



General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
18 October 2011

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 3 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Haniff Hussein. (Malaysia)

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

Statement by the Chair

1. **The Chair** stressed the importance of efficiency. He planned to start meetings promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. While the issues before the Third Committee were multifaceted, delegates were urged to focus on unifying factors.

Organization of work (A/66/250, A/C.3/66/1, A/C.3/66/L.1 and A/C.3/66/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1)

2. **The Chair** said that the letter from the President of the General Assembly concerning the allocation of agenda items to the Third Committee was contained in document A/C.3/66/1. The list of documents issued under each agenda item was contained in A/C.3/66/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1. Recalling the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work in chapter II of A/66/250, he stressed the need to adhere to time limits for statements, respect deadlines for submission of proposals and inscription on the list of speakers, reduce the number of General Assembly resolutions and reports requested of the Secretary-General and keep resolutions short and action-oriented. Draft resolutions involving lengthy negotiations should be prepared as early as possible; time limits should be respected; the Secretary of the Committee or a member of the Bureau should be informed of delegations' intentions to initiate proposals; and, since the Committee would maintain a rolling list of speakers, delegations should be ready to take the floor earlier than scheduled, if necessary. He proposed to place at the end of the list any speaker absent when scheduled to speak, unless a change of time had been agreed in a timely manner with another delegation, and to limit statements to 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States and to 7 minutes for those speaking in a national capacity.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) read out a list of special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, Chairs of treaty bodies or working groups, independent experts and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General who would submit reports to the Committee during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

5. **The Chair** took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights

Council, Chairs of treaty bodies or working groups and others, to submit their reports to, and interact with, the Committee.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) noted some changes made to the programme of work (A/C.3/66/L.1) and drew delegations' attention to changes in documentation before the Committee contained in A/C.3/66/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1, which had just been issued.

8. **The Chair** took it that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work contained in documents A/C.3/66/L.1 and Add.1/Rev.1, as orally corrected by the Secretary, subject to amendment.

9. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 135: Programme planning

10. **The Chair** said that no action by the Committee was currently required with respect to the agenda item.

Appointment of the facilitator

11. **The Chair** said that Ms. Critchlow (Guyana), Vice-Chair, had agreed to facilitate the Chair's text of the draft resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations

12. **Ms. Bethel** (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that under General Assembly resolution 65/276, a non-State actor had, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, received privileges hitherto exercised only by Member States. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had supported adoption of the resolution on the understanding that the primacy of Member States over Observers would be preserved. Therefore, the privilege conferred on the representatives of the European Union of being inscribed among representatives of the major regional groups must be strictly construed under paragraph 1 of the resolution.

13. CARICOM understood that, under the resolution, the European Union could make interventions among representatives of major groups, as outlined in paragraph 1 (a) of the resolution's annex. Thus, in regular plenary meetings of the General Assembly, the European Union could intervene prior to individual

Member States, but could not take priority over other major groups represented by a Member State. However, the Secretariat interpretation permitting the European Union to be inscribed in the order in which it signified its desire to speak was a misreading of the resolution.

14. **Mr. Herczyński** (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union on a point of order, said that the resolution was intended to allow representatives of the European Union to intervene on behalf of its members among representatives of other major groups. Paragraph 1 (a) of the annex indicated precisely that. The text of the resolution was crystal clear.

15. **Ms. Calcinari** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her delegation endorsed the statement made by CARICOM. The resolution conferred no privileges on the European Union over and above those held by Member States. That principle should be carefully protected. The resolution had been adopted after long and complicated negotiations, leaving no room for free interpretations.

16. **Ms. Medal** (Nicaragua) said that her delegation endorsed the view of CARICOM and did not share the interpretation of the Secretariat.

17. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that her delegation endorsed the view expressed by the delegate of Poland representing the European Union. The procedure was clearly laid out in the resolution. There was no reason that the European Union should not be the second group to take the floor, following the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 27: Social development

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/66/124 and A/66/226)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (A/66/62-E/2011/4, A/66/121, A/66/61-E/2011/3, A/66/128, A/66/129 and A/66/136)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/66/173)

18. **Ms. Bas** (Director, Social Policy and Development Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General under agenda items 27 (a) and (b),

said that the report on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/66/124) provided an assessment of the social impact of the global crisis, followed by a review of the contribution of the forty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

19. The report found that the financial and economic crisis had been a major impediment to implementation of internationally agreed development goals. There had been major setbacks to poverty eradication. Recovery in employment lagged behind output recovery. The trend towards austerity in developed countries undermined the potential for recovery.

