



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIRAR (Sudan)

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

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

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

1. Mr. TROUVEROY (Belgium) said that the mid-point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons provided an opportunity to review the activities undertaken during the first half of the Decade and identify guidelines for the second half. Belgium had been one of the originators of the International Year of Disabled Persons and subsequently of the Decade. The original intention had been to draw the attention of the international community to the problems confronted by disabled persons and to means of promoting equality of opportunity for them. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons offered detailed ways of achieving the desired goals. The Year and the Decade had given impetus to programmes and activities undertaken in Belgium to assist the disabled, covering education, rehabilitation and integration into the workplace, guaranteed income and housing and a number of additional measures. At the international level, Belgium supported activities to help the disabled in developing countries which requested assistance.

2. While the implementation of the World Programme of Action depended above all on each State, in collaboration primarily with organizations for the disabled, the United Nations could and should play a role as a focal point and channel for the exchange of data and experience. The United Nations had encouraged the establishment of national committees, which continued to be the institutional mechanisms contributing most at the national level to the implementation of the World Programme of Action. His delegation welcomed the steady increase in the number of such committees and hoped that the trend would continue. Activities to promote development were also significant, notably those carried out with the help of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade.

(Mr. Trcuveroy, Belgium)

3. The report of the Secretary-General (A/42/551) and previous reports demonstrated that in the United Nations much had been done, much remained to be done, and also that the Decade was losing some of its momentum, perhaps because the proliferation of United Nations years and decades in the socio-economic field was causing a dissipation of efforts. The Decade must be reactivated. The Secretariat should be given additional resources; appeals should be made to States to make further contributions to the Voluntary Fund, and the Secretary-General should then draw up realistic programmes based on available resources. His delegation attached particular importance to the catalytic role that could be played by the Secretariat in drawing the attention of all organs of the United Nations system to the special problems of the disabled, which should be taken into account in drawing up programmes and projects.

4. With regard to the report of the Global Meeting of Experts to Review the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons at the Mid-Point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (CSDHA/DDP/GME/3), his delegation would have preferred the recommendations to have been presented in a more orderly fashion; since the scope of the proposals was extremely vast, priorities should have been established. A number of the proposals could not be considered in view of the current financial situation of the United Nations, for example, the proposal to hold a world conference and a number of other meetings. His delegation also had strong reservations about the drafting of a convention: the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons had established clearly that disabled persons had the same fundamental rights as other human beings, and the World Programme of Action called for a whole series of measures to protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of the disabled. His delegation would try to endorse those recommendations which at the national level would revive the spirit which had reigned when the Year and then the Decade had been launched.

5. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that his delegation attached great importance to international exchanges of experience in the field of social and economic development, which offered States an opportunity to describe advances made and problems encountered and open up new areas of co-operation. It was interesting that 33 of the 48 Member States which had submitted reports reflected in documents A/42/56 and A/42/57 had noted their positive experience in promoting co-operatives as an important element of national development. The Committee should pay particular attention to co-operatives in the context of the relationship between property and human rights.

6. The German Democratic Republic had been gaining positive experience in the area of co-operatives for over four decades. It had 4,300 agricultural production co-operatives bringing together, on a voluntary basis, farmers, gardeners, craftsmen and fishermen. Article 46 of the Constitution defined the status of such co-operatives and their basic rights and duties and emphasized their crucial importance for socio-economic development. Co-operative farms cultivated 87 per cent of the country's arable land and took care of 83 per cent of animal husbandry. That agricultural production had grown steadily over the years demonstrated the enormous potential of the co-operative movement.

(Mr. Richter, German Democratic Republic)

7. Co-operatives also played an important role in safeguarding such fundamental rights as the right to work, education, culture, leisure and recreation) 90 per cent of all people employed in agriculture had completed vocational training and more than 10 per cent had graduated from technical schools or higher educational establishments. The co-operative movement had also done much to enhance the role of women in the countryside. Women had equal rights and duties with men and were guaranteed active participation in society's development both by law and in practice. Women employed in agriculture enjoyed the same social benefits as women employed in industry. Particular attention was paid to youth in the countryside, and the co-operative movement had done much to overcome the centuries-long backwardness of the countryside, although a great deal remained to be done. Life in rural areas had become easier and more attractive, catering to the intellectual and cultural needs of the rural population. As a result, the age structure of those employed in the countryside was more favourable than had been the case only a few years previously.

8. The German Democratic Republic's experience confirmed the conclusion that co-operatives were an invaluable institution for promoting social and economic development and achieving an equitable distribution of income (A/42/556, para. 11). There seemed to be a general consensus that it would be useful to continue the exchange of experience on social and economic development for the purpose of social progress; his delegation was ready to participate constructively in that dialogue.

9. Mr. NENEMAN (Poland) said that, as a socialist State, Poland had experienced rapid economic growth and profound social changes based on nationalization of the means of production, land reform, nationalization of trade and services and central planning. The supreme goal of economic development was considered to be the all-round development of the individual through full participation in society. Agriculture had been reorganised on the basis of land reform, debt cancellation for peasants and provision of work for the underemployed agricultural population. Women had been granted equal rights in all sphere of socio-economic life and engaged increasingly in professional activity, so that their share of total employment in the nationalized sector had increased enormously. Education was guaranteed, free of charge, under the Constitution. Health care too was accessible to everyone free of charge; the entire working population and their families were covered by the social security system, which included annual cost-of-living adjustments for pensions and provided a broad range of benefits.

