of the provisional agenda of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, to be held in 1990. Despite the constraints in financing and human resources within the Secretariat, preparations for it had already been initiated. The future course of those preparations would depend on the decision the General Assembly would take at its current session, including those on the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989.

34. Finally, the Committee had before it the Report of the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, containing the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, which had been adopted by consensus. Those Principles contained important recommendations for action at the national, regional and interregional levels and for United Nations activities. If the General Assembly adopted the Principles as an important part of the global programme of action in the social field, the Social Development Division would be reviewing the orientation of ongoing and planned programmes with a view to ensuring that they appropriately supported the priorities and objectives set forth in the Guiding Principles.

35. Mrs. ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that in the report on the question of aging, the Secretary-General had drawn the attention of Member States to the disturbing fact that resources for the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging were being used up but not replenished. Unless additional contributions were received quickly from Governments and private organizations, the Fund's activities would have to be disrupted and there would be no response to many developing countries' requests for assistance. That would jeopardize the fulfilment of the goals of the International Plan of Action on Aging.

36. There was, however, a reassuring note of optimism in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization concerning the solidarity of nations in facing problems which had world-wide repercussions within the multilateral framework of the United Nations. The international community seemed to have

(Mrs. Alvarez, Dominican Republic)

regained some slight, but favourable, impetus. That impetus was apparent, inter alia, in the broad reform measures consolidating the activities of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and in the appointment of Miss Anstee as Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

37. The Dominican Republic, which had served as a member of the Commission for Social Development, hoped that the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action, to be taken up by the Commission at its thirty-first session, would be in-depth and substantive. To that end and ad hoc, informal and open-ended working group should be established to carry out the necessary tasks. Furthermore, if the second review and appraisal was to be valuable and constructive, the members of the Commission would have to have sufficient time and the materials they needed to perform their task conscientiously.

38. The Dominican Republic heartily endorsed the decision to hold an inter-agency meeting on aging, the first of its kind since 1983, whose principal objective would be joint planning within the framework of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. Her delegation also fully supported the idea of elaborating a system-wide medium-term plan on aging so that the question could be approached coherently and effectively. The adoption of such a plan would be the first step towards formulating a United Nations programme on aging. The Dominican Republic noted with satisfaction that the Government of Malta and the Government of Yugoslavia were making preparations for the establishment of an institute and training centre on aging, respectively, which would be working closely with the Centre in Vienna. Hopefully, other such centres or institutes would be established in other regions of the world.

39. The Dominican Republic noted with satisfaction that the Federal Republic of Germany had pledged \$50,000 to the Trust Fund for Aging. That marked the first significant contribution to the Fund since 1982 and was hopefully a sign of renewed confidence and interest in the Fund and would be the first of many others, which would enable it to continue its activities.

40. In implementing the Plan of Action, Governments and the United Nations must allow a greater role to non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Dominican Republic welcomed the idea of establishing a world foundation on aging. That might spur the private sector to lend support to United Nations activities in that field, give renewed impetus to the mobilization of resources to implement the Plan of Action and encourage the collaboration of eminent persons.

41. The Dominican Republic was definitely in favour of holding a world consultation on the question of aging. Indeed, the Dominican Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs had declared his conviction to the General Assembly that it would be beneficial to convene such an international meeting to evaluate and Update the Programme of Action, through the same type of follow-up measures used so successfully at the International Conference on Population, held in Mexico City in 1984, and at the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Nairobi in 1985.

(Mrs. Alvarea, Dominican Republic)

42. She wished to reiterate her Government's proposal to draft a declaration on the rights of the elderly. Both the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, upheld the rights of every human being, without distinction. However, in neither case was age discrimination mentioned. Moreover, the United Nations had deemed it necessary to adopt numerous declarations and conventions on the protection of certain vulnerable, particularly disadvantaged groups. Elderly people deserved the same protection as all the other vulnerable groups.

43. Ms. BAKKER (Netherlands) referred to a meeting held in Amsterdam in May 1987, in which five Nobel Prize winners and a group of young people had participated, on the theme of young people and the future. During the discussion, the young people had expressed ideals and objectives which were related to those of the United Nations.

44. It was crucial to determine - and that task fell to the Third Committee - whether their common interests had given rise to a productive relationship between youth and the United Nations, and whether those young people had really been able to participate. International Youth Year, the results of which had been found satisfactory by the General Assembly, had created an awareness of the situation, needs and aspirations of youth. There must be a continuous effort to resolve specific youth-related problems.

