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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. TIRONA (Philippines)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/185, A/39/262; A/C.3/39/L.6)

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AGENDA ITEM 91: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/191)

1. Mr. URQUIDI (Mexico) speaking on item 85, said that by its proclamation of the International Youth Year, the General Assembly had expressed the international community's concern over the condition of a social group which represented about 30 per cent of the world's population. Poverty, unemployment or underemployment, discrimination and hunger alienated millions of young people in the third world, relegating them to the fringes of society. It was the responsibility of the nations of the North as of the South, of the East as of the West, to remedy that state of affairs, which had been made worse by the current world crisis, economic inequalities, the foreign debt and the arms race, and to guarantee young people a stable present and a stable future. The United Nations had wisely responded to that challenge by making participation, development and peace the major themes of the Year. If, however, the international community wished to succeed in implementing concrete programmes and to ensure that the hopes aroused by the International Youth Year were not dashed, it must not only demonstrate realism, imagination and consistency in its objectives but must also equip itself with the necessary financial means by setting up a special fund.

2. Mexico had already established, under the patronage of the President of the Republic, a national structure to co-ordinate the activities of the Year whose principal organ was the Youth Development Committee chaired by the Minister of Education and with which the various youth organizations representing all political currents in the country were associated. That Committee proposed to hold comprehensive consultations with the young people of Mexico on problems which affected them, with a view to proposing structural reforms, particularly in the areas of employment, health, education and culture.

3. Mexico, in collaboration with ILO, proposed to organize in September 1985 a seminar for youth leaders and those responsible for youth policies, to review youth employment and training policies in Latin America and to seek new ways of creating enterprises which involved young people. It also planned to carry out a comparative study of current youth policies in different regions of the world in order to compile information and to promote an exchange of experiences on that subject among countries. Lastly, an international cultural youth festival would take place in Mexico during the Year and countries throughout the world were invited.

(Mr. Urquidi, Mexico)

4. Mexico wished to see young people actively involved in their communities, inspired by the ideals of pluralist democracy, peace and solidarity. It was aware that young people were particularly attached to the values promoted by the United Nations: respect for human rights, non-interference, militarily or politically, in the internal affairs of States and the right of peoples to self-determination. It knew that young people everywhere had declared their support for the establishment of a new international economic order and for respect for the norms of international law, particularly in Central America, where they supported the initiatives of the Contadora Group. The time had therefore come for the international community to respond to the hopes of young people for peace and progress.
5. Ms. STEER (Australia), speaking on items 85, 89, 90 and 91, said that all people were capable of making a contribution to social development if given the opportunity. It was the responsibility of Member States to develop programmes which tapped the talents of young people and disabled persons as well as the experiences of the elderly.
6. Australia had established, in its Federal Department of Education and Youth Affairs, the Australian National International Youth Year Co-ordinating Committee composed of representatives of the Government and of non-governmental organizations. The Government had committed \$2 million for promoting the international youth year and planned to mount a public information campaign in order to ensure that all sectors of Australia's society had an opportunity to participate in the activities of the Year. Since most of those activities would occur at the local level, a Minister in each state and territory had been assigned responsibility for the Year. Co-ordinating committees currently being set up, would have a supervisory role. Local authorities, the corporate sector, trade unions and non-governmental organizations were actively participating in the programme for the Year.
7. Australia saw the role of government and society as one of supporting young people in their development and not of imposing responsibilities and duties. That was why the Australian Government was seeking first of all to ascertain the ideas of young people and to involve them fully in the activities of the International Youth Year. In that regard, the international tree-planting project, which highlighted the long-term responsibility of mankind towards the environment, symbolized in a striking way the idea of participation and development and was a good example of peaceful and constructive activity for the benefit of all. It deserved the support of all countries.
8. It had often been stressed that there was a need to expand intergenerational contacts and to ensure, by so doing, not only the well-being of the elderly but also their participation in a society which perhaps had much to gain from listening to them.
9. The Australian Government, which supported General Assembly resolutions 37/51 and 38/27 concerning the International Plan of Action on Aging, had established a

(Ms. Steer, Australia)

comprehensive national health and pension scheme for the elderly. For their part, local communities, working particularly through voluntary and non-governmental bodies, sought to ensure the independence of the aged and their integration into the family and community.