20. Sustained economic growth was necessary but not sufficient to eradicate poverty. Growth must be inclusive and equitable. Decent jobs should be central to macroeconomic policy. Government policy must be consistently countercyclical. The visibility of social development must be raised in the United Nations development agenda.

21. The report on the world social situation 2011 and the global social crisis (A/66/226) noted that while stimulus measures had averted a deeper global recession, recovery was uneven. Social spending was down in developing and developed countries. Tens of millions of people had fallen into or were trapped in extreme poverty. The number of people suffering from hunger had risen to over 1 billion in 2009, the highest on record.

22. The report on the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (A/66/129) provided a comprehensive summary of the activities of Governments, civil society and individuals to make the year successful. Various organizations and States had organized 354 events, underscoring the role of youth in achieving the global development agenda.

23. The report on implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth: United Nations system of coordination and collaboration related to youth (A/66/61-E/2011/3) described United Nations mechanisms for collaboration on youth development and presented examples of effective collaboration. The report highlighted the work of the Inter-agency Network on Youth Development.

24. The report contained in document A/66/128, on realization of the Millennium Development Goals and

other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities noted that the rights and concerns of persons with disabilities had yet to be integrated into mainstream development processes. Priorities covered in the report included equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities; collection and analysis of disability data and statistics; and capacity-building for stakeholders. It also proposed options for the high-level meeting being planned.

25. The report contained in document A/66/121 gave an overview of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, including information on the status of signatures and ratifications of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the work of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and monitoring of implementation.

26. Both reports concluded that urgent efforts were needed to integrate the rights and concerns of persons with disabilities into all aspects of development.

27. The report contained in document A/66/62-E/2011/4, on follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond noted that the contribution of families to the achievement of development goals was largely overlooked. Policies supporting families would help development. Policies to confront family poverty, ensure work-life balance and advance intergenerational solidarity should receive greater attention.

28. The report provided a review of human rights instruments and outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits bearing on the family. It proposed a framework for preparations for observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014.

29. The report on cooperatives in social development and implementation of the International Year of Cooperatives contained in document A/66/136 noted that cooperatives contributed to poverty reduction and employment creation. They also supported peacebuilding and disaster recovery. Cooperatives should be strengthened through sound governance, market knowledge, training and research. The report examined how cooperatives could be leveraged for development. Such leverage required sound policy frameworks.

30. The report presented activities planned for the International Year of Cooperatives and suggested

considering a road map for follow-up to the activities of the Year beyond 2012.

31. **Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), reading out a statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that even in hard times, it was important to continue strengthening social development. There was growing recognition that social development had been a missing link in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

32. Youth unemployment was at an all-time high, especially among indigenous people. Social protection for children and the elderly had been weakened. Older persons were seeing their life savings dwindle and their employment opportunities shrink. Social inequities were on the rise. No development path which left billions of people in poverty could be sustainable.

33. In the current economic climate, it was important to maintain commitments to poverty eradication and social justice. Job creation was paramount, as was the establishment and expansion of a social protection floor that would facilitate a shift to green economies. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, would be a landmark opportunity to integrate social concerns with the economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Green jobs and social inclusion would receive priority attention at the conference.

34. Member States were encouraged to establish national committees to promote cooperatives during the International Year of Cooperatives. The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples would be held in 2014, serving as an excellent opportunity to bridge implementation gaps in addressing the rights and priorities of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples should be included at all stages of the Conference.

35. During the current session, the General Assembly would consider options for a high-level meeting on disability and development to be held during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The meeting was expected to address the need for persons with disabilities to participate in all aspects of development.

36. Governments were strongly encouraged to support the preparations for observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, in 2014. Support of Member States for

strengthening protection of the human rights of older persons and putting an end to their invisibility in the global development agenda was crucial.