45. Youth must be allowed maximum participation in the programmes and policies of the United Nations and specialized agencies. Not enough had been done in answer to the appeal for the widest possible participation by youth in the General Assembly.

46. A more specific, decentralized youth policy must be applied in the United Nations system as a whole, and the specialized agencies must develop concrete policies and programmes in their respective fields, taking existing programmes into account, as well as the Guidelines for Further Planning and suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth (A/42/59>).

47. She welcomed the fact that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had been designated as the focal point for youth activities within the United Nations system. She was fully satisfied with the chapter of the Secretary-General's report (A/42/595) on the channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations. However, the chapter on the major trends and activities of the United Nations system concerning the implementation of the Guidelines was too general. Therefore, the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit another report at the forty-third session, with a more concrete list of all youth-related programmes being carried out by the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The report should also indicate the manner in which the programmes were applying the Guidelines under the themes of housing, health, employment, communication, culture and education.

40. Under the general heading of youth, different groups must be distinguished, with their own particular needs and aspirations. For example, young women constituted a special group since they represented the majority of the unskilled

(Ms. Bakker, Netherlands)

unemployed and low-income workers. Although young women formed a target group for United Nations policies concerning both women and youth, the co-ordination of those policies was very limited. Better co-ordination would help to focus attention on certain groups and ensure that scarce resources were not wasted.

49. The problems of housing, health and employment were of particular importance for youth, affecting its physical, intellectual and social development. Within the context of human settlements, it was important to focus on the problem of the flow of young people from rural to urban areas and to provide vocational training in rural areas, adjusted to the local job opportunities for youth. During the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements had stressed the need for community participation in house-building, in which young people, in particular, should be involved. A shortage of housing for young people also existed in developed countries. Despite the measures adopted by the Dutch Government, the problem was far from being resolved and three quarters of those most urgently in need of housing were aged between 18 and 24.

50. With respect to employment, the International Labour Organisation should regard youth unemployment as a separate problem requiring separate recommendations for national action. Proportional participation of male and female youth must also be ensured, as established in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, since the lack of employment opportunities for young women could have harmful effects, including the possibility of sexual exploitation. Although the number of unemployed youth in the Netherlands had decreased in recent years, the figures remained relatively high for certain groups, such as migrants, handicapped people and women. The Government had recognized that situation and had asked for implementation of appropriate policies. For example, it had initiated a publicity and information campaign to encourage students to choose science at the secondary and higher levels, and it had worked out a plan to guarantee temporary jobs for young people aged 16 and 17, after half a year of unemployment.

51. With respect to health issues, in many parts of the world young people were exposed to serious threats such as malnutrition and epidemic or endemic diseases. Youth should be actively involved in the programme carried out under the auspices of the World Health Organization, which put a major emphasis on prevention. Social aid services must be created to deal with the health problems of youth, and issues of specific concern to women, such as contraception and unwanted pregnancy, must be addressed. In many cases the non-governmental organisations were best equipped to provide those services. In the Netherlands, those organisations played an important role in that field and, for example, had established shelters for battered women.

52. In the health field, mention had to be made of AIDS. In order that all young people could behave responsibly, it was necessary to disseminate information on the means of transmission and methods of prevention, in a way that avoided prejudice and misconceptions leading to unjustified anxiety. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and everyone individually should discourage all forms of discrimination against such groups as homosexuals, prostitutes or drug addicts and, in general, the first aim must be to raise awareness of the problem in order to

(Ma. Bakker, Netherlands)

prevent the reversal of development8 in areas which had just begun to show positive results, such as the emancipation of youth and in particular of young women.

53. In conclusion, she echoed the words of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and said that young people were a force that should be used as a catalyst to stimulate popular participation in development programmes. If there were serious belief in the benefits of the emancipation of young men and women, then full participation must be accepted and promoted.

54. MC. TAIHITU (Indonesia) expressed his appreciation for the reports on the national experience in achieving far-reaching social and economic changes for the purpose of social progress (A/42/56 and 57), which were particularly pertinent and informative. Document A/42/56 offered a number of suggestions, several of which had already been implemented in his country.