10. Disability cut across all age groups. The Australian Government had entrusted to the Federal Department of Social Security the responsibility for implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and to the Disability Advisory Council of Australia responsibility for supporting the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. That Council, established in July 1983 and composed mainly of disabled persons, was responsible for developing the Government's policies and programmes in that area and for making proposals consistent with the objectives of the World Programme of Action. The Government had taken measures in that area (rehabilitation, prevention of disability in industry, placement of disabled persons in the Australian public service) and should complete before the end of 1984 a review of its Handicapped Persons Welfare Programme. That review included wide-ranging consultations with disabled persons themselves. It had also established a Human Rights Commission and was preparing a Bill of Rights to guarantee the rights of all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

11. The Australian Government would continue to assist the Governments of developing countries in their efforts to prevent and treat diseases and disabilities by direct support for particular projects, and would concentrate its priority on regional development assistance activities, either bilaterally or in association with UNDP.

12. Mr. POVLSEN (Denmark) speaking on items 85 and 89, said that young people must be given the opportunity to take part, as equal partners, in the political process in their country, since decisions made today would influence the future of new generations. Without taking youth, their ideas and their aspirations into consideration, one ran the risk of preparing a society which would fit neither their needs nor their interests. In order to ensure their participation, Governments should - as Denmark had done - include a youth representative in their delegations to the General Assembly and to other international meetings.

13. Denmark had always wanted the main activities of the International Youth Year to be undertaken at the national and local levels, since it was only at those levels that activities could be organized not for young people but rather with and by young people. The Danish Minister of Education had therefore established a co-ordinating committee representing various other ministries as well as the Danish Youth Council which comprised approximately 60 non-governmental organizations and whose mission was to co-ordinate the activities of the International Year at those two levels.

14. With regard to the channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations, Denmark was of the view that those channels should be improved and that the informal meetings in Geneva played an important role to that end. On the application of the Danish Youth Council, his Government had

(Mr. Povlsen, Denmark)

financed the participation of representatives of developing countries in those meetings, and hoped that other countries would follow its example.

15. An alarming rate of youth unemployment, added to a lack of training facilities, was causing young people material and mental distress that boded ill for the future. Disillusioned youth were likely to lose confidence in the ideals which made a society dynamic. Young people wanted a national employment policy that did not exclude them and a more equitable international distribution of wealth. The arms race, with its resulting waste of resources, and the threat that pollution posed to the ecological balance of the planet were two other sources of anxiety for the young generation. Everything must be done to ensure that young people could continue to believe in the future. The balance of terror must therefore be replaced by mutual trust, and measures must be taken to avert the threat of an ecological catastrophe.

16. The question of youth should never be dealt with in a vacuum. The search for solutions to the problems of young people should be part of the general policy of every country and every international body. Every year should be a youth year.

17. Miss SEDDOH (Togo), referring to items 85 and 89, said that for nearly 18 years the Government of Togo had had a policy for youth which was intended to protect young people - who represented 70 per cent of the population - and to involve them in national construction. A group of measures intended to reinforce the educational infrastructure (an increase in the number of schools in both urban and rural areas, the establishment of the University of Benin) had now enabled Togo to have one of the highest enrolment rates in Africa (approximately 70 per cent). The young people of Togo were thus in a position to contribute effectively to the economic, social and cultural development of their country. In addition, they were participating in political life through a national movement established in 1971, the Togo People's Youth Assembly (JRPT).

18. Young people were playing an active part in the implementation of reforms in education and in the family and personal code by organizing literacy campaigns and were assisting in the health campaign launched by the Government to achieve the WHO objective of "Health for all by the year 2000".

19. The Government was granting economic assistance to young farmers who were starting up. For its part, JRPT was playing an important role in the implementation of the policy of self-sufficiency in food that the Government had been pursuing since 1977 and, in particular, three years ago had started an experiment in collective land use and management by co-operatives of young farmers. Furthermore, on the initiative of that movement, a "green revolution" had been undertaken in the country's lycees and colleges, which had their own garden plots. The Government also envisaged introductory farming courses from primary-school age onwards to give children a taste for working on the land and to slow down the rural exodus.

