



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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

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**AGENDA ITEM 86: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/6211 A/41/340-E/1986/90)**

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**AGENDA ITEM 91: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (cont inued) (A/41/618, A/41/354)**

Introduction of draft resolutions A/C.3/41/L.15, L.16/Rev.1, L.20/Rev.1, L.25, L.26, L.27

Draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.15

1. Mr. TANASA (Romania) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, who had been joined by Bulgaria and Colombia; the number of sponsors indicated the general interest of Member States in the problems of young people and the valuable role the young played in the world at present and in the future. He drew attention to the fourth preambular paragraph, which said that the young must be continuously encouraged to contribute to observance of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the task of nation-building, the realization of the right to self-determination and national independence, and respect for the sovereignty of each State. Emphasizing the need to build on the impetus imparted by the International Youth Year, he also drew attention to the eleventh preambular paragraph, which recognized that the guidelines for further planning and a long-term strategy in the field of youth provided a conceptual framework for a long-term strategy in the field of youth. He then read out operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5, and suggested that, bearing in mind the general support enjoyed by the draft resolution, it should be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.16/Rev.1

2. Mr. BORG (Malta) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, which had been joined by Mauritania. He reminded the Committee of the adoption in 1982 of the International Plan of Action on Aging by 125 nations, and said he hoped that the consensus which had prevailed at the World Assembly in Vienna would also prevail within the Committee. He drew attention to the two major points of the draft, namely, the implementation of the Plan of Action and the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging.



(Mrs. Alvarez, Dominican Republic)

in view of such factors as current demographic projections in the developing countries. Unfortunately, the present United Nations Trust Fund for Aging was not capable of discharging such a responsibility, which was why a new fund had been devised. Her country considered that draft resolution L.20/Rev.1 was extremely constructive and should not create divisions within the Committee.

8. Considering that the administrative costs of the Trust Fund were at present above 20 per cent, while such costs within UNDP were on the order of 13.5 per cent, it was clear that the transfer of the Fund to UNDP would enable significant savings to be made.

9. It might well be asked why contributions to the Trust Fund had steadily declined and why, when there had been 25 donor countries in 1982, in 1985 there had been only 3: two developing countries and one developed country, Austria. The sponsors of the draft resolution were convinced that the decline in contributions could not be attributed solely to the world economic situation. It should be noted in that regard that the United Nations Development Fund for Women had grown considerably since it had been transferred from the Centre for Social Development to UNDP. The history of UNDP was in fact the history of continuing assistance to the developing countries. Furthermore, UNDP possessed machinery which had demonstrated its effectiveness and which would be incomparably useful in executing vitally necessary projects for the aging. The sponsors of the draft resolution firmly believed that if the Committee adopted operative paragraph 5, in which it was proposed to merge the two funds and to transfer the administration of the new fund thus created to UNDP, United Nations bodies as a whole would benefit. She appealed to all delegations to support the draft resolution, which was aimed solely at ensuring a better and more dignified life for all the aging.

#### Draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.25

10. Mr. TROUVEROY (Belgium) introduced on behalf of the sponsors, now joined by Senegal, the draft resolution on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. He drew the Committee's attention to the second preambular paragraph, which reasserted all the relevant provisions of resolution 40/31, under which the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had been set up. He also drew attention to operative paragraph 6, which welcomed the offer of the Government of Sweden to be the host in 1987 of the meeting of experts planned for the middle of the Decade, and to operative paragraph 7, which noted with appreciation the status of preparations for that meeting. The rest of the operative part should enable the Secretary-General to continue his work in respect of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

#### Draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.26

11. Mr. DARWISH (Egypt) introduced on behalf of the sponsors the draft resolution on channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and youth organizations. He stressed the importance of those channels which, provided they

(Mr. Darwish, Egypt)

were well-used and well-rected, would allow the international community to be better informed of the problems of young people and to find concrete solutions for them. The interest raised by the question had already been the subject of resolutions, but the current draft contained a new paragraph in which it was recognized that the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth provided a constructive framework for a long-term strategy in that field. He read out operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution, and expressed the hope that it would be adopted.