37. **Mr. Šimonović** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/66/173), said that during the sixty-sixth session, the President of the Human Rights Council would address the Third Committee for the first time. The report represented a new focus on the human rights of older persons in all regions, as well as an overview of challenges, gaps in protection and measures adopted.

38. Between 1950 and 2010, life expectancy worldwide had risen from 46 to 68 years. Almost 700 million people were currently over the age of 60. In 2050, persons over the age of 60 would outnumber children under the age of 18 for the first time in world history. There were currently twice as many women over the age of 80 as there were men.

39. The elderly often faced age discrimination in combination with other forms of discrimination due to disability, ethnicity or gender. Many suffered from homelessness, malnutrition, untreated chronic diseases, abuse, including in institutions, at home and in the community, and lack of specific measures and services.

40. The report summarized existing norms and standards with illustrations of their application by treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders. The response to violations was insufficient; in some places, no measures were taken to protect the elderly.

41. **Mr. Cesa** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and decent work and social integration remained major challenges for Governments and the United Nations. According to the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the current economic crisis had caused the loss of 27.6 million jobs between 2007 and 2010. In 2009, it had caused between 47 and 84 million more people to remain poor or fall into poverty. Prospects for regaining lost ground on social indicators were dim, due to developed nations' austerity policies. A strengthened global partnership for development based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development was needed, as were

concrete actions to remove obstacles to the realization of the rights of peoples living under foreign occupation, which adversely affected their development.

42. According to the *World Report on Disability*, issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), over 1 billion people currently lived with some form of disability. That figure would increase due to the rapid ageing of the world population.

43. The recently established Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and the upcoming tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provided opportunities for concrete proposals on strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons.

44. **Mr. Ramafole** (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, said that poverty and unemployment in the region had reached unprecedented levels. Moreover, recovery from crises was slower in the developing world. A development plan for 1990-2015 adopted by the Southern African Development Community recognized that poverty eradication, gender equality, development and eradication of HIV/AIDS were necessary for social development. Objectives included achieving 7 per cent annual GDP growth and halving the proportion of the population living on less than one dollar per day.

45. Prior to the financial crisis, progress on poverty eradication had been steady; that progress had been halted. While social protection systems in SADC member States had nonetheless been strengthened, poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work remained major challenges.

46. In 2008, the Community had adopted a declaration on poverty and sustainable development, in which Heads of State and Government reiterated their commitment to combating and eradicating poverty. The Declaration expressed the need to achieve food security and address the impact of climate change in the fight against poverty. A Regional Poverty Observatory would be established to facilitate implementation of the declaration.

47. The Community had held a Summit in Namibia in 2010, at which Heads of State and Government had set the goal of increasing efforts to enhance food production and food security for the region. At the

Summit, a decision had also been taken to scale up implementation of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security. Concerted action by States was required to overcome obstacles to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

48. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the world currently faced towering development challenges, including natural disasters and food, fuel and financial crises. Like many other States, CARICOM members were recording backward movement on development goals, with increased unemployment and decreased social protection. Real links had been established between poverty and unemployment, on the one hand, and crime, gender-based violence and substance abuse, on the other. During crises, families implemented coping strategies which had negative and long-lasting effects on education, health and nutrition, perpetuating poverty. CARICOM members were struggling to soften the effects of its economic policies on social development, and were pursuing family-oriented social policies at the community and national levels.

49. The CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, established in 2007, had presented a report on the situation of youth in the region. The report had demonstrated that the continued development of the region was linked with youth development. Examples of contribution by young people to development, such as the pivotal role of CARICOM Youth Ambassadors in combating HIV/AIDS, had been highlighted in the report.

50. Life expectancy in the CARICOM countries was high. Dominica had the most centenarians per capita in the world. Members were being encouraged to develop social programmes for the elderly. In the past, the extended family had nurtured youth, but in recent years, youth had been left unattended, with clear results.

51. The Caribbean Regional Charter on Health and Ageing, established in 1999 in consultation with the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization, served as a guide for Governments as they established programmes for older persons. However, the difficult economic times had hampered implementation.