55. Co-operatives, which in 1981 had numbered more than 28,000, played a fundamental role in Indonesia's economy, and embraced efforts as varied as animal husbandry, agriculture, cottage industries, fishing and rural electrification. The Government offered guidance and instruction in management and administrative skills, increased awareness of the advantages of the system and facilitated the activities of co-operatives in the context of overall national development. The ultimate aim was to make the co-operatives independent and self-sufficient.

56. With respect to the question of aging, his delegation had taken careful note of the recommendations in document A/42/567. Indonesia had included the issue in its national development strategy, and its national policy was in line with the International Plan of Action on Aging. The Department of Social Affairs was conducting a training programme in the provinces for volunteer community social workers whose task was to visit and assist the elderly. Furthermore, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, in co-operation with other national agencies, had conducted a survey to obtain a better understanding of the problems of aging, which would facilitate policy formulation.

57. His delegation welcomed the agreement signed by the Secretary-General and the Prime Minister of Malta for the establishment of an institute on aging in Valetta. He trusted that in the future all countries could benefit from its services, especially in the area of training.

58. His Government continued to hold the opinion that elderly people, owing to their vast experience, could make an important contribution to society. Traditionally, in Indonesia each family assumed the responsibility for the care of its elderly members; however, when that was not possible, the Government and the community would take up that responsibility.

59. The issues associated with aging were vast and complex, and his delegation had noted with satisfaction that those issues had been adequately addressed during the recent Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and

(Mr. Taihiti, Indonesia)

**Programmes.** The international community must maintain a continuous review of the question of aging.

60. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the problems of youth continued to evoke interest among the Member States. The Indonesian Youth Decade, begun in 1986, was aimed at **facilitating** youth participation in development and preparing them for the next century. Also, special attention should be paid to **measures** guaranteeing the right of youth to education and employment and, in that context, Indonesia had been working vigorously to raise the level of national education.

61. While advances had been made in the field of youth at the national, regional and international levels, much **remained** to be done. Strengthening of the channels of communication with youth **organizations** and greater co-ordination at all levels would enhance **activities** as a follow-up to the International Youth Year.

62. Indonesia, which was composed mainly of young people, welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should undertake a comprehensive review of the situation of youth in the world.

63. With regard to the implementation of the World **Programme of Action** concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled **Persons**, he noted from the Secretary-General's report in document A/42/551 that there was increasing evidence of a common understanding of disability issues and needs, as **was** indicated by trends in the use of resources from the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The bulk of resources had been shifted from promotional activities to training, which would help **enhance** personnel **capabilities** in developing countries. One of the many projects supported by the Fund in Indonesia was a non-governmental community-based rehabilitation centre.

64. The Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World **Programme of Action** concerning Disabled Persons at the Mid-point of the United Nations **Decade** of Disabled Persons, convened at Stockholm from 17 to 22 August 1987, had found that little progress had been made in implementing the Programme. The international community should give serious **consideration** to the recommendations of the Meeting in order to reinvigorate activities during the second half of the Decade.

65. As indicated in paragraph 17 of document A/42/551, a co-ordinating body for Social Welfare Efforts for Disabled Persons had been established in Indonesia in 1983, consisting of representatives of several government ministries, non-governmental **organizations** and disabled persons organisations. Indonesia had hosted the ESCAP Regional Seminar on National Training Programmes concerning Disability and also the Games for the Disabled. It was pleased to note the Secretary-General's intention of convening an interregional meeting of representatives of national disability **committees** to facilitate an exchange of views and information. It would be appropriate for that meeting to use the new approaches of the Guiding Principles as a framework for its discussions.

(Hr. Taihiti, Indonesia)

66. Regarding crime prevention and criminal justice, Indonesia had developed its national **strategy** on the basis of the recommendations of the Sixth and Seventh United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. It noted with satisfaction that the Economic and Social Council had approved the provisional agenda for the Eighth Congress.

67. The Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes held recently at Vienna had achieved positive results. **Social constraints** should not be allowed to jeopardize the formulation and implementation of social welfare policies, however, for social welfare was part of the overall development process. The international community must continue to emphasise that social programmes represented an investment in the infrastructure of societies. To promote social stability in the world, the international community, especially the developed countries, must seek solutions to problems associated with the heavy debt burden, technological progress and demographic changes, all of which had a direct impact on the social welfare of developing countries. The developing countries should also contribute through the development and use of their own social resources.