Draft resolution A/C.3/41/L.27

12. Mr. BUSACCA (Italy) introduced on behalf of the sponsors the draft resolution on crime prevention and criminal justice. He recalled that, ever since its establishment, the United Nations had attached special importance to furthering international co-operation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, as evidenced by the adoption on 1 December 1950 of resolution 415 (V) whereby the United Nations had assumed the tasks previously discharged by the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission. Recently, many countries had been confronted with new, more complex forms of crime that affected their social, economic and cultural development. Those criminal actions were often perpetrated by organizations operating on an international scale and endowed with unprecedented financial means. It was therefore imperative for States to strengthen their common efforts in the face of that new threat.

13. He emphasized in that connection the importance of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Milan in 1985, at which the international community had expressed its determination to take up the challenge. The conclusions of the Seventh Congress had widened the scope of the Organization's activities in that field.

14. The draft resolution was intended to stress the importance of the global reassessment which the Economic and Social Council was to carry out at its next session on the basis of the review and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice that the General Assembly had requested from the Secretary-General at its fortieth session. It also invited all interested parties to ensure that the Eighth United Nations Congress would be adequately prepared. Lastly, it drew the attention of Member States to some elements of the program of work of the United Nations in the field under discussion which deserved more urgent action on the part of the international community. In that connection, he drew attention in particular to paragraph 6, which invited Member States and the Secretary-General to accord priority attention to the serious forms of crime identified in the Milan Plan of Action. He also drew attention to paragraphs 7 and 8, which stressed the importance of international co-operation, including the need to assist the United Nations regional crime prevention institutes, especially the institute shortly to be established in Africa, and the United Nations Trust Fund for Social Defence, contributions to which, as the Secretary-General had recognized in his report, remained insufficient.

AGENDA ITEM 92: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN  
(continued) (A/41/3, chap. III, sect. B; A/41/45 and Corr.1, A/41/608 and Add.1;  
A/41/216, A/41/607)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN  
(continued)

(b) STATUS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST WOMEN; REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE  
YEAR 2000 (continued) (A/41/3, chap. V, sect. C, and chap. VI, sect. C; A/41/600,  
A/41/623, A/41/672, A/41/216,

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PROMOTING  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND CO-OPERATION (continued)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN; REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
(continued)

(c) INCORPORATION OF THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN IN THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE REGIONAL  
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(d) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT  
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AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/41/3,  
chap. V, sect. C)

15. Mr. KOUNKOU (Congo) said that the Congo continued to encourage the advancement of women by strengthening the body of laws which ensured the full enjoyment of their rights. Thus, early in 1966 the Parliament had adopted the Congolese Family Code. The Congo, which had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1980, hoped that the countries which had not yet signed it would join the many which had already ratified it. The Congo was deeply concerned by the numerous reservations expressed by States parties which might well deprive the Convention of its substance. For that reason his delegation welcomed the efforts made at the Third Meeting of the States Parties, held in New York on 25 March 1986, to ensure the universal character of the instrument.

16. He paid tribute to the women of South Africa, Namibia and Palestine, who, as victims of a brutal policy of repression condemned by the international community, were defying despotism to regain their rights.

17. Despite very difficult economic conditions, the Congo was trying to integrate into its development policy the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 adopted in 1985 at Nairobi. To that end, all branches of the Congolese education system had been opened to women. The media and all State institutions were also contributing to that effort. Women themselves

(Mr. Kounkou, Congo)

were organizing into co-operative8 and other highly structured mutual societies at the local level. The co-operation of United Nations agencies in the planning and execution of projects having a real impact on the status of women in the third world, particularly in Africa, should be expanded. The international community must provide Africa, the continent most seriously affected by the world economic crisis, with all the necessary assistance to enable it to extricate itself from its difficult economic situation and implement the Forward-looking Strategies.

se. Ms. BARUTCU (Turkey) recalled that Turkey was one of the first countries to accord civil and political rights to women. In Turkey, women participated more and more actively in the life of the society in all its segments.