10. Young people had always been a decisive factor in social change and Poland was one of the youngest nations in Europe. Efforts to promote the development of its younger generation therefore concentrated on educational activities and creating the material conditions for entry into adult life. Government policy in the field of youth constituted a practical realization of the guidelines endorsed by the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

11. The Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes had provided an excellent opportunity for States Members of the United

(Mr. Neneman, Poland)

Nations and relevant organizations of the United Nations system to consider and share national and regional experiences on social policy and social welfare questions and make recommendations. His delegation considered it particularly important to recognise the links between peace and disarmament and the social situation prevailing in the world. Governments must bear ultimate responsibility for overall social policy and its application, while at the same time the role of non-governmental organizations, communities and families in social welfare services must be increased. Periodic exchanges of experience within and among regions must be held on a more permanent basis, and the objectives set forth in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development must be used as key guidelines for the United Nations system and Governments in their work in the field of developmental social welfare policies and programmes. Lastly, he hoped that draft resolution A/C.3/42/L.3 would be adopted unanimously.

12. Mr. MOLINA ARAMBARRI (Argentina) said that, in the field of crime prevention and the treatment of offenders as in other social areas, there was a direct link between criminality, poverty and unemployment, factors which were particularly serious in developing countries. Since crime was often the product of unjust economic system, attainment of a new international economic order and of the right to development were significant factors for improving the situation. Given the importance of the work being done by the United Nations, in particular the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, adequate resources must be made available through appropriate redeployment of staff and funds. All necessary steps must also be taken to ensure adequate preparations for the Eighth Congress.

13. His delegation endorsed Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/53, calling for the transformation of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs into a specialized body providing assistance in that field. Priority attention should also be given to the prevention and control of the serious forms of criminality identified in the Milan Plan of Action and to the strengthening of technical co-operation and advisory services. In that connection, it would be advisable to provide greater support and assistance to United Nations regional and interregional institutes, whose important contributions were exemplified by the work of the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

14. Turning to agenda item 141 and the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, it was necessary to combat the adverse effects of the present international economic order if those recommendations were not to become a dead letter. It was difficult for developing countries to implement social welfare programmes because scarcity of resources and the tremendous external debt burden impeded the economic growth essential to the success of such programmes. The administrative costs of those programmes must also be reduced so that resources went to achieving their actual objectives. Lastly, beneficiaries of social welfare programmes should be actively involved in their design, implementation and follow-up.

(Mr. Holina Arambar ri, Argent ins)

15. His delegation supported the fostering of horizontal co-operation among countries, in particular at the regional level, in order to permit exchanges of experience, training, advisory services and technical expertise. United Nations regional agencies had an important role to play in that connection by offering assistance and co-operation.

16. In the area of health, efforts should be made to expand community participation not only to medical and paramedical staff but also to suitably trained social workers and health workers, and to develop simple and accessible technologies.

17. The Guiding Principles had an important role to play in the overall development of social welfare policies and programmes. His delegation emphasised the link between social and economic development and between human rights and fundamental freedoms, and supported a transfer of responsibilities from the State to the community in the interests of enhanced protection for all social welfare recipients.

18. Mr. CONSTANTINESCU (Romania) said that the International Youth Year had demonstrated fully the topicality and practical relevance of its motto: "Participation, Development, Peace". In recent decades in particular, youth had proved itself to be not only an important "demographic capital" but also a basic factor of social action. Deeply affected by the current world situation, the younger generation had an active role to play in solving major contemporary problems, particularly in achieving disarmament, above all nuclear disarmament, and eliminating underdevelopment and the massive gaps between rich and poor countries.

19. In many countries of the world, young people had to grapple with such problems as unemployment, illiteracy, delinquency, violence and terrorism, marginality and drug abuse, all of which greatly reduced their capacity to engage in constructive action. Consequently, it was the task of policy-makers at all levels to take effective action to eradicate all those phenomena from the life of young people.

20. The observance of the International Youth Year had favoured the development of a more realistic and practical approach to youth issues at the national and international levels, including recognition of the necessity to establish youth-oriented programmes for securing the fundamental rights of young people to education, work, health, culture and information, and participation in the decision-making process. The guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth, intended to give renewed impetus to all activities devoted to youth at the national, regional and international levels, were of great significance for that process. Because solving youth problems was a long-term process, his delegation attached particular importance to the practical manner in which United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were to perform their duties, including the preparation of specific, action-oriented reports which could serve as a source of inspiration for further youth-related projects and activities.

(Mr. Conetantinescu, Romania)

21. Romanian youth was actively involved in implementing the guidelines: it participated directly in the national development and decision-making process and also co-operated with young people in other countries, above all in peace and disarmament activities.

22. His delegation was preparing a draft resolution on agenda item 90 which would be submitted to the Committee once consultations were complete. Its main concern was the full implementation of the guidelines and, in that connection, it found the Secretary-General's recommendations, particularly those in paragraph 10 of document A/42/595, extremely useful.

AGENDA ITEM 07: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION; REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(continued) (A/42/3, A/42/492, A/42/493)

23. Mr. NYAMEKE (Deputy Director, Centre for Human Rights) informed the Committee that the Secretary-General had already asked Mr. Jan Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, to co-ordinate the activities of the Second Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.