20. At the cultural level, youth was playing a major role in preserving and enhancing the nation's cultural heritage.

(Miss Seddoh, Togo)

21. The importance for Togo of its young people explained why the Government had enthusiastically welcomed the idea of an International Youth Year. In that regard, her delegation congratulated the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year on its work. At the national level, Togo had set up a national committee to prepare for the International Youth Year; it would be organizing conferences and meetings on the themes designated by the United Nations. Under the patronage of the President of the Republic, several political and cultural events had taken place during the week devoted to observing the Year. Her delegation hoped that the world-wide observance of the Year would make young people more aware of the responsibility incumbent upon them as the force that would be taking over in the future and would facilitate better international co-operation through the strengthening of contacts among young people throughout the world.

22. Turning to item 90 on the question of aging, she felt that two widely-held views should be clarified. On the one hand, contrary to what was thought, developed countries were not the only ones to be threatened by the aging of their population: in 20 or 30 years the developing countries would also be faced with that problem, and on a greater scale. On the other hand, the protection of the elderly and their place in society were a field in which the developing countries certainly also had a contribution to make in the context of international co-operation.

23. For that reason Togo had participated in the work of the Advisory Committee for the World Assembly on Aging and in the World Assembly itself. Her delegation again expressed its satisfaction at the adoption of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging and especially reaffirmed its support for General Assembly resolution 37/51, in which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to continue to use the resources of the United Nations Trust Fund for the World Assembly on Aging to meet the needs of the aging in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries.

24. Mrs. DU Yong (China) noted with satisfaction the efforts of United Nations bodies, international non-governmental youth organizations and, in particular, the secretariat of the International Youth Year in preparing for the Year. The International Youth Year had received a favourable response from the international community, of which the numerous national co-ordination and organizational committees set up in more than 100 countries were a proof. Youth represented the future of mankind, and it was in order to allow young people to contribute their full energy, enthusiasm and creativeness in constructing their own country that the United Nations had proclaimed the International Youth Year.

25. China, which was now engaged in a phase of modernization, more than ever needed young people to fulfil its objectives. Young people under the age of 30 accounted for 65 per cent of the Chinese population, and the labour force was composed mainly of young people: 60 per cent in the towns and 70 per cent in the countryside. Young people were actively participating in the afforestation campaigns launched each spring in China. In 1984, 2.6 billion trees had been planted by young volunteers in that programme.

(Mrs. Du Yong, China)

26. Chinese youth was imbued with the idea that the maintenance of peace in the world demanded understanding, friendship and co-operation among all peoples. They therefore wished to establish friendly relations with youth organizations of other countries in a spirit of equality, mutual help and mutual emulation.

27. The Chinese Committee for the Organization of International Youth Year, set up in April 1984, had the task of ensuring that young people were properly taken care of, of ensuring that they participated in the work of building the country materially and spiritually, and of promoting friendly contacts between Chinese youth and the youth of other countries. Activities that would take place in China in 1985 included friendly meetings between young Chinese people and young people of other countries, a seminar on youth, the publication of the works of young authors, the issuing of stamps commemorating the International Youth Year and the launching of afforestation campaigns.

28. Her delegation supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year that the General Assembly should devote an appropriate number of plenary meetings at the fortieth session of the General Assembly to policies and programmes relating to youth and should designate those meetings as the United Nations world conference for the International Youth Year. Since the International Youth Year would require follow-up activities, her delegation also considered that the Advisory Committee should hold its fourth session in 1985.

29. Friendship, co-operation and solidarity among young people of all countries were the only guarantee for world peace in the twenty-first century. The young people of China were determined to join hands with the young people of all other countries and make progress together towards a better world.

30. Mr. MILOJA (Albania) pointed out that the problems of youth first needed to be analysed in the context of the world situation. It should not be forgotten that tens of thousands of young people were at present dying in conflicts directly caused by the hegemonistic policies pursued by the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Throughout the world it was young people who opposed injustice and thus became a target for dictatorial régimes. Neither should the destructive effects of the world crisis on the situation of young people be forgotten. Unemployment, that running sore of the capitalist world, affected youth more than any other group in society, and the same was true of illiteracy.

31. It was often said that young people had lost interest in the burning issues of the day, but that was not true; it was the imperialists who sought the physical, moral and spiritual degeneration of young people and wished to turn them into an amorphous mass, since there was nothing they feared more than the strength and fervour which young people all over the world demonstrated every day. It was young people who protested against the arms race; young people who took to the streets to demand jobs, schooling and democratic freedoms. It was they who resolutely opposed racial discrimination, social oppression and exploitation.

(Mr. Miloja, Albania)

32. Such social ills as unemployment, discrimination, illiteracy and drug abuse were alien to Albanian youth, whose rights were enshrined in the national Constitution and protected by the fundamental laws of the State.