19. Turkey felt that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were a valuable framework for the advancement of women. The Turkish Government was committed to the principles which they contained and was currently seeking means to reach the goals set forth therein. It was important to sustain the momentum of the United Nations Decade for Women, whose culmination had been the Nairobi Conference. In that regard, the Commission on the Status of Women had a role to play in ensuring the effective translation of the Strategies at both national and international levels. It was regrettable that, because of 8 substantially overloaded agendas, the Commission had been unable to fulfil that mandate at its most recent session. She expressed the hope that, at the special session to be held in January 1987 88 convened by Economic and Social Council decision 1986/30, which her delegation fully supported, the Commission would carry out its responsibility. That session would enable the Commission to contribute to the incorporation of the Strategies into the medium-term plan before the Economic and Social Council considered the plan at its spring 1987 session. It was important that the wide range of activities undertaken by the United Nations system to implement the Strategies, activities which were described in the Secretary-General's report (A/41/623), should be continued by means of the integration of the Strategies into the system-wide programming and planning. As to future sessions of the Commission, her delegation concurred with the views expressed by various delegations that priorities should be set and each session should be devoted to a particular aspect of the Strategies. It also supported the idea of establishing working groups in the Commission.

20. With regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it was encouraging to note that an increasing number of States had become parties to the Convention since its entry into force in 1981. As one of those States, Turkey would participate more actively in its implementation. The Turkish Government, moreover, would submit its initial report on the implementation of the Convention to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on 19 January 1987.

21. Fully recognizing the growing role of women in the country's development, Turkey lent its support to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, which played a vital role in promoting the participation of women in development and in financing projects benefiting them. Turkey would also continue to support the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.



22. **Mr. BUDAI** (Hungary) said that Hungary welcomed the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The international community must now take the necessary steps on both national and international levels to ensure their implementation. Hungary felt that the Commission on the Status of Women should play an outstanding role in that regard. His delegation therefore agreed with the suggestion that the reports submitted by Governments to other bodies could be used by the Commission in evaluating and monitoring implementation of the Strategies. That would avoid placing additional reporting obligations on Member States in that field.
23. The Hungarian Government's efforts to ensure equality of rights between men and women by developing a socialist legal system were fully in accordance with the goals set forth in the Strategies. In Hungary, women participated in society and, despite the persistence of old traditions and prejudices which must still be overcome, they were able to combine gainful activity and maternity.
21. His delegation was gratified to note that the number of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had again increased since the previous year, to a total of 90. However, the fundamental instrument had not yet become universal. It was regrettable, moreover, that some developed countries which had ratified the Convention still failed to report on its implementation. That was not the case for Hungary, which had submitted its latest report several weeks previously on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.
25. **Hr. GHAREKHAN** (India) said that his delegation was glad to note that the activities aimed at implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies described in the Secretary-General's report (A/41/623) were being pursued throughout the United Nations system and, in that connection, that the end of the United Nations Decade for Women had not resulted in the curtailment of programmes which had been feared. India was firmly committed to the realization of the objectives set forth in the Strategies.
26. In India, equality of men and women, inherent in the culture and traditions of the country, had been strengthened by the participation of women in the freedom struggle. Women currently played a vital role in the economic life of the country. There remained much to be done, however, to integrate women in development, India's Prime Minister had therefore established a Department of Women and Youth, headed by a woman, which dealt with all aspects of the advancement of women. At India's initiative, the subject of women and development had been considered at a regional seminar of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation.
27. Development, modernization and urbanization tended to divert Indian women from their traditional occupations, even in the agricultural sector. The Government was therefore endeavouring to create more jobs in order to make women independent earners and thus respected members of both family and society. That required institutional changes and changes in social attitudes, which could be brought about by deliberate and planned efforts. India's successive five-year plans took into

(Mr. Gharckhan, India)

account the **problems** of promoting education, employment and health among women. Action **was also** being taken in India to **combat** social prejudices and channels **were** being created to enable women to **participate** actively and **effectively** in the decision-making **process** and to conduct periodic reviews of **social** legislation.