52. Disability was a cross-cutting issue. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

and its Optional Protocol had been signed or ratified by 12 of the 14 member States of CARICOM. Despite the hard times, Governments continued to work to improve conditions for persons with disabilities.

53. **Mr. Abdullah** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recalled the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), adopted in 2003 to build by 2020 a community based on the pillars of political and security cooperation, economic cooperation and sociocultural cooperation, to ensure peace, stability and shared prosperity.

54. Despite persistent socio-economic disparities in the ASEAN region, the desire to eradicate extreme poverty remained strong. In March 2009, ASEAN leaders had called for a road map aimed at realizing the Millennium Development Goals and focusing on five key areas: advocacy and linkage, knowledge, resources, expertise and regional cooperation and regional public goods.

55. The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth, which met biennially, oversaw cooperation on youth. Implementation of youth-related activities was carried out by the ASEAN Senior Officials on Youth, which reported to the Ministerial Meeting on Youth. The Ministerial Meeting provided direction and deliberated on common youth policies for ASEAN member countries.

56. ASEAN was committed to social justice, including the rights and welfare of the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development, held in late 2010, had set priorities for cooperation for capacity-building in the social sector and strengthening the family. ASEAN supported the exchange of best practices in the care and welfare of the elderly, persons with disabilities, women and children living in poverty and vulnerable groups, with regard to such issues as accessibility, rehabilitation, protection and care.

57. **Ms. Zainab Maina** (Nigeria) said that her Government had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other disability-related instruments. The National Assembly of Nigeria had passed a disabilities bill, and surveys had been carried out to determine the number, location and needs of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. The data would be used for policy planning and implementation, and also

for procurement and distribution of mobility aids and appliances. Nigeria had fully adopted the concept of community-based rehabilitation and had hosted an international conference on that subject in late 2010.

58. The Government had produced a draft national policy on ageing which would help with empowerment and poverty alleviation for older persons. An income support and skills acquisition programme established in 2010, which included start-up grants for projects, encouraged older persons to engage in income-generating activities.

59. A draft plan of action on the family would soon be presented to the National Assembly for passage into law. It would provide assistance to Nigerian families, including in the area of poverty alleviation. A programme to assist destitute or disadvantaged persons and families had been launched to help improve income-generating capacities.

60. The Ministry of Youth Development, established in 2007, was working to establish a youth development fund to finance the new youth policy.

61. **Mr. Almaz Toimatov** (Kyrgyzstan) said that over half of the population of his country was 35 years old or younger. In 2010, a ministry had been established to address youth issues. It had begun work on a youth policy framework for the period up to 2015.

62. A law on disabilities had been adopted in 2008. Proposals made by persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations had served as the basis for that law. A decree to increase monthly benefits for children with disabilities was being drafted.

63. Under the aegis of the Ministry for Social Protection, there were 15 residential facilities for older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with mental health conditions. A government centre for disability-related research gathered data on persons with disabilities nationwide.

64. A community council within the Ministry prepared regulatory recommendations and recommendations for special programmes and tracked outcomes of cooperation between the Government and civil society.

65. Lastly, he noted that Kyrgyzstan had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2011.

66. **Ms. Rosenberg** (Israel) said that in response to a recent grass-roots movement in her country, President Netanyahu had established a committee headed by a leading economist to offer recommendations for promoting social justice. The committee had just released a comprehensive report that the Government was now considering.

67. Social development called for holistic solutions and the participation of States, the private sector and civil society. Israel took a comprehensive approach to youth at risk, through legislation and increased awareness. Five ministries participated in a national programme for at-risk young people, which encompassed a number of innovative projects to integrate young people into the community, including through vocational training and entrepreneurship.

68. In its policies on ageing, Israel was guided by the principles of promoting independence and equality, assuring an adequate standard of living, preventing age discrimination and maintaining partnership among generations. A participant in the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, Israel welcomed the attention given to issues of older women by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

69. In 2000, Israel had established a commission for equal rights of persons with disabilities. Its focus was on integrating persons with disabilities into the community and raising awareness of their needs. A Government programme provided a social safety net and a basket of services, including emergency care, for disabled people living in the community.