68. Indonesia welcomed the Secretary-General's recent decision to place responsibility for all major activity on broad social policy and development with the United Nations Office at Vienna which should, among other things, provide technical support and co-operation on social welfare issues to developing countries. The Commission on Social Development, as a focal point at the intergovernmental level, should, where appropriate, review the implementation of the recommendations put forward in the Guiding Principles. His delegation proposed that interregional consultations should also be held periodically to monitor implementation of the Guidelines.

69. Mr. CHAI (Democratic Kampuchea) said that the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/42/551) gave an account of the activities of various Member States and of bilateral assistance. Significant results had been achieved in a number of regions of the world, with the participation of various organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in particular, had given valuable assistance to handicapped refugees in various regions.

70. In the case of Democratic Kampuchea, the programme of assistance to disabled persons formed part of the assistance given to refugees. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Kampuchea (A/42/608, para. 13), there were at present some 270,000 Kampuchean under the care of the United Nations Border Relief Operation and a further 24,000 were being assisted by UNHCR. The report also indicated that both groups were totally dependent on the relief assistance provided by the international community.

71. In Kampuchea, as in Afghanistan, the situation with regard to handicapped persons was becoming steadily worse. The invasion and occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces had created a category of disabled and handicapped persons who

(Mr. Chai, Democratic Kampuchea)

were a heavy burden on the country. The population was living in wretched conditions as a result of the policy of Vietnamization. According to a statement by the Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea, 120,000 Kampucheans were being forced to work for periods of three or six months clearing minefields, without housing, medicines or sufficient food. An estimated 0.2 per cent of the population had limbs or parts of limbs amputated and a sample of such people had shown that 83 per cent. had lost their lower limbs. Agricultural training centres for disabled and handicapped people had been set up to reintegrate them into social life.

72. The Vietnamization of Kampuchea had produced a category of Kampuchean<sup>8</sup> whose living conditions were far below those of the Vietnamese settlers protected by the occupying authority. That formed part of a method of extermination which had produced horrifying results during the Second world War.

73. During the United Nations Decade for Development, the strength of Kampuchea's population had been sapped. As the President of Democratic Kampuchea had said in his statement to the General Assembly, the threat to peace and security was not only military, but was also social and economic<sup>7</sup> there could be no development without peace. For all the least developed countries, the human factor was an essential element of economic development.

74. The fate of the growing numbers of maimed and handicapped people among the Kampuchean population called for an urgent global political solution to the problem of the Vietnamese army's occupation of Kampuchea. In March 1986, the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea had proposed a peace plan for a political solution of the Kampuchean problem. The General Assembly had reaffirmed the need for such a political solution by adopting draft resolution A/42/L.1.

75. Mr. QUINN (Australia) endorsed the observation made by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna to the Economic and Social Council that the increasing internationalization of social issues offered the chance to exploit multilateralism. The important social questions now on the Committee's agenda were concerns common to all countries and should not be buffeted by bloc politics. The Organization's ability to mobilize international efforts to deal with social problems offered a way of generating public support for the United Nations. The latter was not a bipolar organization of donors and recipients; all Member States had something to contribute as well as something to gain from participation in the Organization's activities.

76. Lofty aspirations in the field of social development must be tempered with realism. The identification of practical objectives must be given priority Over ambitious proposals for radical transformations in the world's social order. The focus must be on United Nations activities which assisted Member States in developing effective social programmes at the national level.

77. The Organization's social programmes could continue to be serviced by modest resources. There were parallel problems at the national level in many Member States which were being forced to limit their social expenditures. The Director-General's comments were directly relevant to the reforms being discussed



(Mr. Quinn, Australia)

in the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council, and the debate at the current session of the General Assembly provided an important opportunity to assess United Nations social programmes and make suggestions for reform.

78. Such reform must be tackled in a positive spirit. Conclusions about rectifying programmes could be drawn from experience with projects that worked, such as the crime prevention and control programme. His delegation had sponsored and actively supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/53, which gave valuable pointers to the future not only for crime prevention and punishment but for other social activities as well.

79. One assumption underlying that resolution was that the United Nations should reach beyond the Organization to tap relevant professional, academic and other networks at the national, regional and international levels, working with Governments and other institutions to develop practical and effective strategies for dealing with crime, and placing emphasis on prevention.