28. India had **conscientiously supported** and would continue to support the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). **As stated** in the report of the Administrator Of UNDP on the **activities** of UNIFEM (A/41/600), the Fund continued to play a catalytic role in **women's** development **programmes**. The projects financed by UNIFEM were of direct benefit to women in developing countries. However, the level of UNIFEM **assistance** to the Asia and Pacific region was comparatively low. Her delegation was **glad** that the Consultative **Committee**, of which India was a **member**, had **encouraged** UNIFEM to take more initiatives in that **region**. She hoped that the **secretariat** would continue its efforts to identify and follow up viable projects in the region.

29. **Mrs. MIGNOTT** (Jamaica) said that the momentum created by the Nairobi Forward-looking **Strategies** must be supported at the national, regional and **international levels**; in that process, the United Nations had a **central** role to play in monitoring the **effectiveness** and **co-ordination** of the follow-up to the implementation of those **Strategies**. Account must therefore be taken of **activities** of **concern** to women, particularly the **Strategies**, in the revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1988-1989, and later in the drafting of the medium-term plan for 1990-1995. **Jamaica** welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to **incorporate** the **Strategies** into the **programme** budget and the programme of work of the **Organization** for the 1988-1989 biennium (A/41/623). The **system-wide** medium-term plan for women and **development** called for in Council resolution 1985/46 should provide a methodology for programme- and budget-planning and for system-wide **co-ordination**.

30. **Moreover**, in view of the support which they provided for the **elaboration** of national and regional programmes in favour of women, the regional **commissions** should also adopt that procedure. In addition, in view of the resource constraints **with** which they faced and which were a cause of concern to Jamaica, the **regional** commissions should examine the **possibility** of expanding their activities by collaborating in the technical area with Government-supported NGOs. The **Commission** on the Status of Women was the **United Nations** body which **had** the primary **responsibility** for monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi **Strategies**. It should therefore be given the additional **resources** to permit it to fulfil its mandate. At the same time, the **Commission** would be expected to operate **efficiently** and **competently**. In that regard, the **Commission** should hold a meeting in January 1987 to consider the agenda agreed upon by the Economic and **Social** Council and should take that opportunity to make **recommendations** on how to proceed in order to make the **best** use of the available time without the **need** for **special** meetings.

31. She **wished** to **emphasize** the **importance** of **technical** and economic assistance to **programmes** for women and, in that connection, welcomed the invaluable contribution of the **United Nations Development Fund** for Women which, in view of the new

(Mrs. Mignott, Jamaica)

programming thrust and the high level of professionalism of its team, should continue to promote successfully the role of women in the planning of development programmes.

32. At the national level and within the framework of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, Jamaica had established a Bureau of Women's Affairs which, in co-ordination with the National Advisory Council and through its local branches, sought to build up the awareness of both women and men of issues related to equality between the sexes and to project a positive image of the role of women through the media. The Bureau of Women's Affairs had also undertaken programmes to train women in income-generating skills, including in non-traditional sectors such as construction.

33. Jamaica had submitted its initial report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and its reservation with respect to article 9 (II) of the Convention would be withdrawn as soon as the Jamaican Parliament had enacted the necessary legislation.

34. Mrs. FEXIS (Greece) said that the Commission on the Status of Women was the main United Nations body dealing with the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, which constituted an instrument of unique importance for achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women. In order to enable the Commission to fulfil its mandate, it was necessary on the one hand to strengthen and enhance its effectiveness by increasing its membership and focusing its agenda on priority issues for consideration within working groups, and on the other to review its structure and programme of work, including consideration of the possibility of holding annual meetings.

35. With regard to the follow-up to the Nairobi Conference, periodical reviews of the status of women were an important element in the process of implementing the Forward-looking Strategies. Greece had on many occasions expressed the view that world conferences similar to the Nairobi Conference should be held every five years, or at longer intervals if such reviews were carried out at shorter intervals at the regional and subregional levels. Regional and subregional commissions made a valuable contribution to the analysis of the situation of women in their respective regions.

36. The Forward-looking Strategies should be integrated into the programme and budget planning of the United Nations and account should be taken of them, particularly during the preparation of the 1990-1995 medium-term plan and the programme budget for 1988-1989.