70. Israel partnered with others around the world to advance the principle of the right to an adequate standard of living, using its technical expertise in agriculture, education, food security and community development to alleviate suffering and poverty. MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation had trained more than 250,000 people from 140 countries. MASHAV empowered marginalized people to gain access to the workforce and health-care services.

71. **Ms. Sarr** (Senegal) said that her Government had developed a poverty reduction strategy paper, established a national anti-poverty programme and ratified regional and international social and economic development instruments. Senegal had adopted an accelerated growth strategy based on strengthening human capital and infrastructure. Job creation and job

security were included in social development policy. There was a proactive programme to create jobs and improve working conditions. To improve the delivery of government services, 15,000 new social services employees had been recruited. Significant resources had been allocated for education.

72. Senegal attached great importance to gender equality and women's empowerment. Significant efforts had been made to engage women in decision-making and in the peace process. A law on gender parity in electoral lists had been adopted in 2010.

73. **Mr. Dulyavitya** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his delegation was fully cognizant of the need to maintain or increase social spending, especially during economic downturns.

74. Many people in Thailand were now suffering due to severe flooding, which cut off their access to food, water and medicine, and had damaged schools and universities. During natural disasters, help must come from everyone in society, not only from the Government.

75. Much had been done to alleviate poverty in Thailand, especially in rural areas. Access to education and health care had been improved, and the maternal and child mortality rate had been reduced. Compassion was an important value in Thailand. There should be more compassion among the nations of the world. Member States were encouraged to further contribute resources to those in dire need.

76. **Mr. Nopparat** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that while there had been advances in medical technology, reports of diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and influenza A (H1N1) had increased. Non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes were the leading cause of death in Thailand, including among young people. Measures to control and prevent disease were high on the national agenda. The national leaders had supported the provision of policy advice by non-governmental organizations in the field of health. Young people and youth organizations were doing much to promote government policy and healthy lifestyles.

77. **Ms. Solórzano** (Nicaragua) said that her Government was making serious efforts to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. Since 2007, work had been under way to re-establish health and education

systems with free services. Poverty eradication efforts had focused on microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in the field of agriculture, fair access to credit, seed and fertilizer and provision of capital directly to women in the informal sector. In recent years, there had been significant growth in direct investments and export, resulting in a changed distribution of wealth in the country.

78. Between 2009 and 2011, extreme poverty had been reduced by nearly half and malnutrition by 30 per cent. Infant mortality had been reduced by 9.7 per cent between 2007 and 2011. During the same period, maternal mortality had been reduced by 15.7 per cent, neonatal mortality had been reduced by 53.7 per cent and 90 per cent of children under one year of age had been immunized. Illiteracy rates had been reduced from 22 per cent in 2006 to 3.3 per cent in 2011. In 2010, 31.32 per cent of the population had been enrolled in primary and secondary schools.

79. With assistance from Cuba, the Government of Nicaragua had done a study of the genetic causes of disability. The study had also provided information on persons with disabilities that was necessary in order to prepare policies and programmes to integrate persons with disabilities into society without discrimination. The study had provided information about the location and type of disability of every person with disabilities, making it possible to provide medical care, food parcels and assistive devices to those who needed them.

80. Young people were in the vanguard of social development, bringing programmes to the poor, building schools, eliminating illiteracy and administering vaccinations to large numbers of people. Older persons were brought together for recreation and other activities and received health care in a timely manner.

81. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that in the aftermath of the revolution in his country in early 2011, the Government was vigorously addressing the main social challenges and preparing a comprehensive development strategy. That strategy involved combating corruption; eliminating extreme poverty and unemployment; halting overpopulation and developing the legislative framework for taxes, pensions and wages to ensure stronger protection for the rights of the vulnerable. A bill on the rights of persons with disabilities would be submitted to the new Parliament. Modifications to

pensions and social security were being considered, and the Government had decided to raise the minimum wage.

82. The private sector and civil society would be engaged in development and implementation of development strategies. Financial allocations for programmes to empower women and for education, health and social security were being increased. Access to education would be ensured for persons with disabilities. Efforts were being made to reduce the dropout rate, and closer links between education and the labour market were being forged.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.