33. In 1984 the youth of Albania would be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the country's liberation and the victory of the people's revolution. Great progress had been made during those 40 years, as was evidenced, among other things, by the number of pupils enrolled in Albanian schools at all levels, and by the fact that 60 per cent of Albania's writers and artists were young people.

34. The delegation of Albania was convinced that the progressive youth of the world would continue to be in the vanguard of the struggle for freedom, social justice and progress.

35. Mrs. ASHTON (Bolivia), speaking on agenda item 91, said that her Government had supported the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), and had set up a national commission to carry out and co-ordinate activities planned for that period. In accordance with the goals laid down in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, Bolivia was endeavouring to identify problems affecting disabled persons, to ensure their participation in development and to establish priorities, particularly for rehabilitation. The Bolivian Government had also, in collaboration with young people and students, mounted an extensive campaign to publicize the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons, and established a long-term plan of action for the prevention of disabilities and the rehabilitation of disabled persons. Conferences and seminars dealing with those questions had been organized throughout the country.

36. In the legal field, the National Congress was at present considering a comprehensive bill for disabled persons, with provisions not only for preventive measures, early detection and rehabilitation, but also for the participation of disabled persons in the socio-economic development of the country.

37. In 1981 a survey had revealed that 30 per cent of the population of Bolivia suffered from some form of disability. That percentage, which bore out the conclusion of the World Health Organization that two thirds of the world population of disabled persons lived in the developing countries, was an indication of the magnitude of the problem which Bolivia was facing and which various centres in the country, both public and private, concerned with the retraining, rehabilitation and treatment of disabled people were endeavouring to solve, despite existing economic constraints.

38. The Bolivian delegation considered that the International Year of Disabled Persons had made a positive contribution to the recognition of the right of disabled persons to full participation in social life, by giving absolute priority to development of human resources, to the formulation and implementation of preventive and rehabilitation programmes, and the promotion of equal opportunity.

(Mrs. Ashton, Bolivia)

39. The Government of Bolivia, through its Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Planning and Co-ordination, was seeking to promote and develop the governmental and non-governmental bodies involved in the vocational reintegration of disabled persons and the setting up of training programmes for that purpose.
40. The efforts made by countries in that area would, however, achieve better results if they had the support of the developed countries and international agencies. In that connection, the Bolivian delegation welcomed the work for disabled persons done by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna. It also welcomed the technical assistance given to the developing countries by various specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Industrial Development Organization for the production of vaccines to prevent disabilities. It believed that priority should be given to the implementation in all countries of the Expanded Programme on Immunization of the World Health Organization, which envisaged the vaccination of all children by the year 1990. It also hoped that UNESCO would soon publish guidelines for teachers to improve the training of personnel involved with disabled persons.
41. The Bolivian delegation considered that the adoption by the 1983 International Labour Conference of two international conventions on the rehabilitation of disabled persons represented a great advance, since for disabled persons rehabilitation was an essential prerequisite for employment. The ILO should in future give high priority to its surveys of the problems facing disabled women in gaining access to vocational rehabilitation services.
42. Mr. HWANG (Republic of Korea), speaking on agenda items 85 and 89, said that his country, being among those with insufficient natural resources and therefore obliged to rely on its human resources, attached considerable importance to the problems of youth. His Government's efforts in that area had been focused mainly on education and vocational training, and had contributed to improving economic and social conditions in the Republic of Korea, which now counted as one of the advanced developing countries. Every year about 100,000 college graduates and a similar number of skilled workers joined the labour force. Vocational training for young people was provided by publicly funded facilities, private companies and non-profit-making corporations. The success of the Republic of Korea's technical training programmes had been amply demonstrated at the International Vocational Training Competition held at Utrecht (the Netherlands) in 1977, at which the Korean team had won the first prize, as it had done in each of the four subsequent competitions.
43. The Republic of Korea looked forward to celebrating International Youth Year in 1985. As part of its technical co-operation with developing countries, his Government had already invited hundreds of young people from overseas to undergo vocational training in agriculture, fisheries and mining. That initiative had been taken within the framework of South-South co-operation, which his Government felt was sometimes more useful than co-operation between developed and developing countries, since it minimized trial and error in the transfer of technology. His

(Mr. Hwang, Republic of Korea)

delegation believed that every country had a moral obligation to facilitate the transfer of technology by providing on-the-job training to those young people from abroad who needed it most. Young people trained abroad would be able to transmit to other young people in their home countries those skills which formed the "common heritage of youth".