37. Greece welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies (A/41/623), which described the entire range of activities of the United Nations system relating to the advancement of women. While her delegation was impressed by the extent of those activities, it would welcome a better distribution of activities at the sectoral level. With regard to women and peace, in particular, her Government had supported the Betting UP of On

**(Mrs. Pexis, Greece)**

ad hoc committee aimed at mobilizing women throughout the world for the purpose of peace. An international assembly of that committee would be held in Greece in November 1986 and women from more than 40 nations were expected to participate.

38. She expressed **satisfaction** at the number of countries which had **submitted** their instruments of ratification of, or accession to, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; it was to be hoped that the remaining signatories would soon do likewise. She **was concerned**, however, at the **reservations** made by certain States, which were incompatible with the spirit of the Convention.

39. **Mrs. KALININ** (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the **Soviet** union had, since its founding, **always** attached great importance to improving the status of women and sought, in accordance with the principles of socialism, to guarantee genuine **equality** of rights between men and women. Equal rights for women were **written** into the Soviet Constitution and women in the **Soviet** Union participated in all social activities and in public affairs. Family assistance was the focus of constant attention.

40. The Soviet Union **supported** the resolutions adopted by the 1985 Nairobi World Conference to **Review** and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for **Women** and the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of women to the year 2000. The **Strategies** brought out clearly the main obstacles to improving the **status** of women in the contemporary world. **In many** countries it was more difficult for women to obtain an education and find work than it was for men. Women and children were the **first** victims of armed conflicts and **suffered** the most from the **consequences** of militarism, imperialist **expansion**, colonialism and racism. Millions of women were exposed to economic difficulties and suffered from **hunger, poverty and lack of housing**. **In many** countries, discrimination against women in the workplace had still not been eliminated.

41. **It** was for the United Nations to do everything **possible** to implement the Nairobi Strategies. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-first session, had underscored the need to eliminate **discrimination against** woman and ensure their enjoyment of economic, **social**, cultural, political and civil rights. Its recommendations on the **role of women in society**, Palestinian women, women and children under **apartheid**, and measures of **assistance** provided to South African, **Namibian** and refugee women, were all extremely important and had been adopted by the **Economic and Social Council**. The Commission must carry on with **its** useful work on the implementation of the Strategies at **its** 1987 session. Similarly, the Centre for Social **Development** and Humanitarian Affairs, which drew up the **programmes** needed to ensure the implementation of the Strategies, must expand **its** activities in that area.

42. **Mrs. EGZIABHER** (Ethiopia) said that, as a result of the comprehensive and integrated approach taken at the Nairobi Conference, the Forward-looking Strategies covered all the problems facing women and made concrete recommendations on how to deal with predicaments that impeded the promotion of the status of women. **It was**

(Mrs. Egziabher, Ethiopia)

now the task of Governments, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to take a realistic approach and show the determination needed to implement the Strategies.

43. It was encouraging to note that, according to the Secretary-General's report (A/41/623), the United Nations system was studying measures for the implementation of the Strategies and their monitoring. Ethiopia felt that efforts to incorporate the Strategies into the programs of the United Nations system must be pursued with added vigour. The Commission on the Status of Women needed to be strengthened if it was to cope with its heavy and difficult responsibilities in that connection.

44. National action, however, was the cornerstone of the advancement of women. The Ethiopian Government was therefore working essentially to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices with regard to women, through information and through the adoption of legislation to ensure equality between men and women in practice. The new Ethiopian Constitution, which would soon be submitted to a popular referendum, recognized equal rights for women in the political, economic and social life of the country. In addition, the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association had been established with government support to help women to participate more in the economy, particularly by providing appropriate training and by mitigating their traditional burdens. Ethiopia attached great importance to the integration of women in development and to have them take part in the formulation and execution of national development plans and policies. Ethiopian women were assuming administrative and political functions formerly reserved to men, including the defence of the country. The nation-wide literacy campaign had likewise served to change some negative attitudes towards women.