80. The whole United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and regional commissions, must be mobilized. Member States in turn should give due prominence to crime issues in their national development plans and UNDP country programmes.

81. Strengthening co-ordination between various United Nations bodies and organizations, especially in the economic and social fields, was an important area in which the Economic and Social Council had a crucial role to play. At the Secretariat level, it was necessary to strengthen the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and to maintain an effective liaison at Headquarters with the United Nations Office at Vienna. Post vacancies in key programme areas in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) must be filled without delay by qualified staff. The Secretary-General should also make staff from Headquarters, particularly from the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, available for priority tasks in the social field, for instance, preparations for United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

82. Australia had argued consistently that the focus of activities relating to youth, ageing and disability should be at the national level. It did not favour the launching of ambitious projects in the social field involving further allocations from the regular budget. New activities must be financed through redeployment as a result of reordered priorities. Regrettably, there was little latitude for manoeuvre with regard to staffing at the Vienna Centre; the Centre's limited resources were already spread thinly over existing programmes.

83. As with the crime-prevention programme, there were ways in which the United Nations could make a distinctive contribution in other social fields with limited resources, notably by raising international awareness of the problems encountered by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Australia supported fully the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, in particular, equalization of opportunities for disabled persons and their social integration into the broad community. In order to achieve the objectives of the Decade, the disabled must

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have full access to services and opportunities available to other citizens. Furthermore, support should be given to activities carried out for the benefit of disabled persons and, above all, to special services which did not create barriers between recipients and the community as a whole.

84. It was gratifying that the experts who had participated in the Global Meeting at Stockholm had emphasized both the need for the international community to rededicate itself to the objectives of the Decade and the importance of the activities carried out by non-governmental organizations. He had reevaluation, however, about several of the proposals, including the proposal for an international convention on disabled persons. Drafting new instruments was resource-intensive and the implications of such a proposal for progress on substantive programmes would have to be assessed, especially in the current financial climate facing the United Nations. Existing international instruments, including the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, already covered many of the rights of disabled persons. His delegation also did not support the proposed establishment of a disability unit within UWDP, which might usurp the role of CSDHA. The evaluation document prepared in connection with the Stockholm meeting demonstrated the unique role of the United Nations as a clearing-house for information in that field.

85. The CSDHA evaluation showed that fewer than half the Member States had responded to the questionnaire on the implementation of the World Programme of Action and he stressed the need for the international community to reaffirm and implement the objectives of the Decade.

86. With a modest resource base, the United Nations had also played a catalytic role in activities relating to the elderly. The problem of aging was being given an increasingly important place on international and national agendas and Australia was no exception in that regard. His country had a rapidly aging population, especially in the over-80s category. There was broad recognition that more resources would need to be channelled into residential care for the aging and the debate now focused on the most appropriate distribution of resources for such services. Australia was also trying to ensure that the special needs of certain groups of elderly persons, including non-English-speakers, Aborigines and disabled persons, were recognized. The elderly must be informed fully about the options and services available to them and the Federal Government was conducting an information programme for that purpose.

87. The Secretary-General's report on the question of aging made a number of proposals which required careful study. He felt that it was premature to begin work on a declaration on aging, for reasons similar to those given concerning a new instrument on the disabled. Other proposals to mobilize the United Nations system to promote the rights and welfare of the elderly seemed more consonant with the resource constraints under which the Centre was labouring,

88. Despite the success of the International youth year in Australia, United Nations activities relating to youth unfortunately seemed to be of limited relevance to many young people. One helpful strategy might be to focus more on

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"mainstreaming"; young people wanted to be heard but did not want to be marginalized as a separate constituency. Rather than setting up a major United Nations programme for youth, it might be more profitable to address the concerns of young people in separate areas, such as, narcotic drugs, education in the field of human rights, discrimination against girls and young women in education, and unemployment.

89. The Commission for Social Development must rise to meet those new challenges. It was ironic that as the debate on development assistance focused increasingly on social implications, the Commission was becoming increasingly marginal to that debate. Consideration should be given to reforming the Commission, examining, for instance, what social development functions could be transferred to the Economic and Social Council. The Council must discharge its cross-organizational mandate properly if co-ordination between the economic and social sectors was to be improved. That would allow the Commission to promote the welfare of specific groups such as disabled persons, the elderly and youth. The General Assembly could also help by biennializing its consideration of a number of social items to allow more in-depth examination of key issues.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.