44. Mrs. ELMIGER (World Health Organization) said that the activities for the International Youth Year were closely intertwined with the WHO goal of what was popularly known as "Health for All by the Year 2000", which could not be attained without the participation of young people. Most WHO programmes dealt with young people, and some were focused mainly on them. A WHO programme for Reproductive Health in Adolescence had been active since the mid-1970s. The organization had also been concerned with problems of alcohol and drug abuse, and had developed methods of treatment currently being tested in six countries. Statistics on drug abuse had been compiled for the period 1975-1982; surveys on drug and alcohol use in 33 countries had been carried out, as well as programmes designed to aid young people with those problems. The organization was also concerned with the effect of television on young people and was investigating ways of preventing violence in that age group.

45. In the area of epidemiology, WHO had undertaken studies on special risk factors affecting children at work. A global survey of legislation intended to promote adolescent health was being conducted and was to be published in 1984. In June 1984, a study group had been convened by WHO on the topic of "Young People's Health - A Challenge", with the overall objective of considering the health issues facing youth. What had emerged from that meeting was a realization of the need to change attitudes towards the young, who had to be viewed as a resource rather than as a problem. It was further agreed that, given the necessary support, young people could not only solve most of their problems but could contribute significantly to the well-being of the community.

46. WHO had planned a number of activities within the framework of International Youth Year, in particular the preparation of a world health kit which would contain a message from the Director-General and various articles on youth and world health. The January-February 1985 issue of World Health magazine would be dedicated to youth, and the majority of the articles it contained would come from young people themselves. Lastly, on 7 April 1985, World Health Day would be observed on the theme: "Healthy youth: our best resource".

47. With the same objective of achieving health for all by the year 2000, WHO had established a programme for the health of the elderly, which consisted mainly of organizing conferences and workshops with the co-operation of the member States in the six regions in which WHO operated. That programme, which came within the framework of the Vienna Plan of Action on Aging, had made it possible to raise the level of awareness concerning disease prevention and the planning of health activities.

(Mrs. Elmiger, WHO)

48. WHO was actively engaged in the dissemination of information to the public on matters such as normal aging, environmental impacts on aging, the border zone between aging and medical disorders, and disease prevention. The organization was also paying particular attention to the active contribution which could be made by the elderly, both in the context of health services and of society in general.
49. Research was an important element of the WHO programme for the health of the elderly, and was concerned primarily with epidemiology and senile dementia.
50. The WHO programme for the health of the elderly was carried out in close co-operation with governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as with agencies within the United Nations system. Primary health care, as defined by WHO, encompassed the needs of the elderly, and WHO's programmes for social development were aimed at integrating the elderly in society.
51. The WHO programme for rehabilitation of the handicapped also came within the framework of primary health care. That programme was centred on a community-based approach, in contrast to conventional institution-based rehabilitation and high technology. The WHO programme was low in cost, effective and acceptable in all countries. Its main objective was to integrate the disabled in the mainstream of community life. By the end of 1984 such programmes would be in operation in 24 developing countries. In that connection the WHO manual entitled Training Disabled People in the Community, which had been translated into 15 languages, was very useful. Scarcity of resources remained the main problem in that area. In an effort to increase the effectiveness of existing programmes, a guide on managing services for the disabled had been prepared. Many activities were being undertaken to improve the training of personnel involved in community-based rehabilitation services. Consultations were therefore being held to improve the curricula for personnel to be trained at the African Rehabilitation Institute, and WHO, in co-operation with the University of London's Institute of Child Health, was setting up a course for trainers of community rehabilitation workers. The substantial funds made available to WHO by the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Agency for International Development had supported training programmes in the southern African region. Similarly, funds provided by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) had made it possible to finance community rehabilitation programmes in India. Lastly, children from 48 countries had taken part in an international poster competition intended to promote community rehabilitation.
52. One of the main objectives of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons was the prevention of disability. That was also the aim of IMPACT, the tripartite UNDP/WHO/UNICEF inter-agency programme which had been launched in India in October 1983, following the International Year of the Disabled, and which would also be implemented in Kenya in November 1984.
53. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) informed the members of the Committee that Greece, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Mozambique and Senegal had become sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.3/39/L.6.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.