45. Internationally, Ethiopia had participated in the major international conferences on woman's issues; it was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and actively participated in the work of the relevant Committee. Unfortunately, a lack of funds and technical know-how made it difficult for Ethiopia, like many other developing countries, to do as much as it aspired to do in that area. The problem therefore required the immediate attention of the international community, which must mobilize additional resources for development activities that directly involved and benefited women. In that regard, Ethiopia was confident that the United Nations Development Fund for Women, if expanded and strengthened, would make great contributions to the advancement of women.

46. Ma. BARGHOUTI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking on agenda items 92 and 93, underscored the peculiar situation of Palestinian women, who not only were victims of social inequalities, as were many other women, but also endured oppression and exploitation more pronounced than in any other part of the world except for southern Africa. In their situation, Palestinian women had demonstrated a courageous resistance as early as 1920 by their participation in the first mass uprising against the British Mandate. It was the women who, after the illegal eviction of more than 8 million Palestinians in 1948, had shouldered the responsibility for preserving the unity of the Palestinian family. Currently, in the Arab territories occupied by Israel, Palestinian women were living under



(Mrs. Ilić, Yugoslavia)

those set forth in the resolution on the advancement of women in Yugoslav society adopted by the Federal Assembly in 1978. The Forward-looking Strategies were to be translated into Serbo-Croat. The body set up in Yugoslavia to monitor the programme for the United Nations Decade for Women would, in the future, monitor the implementation of the Strategies.

53. Mr. BROWNE (Fiji) said that, although the Nairobi Conference had marked an important stage in the improvement of women's status, the situation of women in many regions of the world was far from ideal. The international community's interest in the question had first been expressed in 1902 in the Hague Convention relating to the Settlement of Conflicts of Law concerning Marriage. In the late 1960s, that interest had increased, leading to the declaration proclaiming the period from 1975 to 1985 the United Nations Decade for Women, and, subsequently, the Nairobi Conference and the adoption of the Forward-looking Strategies. Among the many achievements of the United Nations for the advancement of women were two institutions which had benefited Fiji and many other countries - the International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

54. However, it was ironic to note that, despite its tangible results in the advancement of women, the United Nations system, which might have been expected to set an example, had not followed the trend. It had been recommended that the United Nations Secretariat should try to increase the number of professional-category posts occupied by women, particularly at the higher levels.

55. The advancement of women must take into account the cultural values in a given country, because change could not occur overnight. In Fiji, women were encouraged to participate in all aspects of development. The current five-year plan contained provisions which would give women new opportunities in employment and eradicate all discrimination.

56. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that, despite the United Nations Decade for Women and the success at the Nairobi Conference, the results in the campaign to improve the status of women were still disappointing. The forthcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women could not hide the fact that the year since the Nairobi Conference had been a year without progress for most women. It was also disquieting to learn that, at its thirty-first session, the Commission on the Status of Women, which was responsible for monitoring implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, had not fulfilled its task. That was even more regrettable because no action could be taken in that direction before 1988, because the regional commissions had decided to integrate women's issues into their overall work programmes for the biennium 1988-1989.

57. The status of women in the world required constant attention. Studies undertaken by the European Economic Community and in the United States showed that women seeking work had to have higher qualifications than men. There was never any mention of the women who had to travel abroad to find work, although their numbers were rising steadily. Serious consideration should also be given to the situation

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

of women in countries facing grave economic difficulties where they were the first to be affected by unemployment and the last to be taken back by employer. Although some laws in favour of women had recently been promulgated there were cases where discriminatory measures had been taken against them. In May 1986, the parliament of a certain country had considered a bill apparently intended to prevent divorced Muslim women from claiming alimony.

58. Those and many other problems laid a great responsibility on the Commission on the Status of Women and also on women themselves, particularly on those who were able to speak out in defence of their sisters in South Africa, Namibia, Palestine and elsewhere, who were discriminated against twice: because of their nationality and their sex.

59. Some feminists were questioning their earlier convictions, but she agreed with them about the validity of the family as an institution. As the feminist Betty Friedan had acknowledged, measures taken to achieve equality between men and women had often backfired to the detriment of the latter. Divorce by mutual consent and the liberalization of abortion had relieved men of their responsibilities and placed an even greater financial and emotional burden on women. Western countries seemed to have realized that fact, as indicated by the decision of Mrs. Thatcher's Government to change the law on education and place more emphasis on values such as love, marriage and the family.

60. At the international level, the Commission on the Status of Women was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies; accordingly, there should be close co-ordination between the Commission and Governments, through the Economic and Social Council. If the Moroccan delegation had to specify priorities, it would give top priority to the living and working conditions of women in rural areas, because they were the majority and their input to national development, although unacknowledged, was considerable.

61. Ms. KUMI (Ghana) quoted a famous Ghanaian who had said 60 years before that if you educated a man, you educated an individual, and if you educated a woman, you educated a nation. In all societies women played a primary role, for it was they who brought up children, the future assets of the nation. They also contributed considerably to the economic prosperity of every country, developed or developing, and that was why their education, in all forms, was vital.

62. In Ghana, as in almost all developing countries, agriculture was the mainstay of the people and 72 per cent of the farmers were women. Eighty-seven per cent of traders were women, whose shrewdness and skill were famous. In hospitals and schools too, women far outnumbered their male counterparts.

63. Conscious of that situation, Ghana had always sought to protect the interests of women and did not draw any distinction between men and women so far as job opportunities, remuneration and conditions of service were concerned. Most Ghanaian educational institutions had been co-educational since the 1920s. The ratio of women to men in the various professions was respectable. Lastly, women



(Ms. Kumi, Ghana)

were actively involved in the decision-making process and occupied important posts in government.

64. However, such was not the case in most of the developing countries. Improving the plight of those women constituted one of the priorities of her Government, whose decision had indubitably been inspired by United Nations activities and programmes in that regard. The many discussions on women's issues in various United Nations forums had provided the basis for governmental action for women at every level of Ghanaian society. That was why women who had the privilege of education and were occupying responsible positions owed it to their compatriots to ensure that United Nations programmes did not stagnate but were given wide publicity and implemented at the national and international levels.

65. Following the Nairobi Conference and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/108, her Government had already restructured the National Council for Women and Development to enable it better to implement forward-looking strategies at the national level. That body, in collaboration with the largest women's organization in Ghana, the 31st December Women's Association, had embarked on a number of projects in the following areas: community health programmes, primary health care, environmental protection such as tree-planting to fight desertification, fish farming, agricultural extension services, vocational training and day care centres. Through the 31st December Women's Association, the Government kept in close touch with women and consulted them on issues vital to their interests or daily welfare, thus bringing them increasingly into the decision-making process, especially in rural areas.

66. Ghana congratulated the United Nations Development Fund for Women on its work and would try to avail itself more of the facilities offered. Her delegation had noted with satisfaction and fully supported United Nations activities in implementation of the forward-looking strategies. It was to be hoped that the integration of women in all spheres of United Nations activities would receive wider acceptance. Convinced of the need for frequent international meetings for checking on the progress made, her Government would participate in all conferences related to women's issues and especially the 1987 Special Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

67. She stated that her Government had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

68. Mr. HUSAIN (Oman) said that Palestinian women were still living under occupation and were victims of the most barbarous oppression. He urged the international community, which at the Nairobi Conference expressed its intention to promote the full participation of women in all spheres, to discharge its responsibilities in respect of Palestinian women by helping them to exercise their inalienable rights.

69. In the Sultanate Of Oman, the progress achieved since 1970 had benefited both men and women. Freed from ignorance and underdevelopment, Omani women had the same rights and obligations as men. The Association of Omani Women had been taking

(Mr. Husain, Oman)

action since it is essential to improve the social, health and cultural conditions of women. Education, from the primary school level to the new Sultan Qaboos University, was open to girls. With regard to international co-operation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP and ECSWA, had launched a pilot training project which was being carried out locally by Omani women.

70. That considerable progress was attributable to two essential factors: the will of the women themselves and the resolute action of the State. It was owing to the combination of those two factors that Omani women were currently working in the most diverse occupations and fully participating in the country's development. The action taken by the Government to promote the status of women was in line with the principles of Islam which viewed woman as the corner-stone of the family and society.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.